

## “...here I stand” by Prof. Ottmar Hörl: A Word of Greeting

“... *here I stand*” is what Johann Gottfried Schadow’s 1821 statue of Luther seems to be calling out to us. Protected from wind and weather with a baldachin by architect Schinkel and placed on a high base of red granite, Luther points at the German Bible with a dramatic gesture. The proud nineteenth-century figure betrays virtually nothing of the scepticism and refutations. After all, at the Diet of Worms, Luther stood his ground against the mighty of his day and age, armed with nothing more than the scriptures and his intellect. The Bible, faith and education have always been the triad of the Reformation. In 2010, the Melanchthon Year and third year of the Luther Decade, this is the special focus of our commemoration.

For several weeks now, the market square of Wittenberg has been empty. Luther and his friend Melanchthon are in the workshop for repairs. The base has been razed. The market square had been in possession of the monuments since 1821. This unique opportunity for (re-)conception is to be used during the Luther Decade to conduct the discussion on Luther’s veneration and commemoration in an artistic, provocative, unusual and aesthetic manner.

With his installation, Hörl picks up on the familiar and well-known Luther statue of the nineteenth century – which continues to shape our image of the Great Reformer to this day, while at the same time introducing a provocative element by placing the focus on the reproduction, the serial, the large edition and unusual colouration. Hörl’s art aims to facilitate communication and involve as many people as possible.

“...*here I stand*” The art project turns this Lutheran confession into a personal question: What is your stance on Luther and the Wittenberg Reformation? Which of the impulses originating during that era are still important to us today? How should we pave the way to the anniversary of the Reformation in 2017 with regard to content? I particularly like the fact that the “Luther messengers” will make their way out into the world following the installation – into homes and offices in Wittenberg and elsewhere, to sites associated with Luther, to Lutheran schools, and to partner churches and Protestants all over the globe who feel a connection with Wittenberg’s Great Reformer as well as its present-day citizens. In eloquent allusion to the global Reformation anniversary in 2017, a world-wide network will become visible.

When contemporary art takes on a richly traditional theme in the public realm, suspenseful dialogues come about as a matter of course. And they also address such critical questions as: Is it permissible to do this with Luther? Is Luther holy? What size, what colours are appropriate?

Discussion of this kind is an essential part of public urban life. With this installation on the market square, Ottmar Hörl extends an invitation to the citizens of Wittenberg and their visitors to participate.

I look forward to the dialogue with art.

Prelate Stephan Dorgerloh  
Deputy of the Council of the Protestant Church of Germany in Wittenberg

(Translation: Judith Rosenthal)