

Hope your eyes are fine. I work a lot. (pionier work)

by Barbara Ungepflegt

Hope your eyes are fine. I work a lot. was created in November 2019, just after the public transport organisation „Wiener Linien“ spread a visual instruction on social media to promote more respect on public transportation. "Are you still sitting, or are you already spreading?" The „Wiener Linien“ asked their male passengers this question (including a twinkle smiley), with the advice to only take a seat and not to spread out, as many passengers felt disturbed by unwanted physical contact and the feeling of being constricted.

Like the Viennese social media post against "manspreading", other European and American public transport companies have also launched campaigns against wide-legged sitting in the past.

Obviously, our culture of riding public transport is very much influenced by a view that classifies fellow passengers as disturbing factors and signals to the surrounding area:

"Don't get too close to me." When we enter the transport, we place ourselves far away from other passengers. The other is my enemy. In *Hope your eyes are fine. I work a lot.* Barbara Ungepflegt counteracts the preference of men to sit wide-legged in public spaces.

Who is allowed to sit? Who is allowed to sit in what way? Who is allowed to get close to whom? Who takes care of the cauliflower?

Indeed: a cauliflower should not be too warm, because the temperature has an influence on the quality. The cauliflower has its own cooling system - this works while standing and walking. But not while sitting - especially not when the legs are crossed.

Hope your eyes are fine. I work a lot. illustrates the dealing with the transformation of conventions and rules. This intervention shows, that the aim of art and artistic research is to irritate, disrupt and harass the (scientific) demarcations that have taken place so far - not only - in the public space, to make them perhaps more visible, and above all to overcome these demarcations with relish. Art is not something that creates an illusory opposite world, it is more real than reality. Yes, in its function as a disruptive factor, as a moment of uncertainty of worn patterns of hearing, seeing, thinking and acting, art brings reality to light.

Following this aim, one of the questions underlying my artistic research could thus be formulated as follows: Which (symbolic) walls can art offer in order to fulfil a protective function even in largely unprotected spaces?

Video *Hope your eyes are fine. I work a lot.*:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bObFmRThKIA>



Hope your eyes are fine, I work a lot. (pioneerwork, 2019) Galerie Knoll, Vienna



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Barbara Ungepflegt (AT) is a performance, video and installation artist. In many of her works she deals with gaps and utopias in the public sphere. She is co-founder and head of the university programme for applied dramaturgy at the University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna. Since 2018, she is PhD Researcher at the Kunstuniversität Linz. Furthermore, she is the editor of the art journal IMMERHIN / AFTER ALL and winner of the Dissident Goddesses Temple Prize (2019) for her office installation Büro Zimmer Frei.

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