

STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR THE THING Hamburg

My name is Michel Chevalier, I have been active in the Hamburg art scene since I moved here in 1996. I did several art-in-public space projects in this city, such as the exhibition series "12-18" (with Anja Hertenberger and Markus Binner, 2000-2001) and the experimental shop project "unlimited liability" (2006 to present). I work with several international art institutions such as *Montevideo Time Based Arts* (NL) and the *Biennale de Paris* (FR).

Since 2007, THE THING Hamburg has been the principle forum for the publication of my ideas. I have published three long articles (a fourth is under review) and one translation, as well as several "unedited" photo-essays. Before 2006, there was nothing at all like THE THING in Hamburg.

THE THING Hamburg is not only the best source I know for art criticism and critical art, it is humorous and lively. The "Special Thing" section has become an indispensable tool for planning my social calendar: I have only once been disappointed when I followed the listing's advice.

THE THING Hamburg represents a level of integrity and an ethos that is without compare in the German art/art-media scene. Opportunistic snow-jobs and "Vitamin B" games do not function in this critical forum where all have the right to express themselves and comment equally and at any length they see fit. I know this because some have tried and gotten their hands burned!

THE THING Hamburg is a first step in the long-overdue task that lies ahead of us: getting beyond the art world business-as-usual that has clogged institutions with a new art-pompier.

With those spaces who are normally the showcases for "international art" Deichtorhallen and Kunstverein cutting back on their programs since 2005, featuring fewer and fewer international group exhibitions, taking no risks, THE THING Hamburg has picked up the slack and become an excellent showcase for international concept art that shuns the white cube. I also regard many of the spontaneous, call-and-response "unedited" contributions on THE THING Hamburg as very strong art works in their own right.

THE THING Hamburg is a laboratory for new forms of art.

Finally, as a member of the *Wir sind Woanders* initiative and the *Dachverband für Aktueller Kunst Hamburg*, I can say that no German media outlet has come even close to THE THING Hamburg with regard to covering those urgent aesthetic and political issues raised in WSW#2 (gentrification; autonomy/instrumentalization of culture; art reaching new audiences).

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Michel Chevalier