

Olaf Nicolai, *MARX*



Olaf Nicolai, *MARX*, 2021, Detail, 24 h Color / Sound

A 24-Hour-Screening

**22. September 2025, 12 noon to 23. September 2025,
12 noon**

"Nobody knows in spite of everything whether the universe is counting backwards while we count faithfully forward."

Inger Christensen

In 1971, a sculpture designed by Lew Kerbel depicting the face of Karl Marx was inaugurated in Chemnitz, then

Karl-Marx-Stadt. Kerbel was known for his monumental statues, such as the Soviet Memorial in Treptower Park, Berlin. The Marx monument is located in the city center of Chemnitz and is still a landmark of the city.

The film *MARX* (24 h Color / Sound, 2021) portrays the monument in a very specific way: With a single, fixed camera shot, the statue was filmed for 24 hours, starting at 12 noon on September 21. The chosen frame deliberately shows only part of the monumental face, with light reflecting off its abstracted and sharply contoured bronze surface.

The 24-hour close-up transforms the political icon into a landscape, subject to constant change under the surrounding light conditions. The soundtrack reproduces the sounds of this environment without revealing the corresponding events or actors. In addition to the sounds of traffic and passers-by, the chimes of the nearby town hall come to the fore.

The statue was filmed in the 24 hours prior to the autumn equinox, when day and night are the same length; it is now also screened during equinox, in different locations. In each instance, the images travel around the globe and can be seen in different time zones. Each location begins the screening at 12 noon local time. The fact that the narrated or filmed time coincides perfectly with the duration, i.e. the screening time, is emphasized by the chimes of the town hall clock. These stylistic devices

come together to create a kind of time capsule. The structure of the screening creates not only a kind of a “cinematic sundial” - it is also a proposal on forms of cooperation and togetherness, based on sharing time and taking care of it.

With *MARX*, Olaf Nicolai (* 1962 in Halle/Saale) pointedly poses the question of the course of time, its measurement and meaning in both physical and philosophical terms. Nicolai grew up in Karl-Marx-Stadt and is thus biographically connected to the film's leitmotif. The film ends with the quote from the Danish poet Inger Christensen cited above.

MARX

Camera: Volker Sattel, Thilo Schmidt
Sound / Sound editor: Jakob Braitto. Cutting: Olaf Nicolai, Patrik Thomas