

But when it comes to exhibiting art, what exactly is "the best light"? Is it the brightly lit spaces in the historic Erlwein ensemble that are playing host to works by over 90 individual artists and groups? No, definitely not. Considering light in purely pragmatic terms would fall short of the mark we are trying to hit here.

Our answer lies in seeing the Ostrale and all its exhibition locations as a single institution that lets contemporary art shine. In doing so, it aims to present and establish this wonderful corner of the artistic world beyond regional and national boundaries. We have achieved much over the past seven years. We have overcome barriers and aroused attention. But our work is not over. We have to intensify our efforts, and we want to. Contemporary art – created in Dresden and radiating beyond it – must be more and must become more than brands accepted by a market made up of members of the contemporary arts scene.

Every seed needs a place where it can grow. At first, it may just be a mind bright enough to bring disegno through an artist's hands and into our world. An atelier, a kind of sanctuary and space for fruitful work, would also be good. But perhaps the most important place is one where young works can find an audience, where they can become part of a vibrant discourse and where collectors, curators and directors can make wonderful discoveries as they attentively study the treasures before them. In short, young art needs a place where it can grow, where it will be shown in its best light. The Ostrale is such a place.

For this year's exhibition, we set ourselves the goals of raising the artistic standard by making careful changes to our selection criteria, of incorporating new perspectives into our selection, and of getting experts from the worlds of art and culture on board. Now here we are, and we have achieved them all.

Our first step was to build relationships with renowned gallery curators. The next, to establish new links to the art scene in Dresden. Networking is crucial, pooling creative resources vital. Young artists need platforms, and these platforms should be built on trusting relationships between everyone involved. Collectors, galleries, art schools, museums, exhibitions and every other cultural institution besides can achieve so much more if they work together for the beauty of art. Synergies are our tools and we must use them.

The theme "Crossing the Rubicon" encapsulates the aspirations of this year's Ostrale. It is about moving on to pastures new, learning from the past and looking attentively to the future. It is about developing new strategies and forging promising new alliances. But as we cross that river, we must also overcome boundaries and break through layers that bind us. At first we need to focus on our own internal barriers and find out who we really are. Only if we truly know ourselves can we look past external borders and dare to step beyond them. We must strive to experience objectively foreign influences, forms and, yes, even whole cultures and understand them without allowing ourselves to be swayed by prejudice, by conditioned behaviours and, perhaps, by obstructive patterns of thought.

This is all the more important in light of the Ostrale's plans for an artistic trip east in 2014. Our eastern European neighbours will be in the limelight, and so will Turkey and Russia. At this meeting of east and west, what questions will the two cultures ask of each other, or of themselves? What will we learn?

So be courageous, join us in crossing the Rubicon. Discover yourself as you explore these outstanding examples of seedling art – all presented in the very best light of the Ostrale 2013.

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