

Philippe Van Cauteren Gaußstraße 152, Haus 3, 22765 Hamburg, Deutschland
T/F: 0049 (0)4039903369

Sol LeWitt
Via Bignone 18
06049 CP Soletto
Italia

Hamburg, 14.08.2003

Concerning: 'Black Form - Dedicated to the Missing Jews' (Altona, Hamburg).

Dear Sol Lewitt,

This letter articulates a concern in respect to one of your major sculptures. I write as inhabitant of the district of Altona (Hamburg) and as independent curator. The sculpture I am talking about is **'Black Form - Dedicated to the Missing Jews' (1987/1989)**. As you know is the sculpture located at the 'Platz der Republik' in front of the City Hall of Altona, Hamburg. My concern relates to the present physical condition of the work. Apparently the Kulturbehörde of the city of Hamburg does not find time to assume the responsibility to maintain this sculpture as it should be. The photos included show the actual condition of the work. I am not talking about an incidental graffiti but about total neglect. This neglect with which your sculpture is treated shows once more the latent strategical attitude of cities in promoting art in public. Recently the city of Hamburg was about to invest in a monumental sculpture of Mr. Jeff Koons. I do not have anything against any new artistic interventions within a city. But I do counter this when I see that the existing patrimonium is not maintained and taken care of as it should. As curator and sociologist I am not insensitive to this situation.

With this letter I would like to do you **a proposal**. I am ready to repaint the 'Black Form - Dedicated to the Missing Jews' myself in order to give the sculpture its original appearance and skin. Therefore - in case you agree with my proposal - I would like to ask you the technical procedure I have to follow, the precise type of paint I need, the number of layers that should be put and these like. After getting your permission to restore your work I will inform the Kulturbehörde of Hamburg that on a certain day your sculpture will be repainted.

I believe in the necessity of this action as I do consider this as an articulation of my responsibility as a citizen. As the artist takes responsibility in proposing with precision an artistic work, the least thing what a city can do is surrounding the artistic intervention with the necessary care. I do of course also articulate with this action my great respect for your oeuvre and your artistic practice.

One word on who I am. I am a Belgian born (°1969) art historian and sociologist. After having worked a long time among others for the Museum of Contemporary Art in Ghent (Belgium), I am now working as an independent curator in Hamburg. If you might be interested I can keep you informed on my professional activities. Having this double academical formation it should not be a surprise that I have a particular interest for art in public space.

I hope, Mr. LeWitt, that you can provide me with the necessary technical data in order to do what has to be done. Of course, this makes only sense when you agree on this undertaking in the way that you would give me the formal agreement and full mental support for restoring 'Black Form - Dedicated to the Missing Jews'. This action might be dedicated to the failing responsibility of municipal administrators and decision takers.

With the greatest respect,

Philippe Van Cauteren