



# EXCHANGE RADICAL MOMENTS!

Live Art Festival

**28.9.2011 – Sibylle Ettengruber – Walk on by**  
<http://11moments.org/sibylle-ettengruber-de/>

## **Exchange Radical Moments! Live Art Festival**

INTERVIEW #17: Today we want you to meet Sibylle Ettengruber, an artist from Linz, Austria. She will present her work "Walk on by" in Berlin as part of the Exchange Radical Moments! Live Art Festival. Hi Sibylle, where are you at the moment?

## **Sibylle Ettengruber**

Hello! Right now I am sitting in my studio in Linz.

## **Exchange Radical Moments! Live Art Festival**

Welcome to the Facebook page of our Festival. Do you manage to describe your work in one sentence?

## **Sibylle Ettengruber**

Thank you for inviting me for this interview! well, and my work is about walking along the lines of a square of a map.

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But in the real world and not only with your finger on a map.

## **Sibylle Ettengruber**

What a funny thought! Yes, I am transferring that line into my real path and try out to follow that line as close as possible.

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So, you are ringing at unknown doors, ask people if you can cross their flat or garden, hedge or whatever is in your way? How do they react?

## **Sibylle Ettengruber**

I'm on my way with somebody who is filming my walk and we are just walking along the line and surprising people in their offices, flats or backyards if they let us through. Sometimes, if the building is too official we have to ask before. But the surprise is working pretty good. The reactions are different.

Some people are very interested in the special path I have chosen. And sometimes people feel kind of happy and involved in something different than the ordinary...



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Live Art Festival

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In your performances you follow a geometrical form like a rectangle. Do you walk alongside other forms as well? Is there a reason behind it?

### **Sibylle Ettengruber**

I started with a square. And in another place I referred to a place in the city, and the form became a triangle. But I prefer the square because it also suits very well with the geographical directions.

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During your performance you permanently switch between private and public areas. Is this important to you, does it have an impact on your work?

### **Sibylle Ettengruber**

For me it is really important to involve the public and to reach that public at different places and spaces. It is very different to enter an office and climb over an office desk from ringing at a private house doorbell and asking to be allowed to jump out of a window on the backside. I also do not invite the people who are involved to participate at my film and walk through.

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Can you start your performance immediately or do you have to prepare it? What are the selection criteria to choose a territory for you?

### **Sibylle Ettengruber**

I am always looking for private and public spaces crossing my lines. I exclude rivers and railways because it would be too dangerous and the flow of the walk would be interrupted too much. If there are some buildings that seem to be "too official", I ask before and try to make some kind of appointment for my passing by. But mostly I just start with a first ring at a doorbell.

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But you could have chosen also different grid squares in Berlin – why did you choose Berlin Mitte?

### **Sibylle Ettengruber**

Well, I wanted to find an important place somewhere in the center where crossing was always important, and where things have changed very much as well. Where there are new buildings



# EXCHANGE RADICAL MOMENTS!

## Live Art Festival

and new property owners. I think I wanted and still want to look behind the capital walls ... in ministeries, private flats, backyards... I just didn't want to go outside the "center" or the ring. Berlin is full of water, so my choice was really reduced – well, let's say kind of reduced. And it is not just Mitte, it is also Kreuzberg!

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You are always wearing a cute dress for your performance. Isn't that too obstructive if you have to climb over a hedge or go trough a small creek?

### **Sibylle Ettengruber**

For me the dress always refers a little to a very nice sunday walk. Sun is shining, and one is dressing up for a nice walk around. I also like that kind of elevated risk and I have to be even more careful during my climbing and jumping and crossing. Plus it also produces a picture of something special – for myself and for the people getting involved by opening their space for me. The shoes are also important because I like the sound of the steps. For my first winter walk in Berlin I have to get dressed differently – I am aware of the low temperatures, the wet streets and the very cold wind.

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Looking forward to see your new dress there! But back to an answer you have already given: Berlin was separated for many years through the wall. There have been houses next to the wall, where people jumped out the window to escape into the west. Does your performance get a different meaning because of the fact that you perform in Berlin?

### **Sibylle Ettengruber**

I was really looking forward to perform in a bigger city. I always try to refer to something typical for me. Crossing the area of the wall was kind of a coincidence because I also was looking for some wide open areas. But now most of them are kind of rebuilt or simply new. I just wanted to enter some different areas, new and old ones. Parts of the square are old Kreuzberg living areas, others are just very very touristic, as I am almost touching Checkpoint Charly. There are also some ministeries and a museum involved as well as some backyards, gardens and living areas.

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You have been performing your work several times now. Can you tell us about one encounter that stays deep in your mind?



# EXCHANGE RADICAL MOMENTS!

Live Art Festival

**Sibylle Ettengruber**

Sometimes people open doors in their office buildings for example to let me go through despite they had never opened them before. These moments are really nice.

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Would you consider that a radical moment? Or how do you define radical for yourself?

**Sibylle Ettengruber**

"Radical" could refer to the areas I can go into and through. The more "closed to the public" they are the more radical the moment could be. But for me the most radical thing is to follow that whole path along the square, to make the walk kind of complete. To end where I started. There is no competition of most important buildings because sometimes even a boring looking house can keep a secret.

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Where can we find your work online?

**Sibylle Ettengruber**

On my website: [www.sibette.net](http://www.sibette.net) and <http://vimeo.com/12510336>

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Thank you for the interview and good luck in Berlin!

**Sibylle Ettengruber**

Thank you very much for the very nice interview and see you in Berlin! Have a very nice afternoon!