Concourse Discourse: Terminal Exhibitions En Route To Iceland

Published December 7, 2018

Words by
Grayson Del Faro
Photos by
Jan Michalko & Gregor Fischer
A new terminal is coming to Keflavík next summer. Well, not literally. ‘Terminal’ is a collaborative exhibition of artists based in Berlin and Reykjavík. The first shows were held in Berlin—but that is not the project’s final destination. Series curator Annabelle von Girsewald spoke with us from Berlin about Terminal (TXL), and what to expect at Terminal (KEF).

Checking in

“The concept is that it is an exchange between Reykjavík and Berlin because Berlin is almost like a terminal of Reykjavík,” she chuckles. “There are so many Icelandic artists here. I’m showing three that are based here. The next exhibition will be artists mostly based in Reykjavík.”

Although the project is called Terminal, it actually started with a post office called Postwerk. “Last summer I got a call about a former post office,” she says. “300 square metres with 6 metre high ceilings. So of course I wanted to do something there. Since it’s located in Tegel, where the airport is, the airport aesthetics concept came about. But since it’s in a post office, the subtext was communication.”
Taking off

Terminal (TXL) comprised three exhibitions, the first being “Borderline Human – Milk River Valley” by Gunnhildur Hauksdóttir, which reflects on “how monkeys communicate or how we interpret their communication or their calls.” The show included an installation of an arbor-esque jungle gym alongside interpretations of monkey calls by Gunnhildur and simian movement by dancer Saga Sigurðardóttir.

The next was “noWhere, noThing, noBody” by Rebecca Erin Moran. It blended sounds ranging from kissing to techno (to which the artist could be seen dancing nonstop in a three-hour video projection) to hypnotherapy. “In the hypnosis,” Annabelle adds, “you’re also kind of losing yourself or even fucking yourself, almost, on this journey through your body as your organs become a constellation.”
A corruption of "home island" in Icelandic plus the hashtag of transgender Lebanese musician Haifa Magic, "Hei Maei #my_کل_شي" by Borghildur Indriðadóttir was the final exhibition. Set before a one-minute film, made at Grótta, about "the unknown knowledge of the ocean" and starring Tómas Lemarquis, the performance mixed latex-clad clubbers with niqabi women in an airport to create “tension between different worlds, and negation—like home, not home, transgender, Arabic world, sexuality.”
Landing

Terminal (KEF) will go slightly off script, involving ten artists and the European Space Agency in a single exhibition. “It will be about how we can prepare for the future of the environment,” Annabelle says. This is the focus of the EPA’s Space for Earth initiative. “So there will be a pairing up of artists with the scientists focussed on the ocean, the air, and the earth itself.” Although installations by Borghildur Indriðadóttir, Emilija Škarnulytė and Hreinn Friðfinnsson will be the foundation, she explains that “the others are a little bit more like jokers. Their presence will be dependent on their work, whether it’s an installation or a concert or performance.”

Instead of a post office or airport, Terminal (KEF) will be held at the old military base in Keflavík. “Just like the post office, this location, this non-space, is in flux,” she concludes. “Just like terminals in the airport, you’re always waiting. You’re between arriving and leaving. So how are we defined in these places? How do they define us as individuals, or as women, or as artists, or as whatever?”

Terminal (KEF) will arrive at Keflavík in summer 2019. Check terminal.is for more details as they emerge.

---

Related

‘Earth Homing’ Exhibition Asks: Are Turf Houses Part Of A Sustainable Future?

Reykjavík Arts Festival: Dragsúgur—A Gust Of Air, Or A Mobile Gallery?

The Transformative Quality of Paper: ‘Lignin’ Sheds Light On Matter