

report: May 2009

PAWEL ALTHAMER AND OTHERS

Exhibition at Secession / until June 21 / 09

For his exhibition at the Secession, that makes use of the entire building and the garden, the Polish artist Pawel Althamer creates a tunnel-like corridor, accessible around the clock, that runs through the building straight into the garden beyond, where he initiates a public site for communication with simple means. An evening camp fire – for Althamer a symbol and archetype of the “round table” – acts as the centre of informal gatherings and meetings. Although ahead of the exhibition the artist has specifically prompted various people for example Donat Grzechowiak, students of the Academy of Fine Arts / Performance Art class, Südtirolerplatz-Günther and friends and residents of the Neu Albern refugee house to take part, basically everyone is invited to make use of the temporary outdoor space. Althamer’s intervention at the Secession also transforms the traditional use and perception of the institution: Instead of approaching the art via the entrance hall, set back from the everyday bustle of the street, visitors are guided right through the building. The exhibition space is rather masked out, and the place that invites visitors to stay a while is removed into a natural setting, an open situation that cannot be controlled. Continuous change, unpredictability and loss of control are inherent factors in Pawel Althamer’s works. This also involves giving up and transferring authorship to others. This is based on an artistic understanding of himself and his work that does not regard art and life as separate. Pawel Althamer (b. in Warsaw in 1967) lives and works in Warsaw. Wiener Secession, Association of Visual Artists Friedrichstraße 12A-1010 Wien