

BEAU TRAVAIL

Skulptur Projekte Münster is a sculpture public art exhibition in the city of Münster in Germany, held every ten years since 1977. Kasper König, who was one of the initiators, has been the curator of all the exhibitions.

The story of the Skulptur Projekte dates back to the 1970s when George Rickey placed his kinetic sculpture, "Drei rotierende Quadrate" in Münster. At the time there was a significant public outcry against placement of the artwork. To address this dissatisfaction and to attempt to bridge understanding about art in public places, Klaus Bussmann (then director of the Westfälisches Landesmuseum in Münster) undertook a series of lectures and presentations in 1977 at the museum. It was as an extension of this outreach program that the idea for Sculpture Projects Münster was born with Bussmann and Kasper König (curator at Museum Ludwig) as the project's founders. Although protests of the project followed in latter years, the citizens of Münster eventually came to embrace the project.

I learned about the Skulptur Projekte Münster from artist, friend and collaborator Lena Henke when we started M/L ARTSPACE in New York City. We had the idea of turning a parking lot under the Brooklyn Queens Expressway in Brooklyn into a sculpture exhibition. Each sculpture in the lot was like a small island in a dystopian archipelago. Visitors had a hard time distinguishing the art from the expressway's already existing trash.

When I started Beau Travail, I couldn't stop thinking about how the outdoor garden felt very unique for a gallery and how it was an ideal platform for a sculpture park. In order for a sculpture to handle all sorts of weather, I was imagining the garden filled with materials such as steel, concrete and epoxy resin. Industrial materials in combination with the garden's natural environment. There's a different experience when viewing art that is shown outside and not in a white-cube. Nature is alive, the grass is moving with the wind, flowers are in symbiosis with insects; it has the rhythm of something constantly growing and dying. When I crash on the grass it feels like a pillow. Sculptures are generally hard, they're not objects into which I'd like to crash—except for *My Franz West*. I once heard an interview with Kraftwerk's Ralf Hütter in which he described how Kraftwerk created music from the city soundscapes, like the honking of a car and tram rolling by are substitutes for a violin and a brass instrument. Here at the sculpture Projekte Stockholm I can hear birds chirping and shoes walking on the gravel. The silence of each sculpture creates a vacuum for the visitor to observe. Nature's flow comes to a stop when it reaches the standing sculpture. The grass and trees that surround the sculptures seem both harmonic and disharmonic as any symphony produced by contemporary society might be.

—Marie Karlberg