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TWO YEARS OF LAB.BODE: RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS AND A LOOK AHEAD

Bode-Museum | Am Kupfergraben | 10117 Berlin



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With lab.Bode – Initiative to Strengthen Museum Education, the German Federal Cultural Foundation and the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin are sending a strong message about the importance of fostering contemporary, networked museum education programmes.

Since the summer of 2016, the Bode-Museum has served as a laboratory for the exploration and testing of future-oriented educational concepts and for integrating them into the work of museums. With an education lab, a school programme, and a national training programme involving a total of twenty-three museum institutions, the initiative aims to show what museum education can achieve. In December 2018 a second group of twelve partner museums has begun an active cooperation with lab.Bode. Through 2020 the initiative will make available all successfully tested methods and results in the form of a digital toolbox, and all Berlin schools are invited to take part in the newly developed project days by booking these programmes free of charge. lab.Bode is accompanied by a discourse programme unique to Germany, which features international experts.

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Initiative zur Stärkung der Vermittlungsarbeit in Museen

Twenty-three partner museums from throughout Germany, nine Berlin partner schools and numerous experts have invested their time and efforts in the Bode-Museum's education lab, lab.Bode, and since 2016 they have carried out twenty-eight school projects, fifteen discursive events, and three mini residencies as well as the development of a comprehensive training programme. Pupils of various ages and backgrounds have engaged with works of art in the collections of the Bode-Museum, ranging from artworks by Tilman Riemenschneider to those of Antonio Canova. Trainees have accompanied programmes at the Bode-Museum and then subsequently carried out their own projects at their respective institutions. The positive influence of lab.Bode is not only being felt in the Bode-Museum itself but also in partner museums, which have gained new inspiration for their own educational programmes. The public discourse programme has enjoyed large audiences, and the popularity of the lab.Bode project days among Berlin schools is further testimony of the successful realization of the educational programme for schools.

Training Programme

lab.Bode is funding twenty-three specialised traineeships in the field of museum education. All trainees take part in a training programme, shadow individual school projects at the Bode-Museum and develop a project of their own at their respective institution. For example, a trainee from Bremen developed a school project "WELCHE_R HELD_IN STECKT IN DIR"? (Who's the Hero/Heroine in You?) for the education programme of her institution, Kunsthalle Bremen, which was based on the lab.Bode project "GARDE DER SUPERHELD_INNEN" (Ranks of the Superheroes). Due to the positive feedback, plans are being made to continue this specific training programme above and beyond the designated period – as an offering available to museums throughout Germany.

Programme for Schools

Nine Berliner partner schools have been working with the Bode-Museum since 2016, and have each been involved in one to two extensive cooperation projects per school year. In the school year 2017/2018 a total of 406 pupils visited the museum for 99 workshop days. Pupils and teachers engaged in research by comparing their own works to sculptures in the museum collection, or, for example, by measuring the shoe size of the equestrian sculpture of the Elector in the great entrance hall. The cooperation with partner schools functions as follows: together questions relevant to the collections of the museums, the institution, and current socio-political issue are gathered; formats are then developed and tested around these themes. Questions that cut across different media also address the core subjects taught in school: Do you need math in a museum? What kind of chemistry is found in museum objects? The results of these investigations have

included trick films and short films, raps, performances, performative tours, and sculptures, installations, and exhibitions that are presented within the museum for extended periods of time.

Since May 2018, the project days developed as part of lab.Bode can be booked free of charge by all Berlin schools. For example, the project “Let´s Talk about Sex” can be booked as a supplement to school sex education. This project day deals with gender and the diverse sexuality expressed through art.

Discourse Programme

A further aim of the initiative is to foster specialised exchange among various disciplines about new research and practical approaches. Museum directors, educators, school representatives, artists, and students are invited to monthly events featuring international speakers, who address current topics in museum education. Following the first four discussion series on the topics of “Spaces,” “Participation,” “Dissent” and “Visions,” another series is taking place in the spring of 2019, which is dedicated to the topic of “Dialogue” and will feature three public lectures and a workshop. In this manner a professional network is being developed and educational programmes are being strengthened throughout Germany.

Education Spaces in the museum

With its important collections the Bode-Museum is a place of international renown, but especially among younger audiences it is little known. For this reason it is important to explore how the treasures of the museum can be made more accessible to younger people. Artists and educators work with the collection to draw connections between different forms of art and current social themes. The education spaces, designed by the Berlin architectural collective raumlabor, have helped make the education programmes more visible and relevant within a visit to the collections. Museum-goers are able to get a sense of the work of education initiatives; children and young people are given a voice within the museum through a place where their works, questions, and project results are shown in the context of the collection.

Julien Chapuis, Director of the Bode-Museum:

“Lab.Bode demonstrates to everyone, that the museum is a public institution with social relevance. Whether pupils turn themselves into statues in the Bode-Museum through a choreographed performance; whether they explore the relationship between light and shadow through photographing sculptures and exhibiting their works at lab.Bode; or whether they use works of art as inspiration for new stories – they are enabling an innovative way of looking at the museum and its collections. This perspective does not originate from the museum itself but from a portion of its audience. My wish is that every day members of the younger generation continue to make the museum more and more their own.”

Hortensia Völckers, Member of the Executive Board and Artistic Director of the German Federal Cultural Foundation:

“Museums want to change, because society is changing. In order to do so, they have to prove that they are able to attract new audiences. With lab.Bode the Bode-Museum is demonstrating the immeasurable contribution that education formats make to this process. After two years, promising milestones have been achieved in the Bode-Museum: four hundred pupils from nine Berlin schools have become familiar with the museum over an extended period and from different perspectives. They now navigate the museum as familiar territory. Based on these experiences, the lab.Bode training programme — one of a kind in Germany — promises to close a systemic gap in the cooperation and exchange between educators and curators. I am confident that lab.Bode will make its mark on the national museum landscape, especially when an additional twelve museums join the project during the second half of its running time. We are enabling museums to professionally steer their processes of change with the help of lab.Bode.”

Heike Kropff: Head of the Education/Communication Department of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin:

“Lab.Bode has developed into a motor that is driving the educational outreach of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin. In particular the initiative creates room for experimental and thoughtful working processes in cooperation with partner schools — ways of working that are not possible at this level of intensity within routine processes. Lab.Bode offers outstanding possibilities for testing strategies, formats, and structures of cooperation between school and museums, and for applying them to other collections. This also holds true for the newly designed educational spaces that are integrated into the exhibition halls and that may inspire other museums. With the discourse programme, the Bode-Museum becomes a meeting point for educational experts from around the world. The fresh inspiration, specialised input, exchange among colleagues, and possibility for establishing networks are highly enriching for our employees in the departments of museum education, communications, and visitor services. It is also important to us that we are making a contribution to the professional education of future museum educators through the training programme.”

Participating Museums

- Kunsthalle Bremen
- Kunsthalle Mannheim
- Kunstmuseum Stuttgart
- Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich
- Lindenau-Museum Altenburg
- Museum für Gegenwartskunst Siegen
- Museum Pfalzgalerie Kaiserslautern
- Neues Museum – Staatliches Museum für Kunst und Design in Nürnberg
- Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden
- Städtisches Museum Abteiberg, Mönchengladbach
- Museum Ulm
- Focke Museum, Bremer Landesmuseum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte
- GfZK – Galerie für Zeitgenössische Kunst Leipzig
- Historisches Museum Frankfurt
- Jüdisches Museum Frankfurt
- Kunstmuseum Villa Zanders, Bergisch Gladbach
- MEWO Kunsthalle, Memmingen
- Klostermuseum Unser Lieben Frauen Magdeburg
- Berlinische Galerie
- Brücke-Museum, Berlin
- Museum Folkwang, Essen
- Landesmuseum Württemberg, Stuttgart
- Museum Ludwig, Cologne

Participating Berlin Schools

(2 elementary schools, 2 comprehensive schools, 5 secondary schools)

- Sophie-Brahe-Schule, Treptow-Köpenick
- B. Traven Gemeinschaftsschule, Spandau
- Athene-Grundschule, Steglitz-Zehlendorf
- Grunewald-Grundschule, Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf
- Herder-Gymnasium, Charlottenburg-Wilmersdorf
- Barnim-Gymnasium Berlin, Lichtenberg
- Thomas-Mann-Gymnasium, Reinickendorf
- Gustav-Langenscheidt-Schule, Tempelhof-Schöneberg
- Schule am Rathaus, Lichtenberg

For further information on *lab.Bode – Initiative to Strengthen Museum Education*, see <http://www.lab-bode.de/>

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