

PRESS RELEASE

# FRANZ ERHARD WALTHER. WALKING PEDESTALS AND PLACES TO STAND

PART V OF THE SERIES "IN THE STÄDEL GARDEN"  
17 SEPTEMBER TO 23 NOVEMBER 2014

Press preview: Tuesday, 16 September 2014, 12:00 pm  
Städel Museum, Städel Garden

**Frankfurt am Main, 20 August 2014.** The Städel Museum continues the series "In the Städel Garden" with an extraordinary presentation dedicated to Franz Erhard Walther (b. 1939). The artist's *Walking Pedestals and Places to Stand* will be on display on the museum's freely accessible greens from 17 September to 23 November 2014. The internationally much-noticed artist began developing this group of works for outdoors, which made him a key figure of Minimal and Performance Art, in the early 1970s. With their reduced forms, the minimalist ground elements formed of steel invite the viewer to a walk-on tour of his work. Pacing off the plinths, the visitor turns into the material of the sculptural process. Franz Erhard Walther's *Walking Pedestals and Places to Stand* in the front and back garden areas offer surprising lines of sight and new perspectives of the museum and its environs. The exhibition will be opened with a talk between Franz Erhard Walther and Dr. Martin Engler, Head of the Contemporary Art Collection of the Städel, in the Metzler Hall on Tuesday, 16 September at 7:00 pm; visitors are welcome to a tour of the grounds with the artist after the talk. A further tour through the exhibition with Franz Erhard Walther on Sunday, 21 September at 3:00 pm and a lecture held by the artist in the Städel Museum on Thursday, 16 October at 7:00 pm will provide the interested public with additional insights into the artist's oeuvre.

The exhibition is being carried out with support from the Städel Gartengesellschaft.

Born in Fulda in 1939, Franz Erhard Walther enrolled at the Städelsschule in Frankfurt in 1959. In 1962, he changed to the Art Academy in Düsseldorf, where he studied with Gerhard Richter and Sigmar Polke in Karl Otto Götz's class. Even then, Walther's interest focused on design processes resulting from the context of a specific materiality. He was fascinated with paper, for example, which took on different forms when brought into contact with certain liquids. He came to experiment with textiles and made objects from nettle cloth aimed at involving the viewer in an interactive manner by their use. It was under these conditions that he produced his *1. Werksatz (First Work Series, 1963–1969)*, which comprises fifty-eight objects and was already presented in the first year of the artist's stay in the

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USA from 1967 to 1971 in the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Through Walther's art, the traditional understanding of sculpture underwent a radical change in the 1960s. The artist regards the process, seeing, movement, and experience as the components constituting a work. Because of this attitude, Walther, who held a professorship at the Hochschule für bildende Künste Hamburg between 1971 and 2005, influenced an entire generation of artists: from Rebecca Horn and Martin Kippenberger to Santiago Serra and Jonathan Meese, which are all represented in the collection of the Städel Museum.

Franz Erhard Walther's group of works *Walking Pedestals and Places to Stand* is primarily characterized by the reduced and minimalist solutions it offers. The so-called *Walking Pedestals* present themselves as steel sheets and tracks with unilaterally elevated margins to be found on the ground of the Städel Garden premises; slightly raised square areas, the *Places to Stand*, complement them. The workpieces depend on being paced off so to actually become plinths. Thus, participants may regard themselves as part of the sculpture. In addition, the process of striding establishes a relationship with the environs, as standing and lingering in a place integrates the dimension of time into the work. Striding or standing, visitors are offered unusual perspectives and surprising associations in the art-informed surroundings of the museum and the Städel's outside premises. Walther's *Walking Pedestals and Places to Stand* not only relate to their real environs, but also foster forms of interaction between the visitors. Although body, space, and time are clearly essential elements of classical sculpture, Walther uses these elements to create a completely new conceptual sculptural mode of expression.

The exhibition highlights both the processual and social dimension of Walther's works and their extended "sculptural quality." Understanding the body as part of the artistic design led to a lasting extension of the concept of the work in Walther's art. Franz Erhard Walther not only realized these ideas in his production quite early on but combined them with fundamental thoughts of Minimal Art and Performance Art emerging in the United States at that time.

As part of the new presentation of its collection of sculptures in the Städel Garden, the Städel Museum has presented a number of performative works and installations on the freely accessible premises around the museum building in the series "In the Städel Garden" since 2013. The beginning was made in April 2013 with the lavish production of the performance *Watering Hole* by Adrian Williams, who lives in Frankfurt. It was followed by an exhibition of Adolf Luther's works as another temporary presentation in June 2013. In 2014, the series was continued with Erwin Wurm's *One Minute Sculptures* and Alan B. Brock-Richmond and Bernhard Schreiner's *The Encryption Garden – A Sound Installation in the Städel Garden*.

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PART V OF THE SERIES "IN THE STÄDEL GARDEN"**

**Curator:** Dr. Martin Engler, Head of Contemporary Art Collection, Städel Museum

**Exhibition dates:** 17 September to 23 November 2014

**Press preview:** Tuesday, 16 September, 12:00 pm

**Opening:** Tuesday, 16 September, 7:00 pm, Metzler Hall and Städel Garden

**Information:** [www.staedelmuseum.de](http://www.staedelmuseum.de), [info@staedelmuseum.de](mailto:info@staedelmuseum.de), phone +49(0)69-605098-0, fax +49(0)69-605098-111

**Venue:** Städel Museum, Schaumainkai 63, 60596 Frankfurt am Main

**The Städel Garden is freely accessible during the museum's regular opening hours.**

**Opening hours Städel Museum:** Tue, Wed, Sat, Sun 10:00 am – 6:00 pm, Thu and Fri 10:00 am – 9:00 pm

**Special opening hours Städel Museum:** Fri, 3 October 2014, 10:00 am – 6:00 pm

**Tour of the grounds with Franz Erhard Walther:** Sun, 21 September 2014, 3:00 pm, Städel Garden

**Artist lecture:** Thu, 16 October 2014, 7:00 pm, Metzler Hall, Städel Museum

**General guided tours of the exhibition:** Sundays 11:00 am, Städel Garden

**Special guided tours upon request at:** +49(0)69-605098-200, [info@staedelmuseum.de](mailto:info@staedelmuseum.de).

**Sponsoring:** The "In the Städel Garden" series is being carried out with support from the "Städel Gartengesellschaft". This society is made up of citizens working to facilitate contemporary art actions, installations and performances in the Städel Garden and make them accessible to the public.