

Alexandra Leykauf and Michele Di Menna

20 June – 2 August 2009

The Kunstverein Nürnberg presents two simultaneous solo exhibitions by the artists Alexandra Leykauf and Michele Di Menna. Both artists present putatively theatrical installations comprising collages, films, and sculptures, which draw in turn upon historical references and poetic narratives.

Using photographs, photocopies, and films, Alexandra Leykauf (b. 1976 in Nuremberg, lives in Berlin) creates installations which have the distinct feel of stage-like situations. She has selected works for her exhibition that revolve around the theme of theatre and cinema spaces. For this, the artist has searched out found images of auditoria that have burned down for a variety of reasons. Mostly, these spaces rekindle a sad memory of past glories, however, at the same time, the use of the pictures is like a retracing of these spaces, which are staged first through reproduction, and then again become representative by means of the inherent defamiliarisation within the artwork itself.

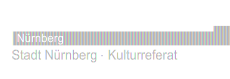
The central element is a 20 sq m photocopy of a photograph of the destroyed Vienna Opera House, where the photographer has taken photographs from the stage out into the auditorium. The artist takes details from this and drapes them over lightly constructed upright boards, the reverse sides of which she uses as a projection surface for her 16mm films. In the films, and also in the mural reliefs made out of papier-mâché, the viewer sees further empty theatre spaces, which no longer exist today.

Her exhibition always concerns itself with issues of perspective – in terms of form and also of content. Thus the theatre spaces are incorporated in model form in the films, or for example, a “Salle de ciné-bal de l'Aubette”, designed by Theo van Doesburg and situated in Strasbourg, is turned inside out and revolves in the film. Nevertheless, they are always devoid of people, and serve as a projection and reflection for the viewer of his or her own viewpoint, as well as that of the exhibition.

By contrast, Michele Di Menna (b. 1980 in Vancouver, Canada, lives in Frankfurt and Berlin) presents a setting made of sculptures, paper costumes, drawings, and collages. Di Menna designs her performances using collages and texts subsequently developed out of dance-like, cinematic, and musical sources, which she develops and plans with great precision. In this way, the artist herself plays an important role as a protagonist, who performs construction as an idea, but also as a form. She incorporates other performers who, according to her instructions and dressed by her, portray her compositional forms and stories. To accompany this, she has devised a concertina folder, reflecting her linguistically poetic, collage-like method of working, and which functions like a programme, which one can take home afterwards and look at again.

The artist gathered material for her exhibition from several trips, and was inspired by the visiting artist's studio in Worpswede. As a result, the viewer witnesses a monument made of bricks, the “Niedersachsenstein” (Lower Saxony Brick), which the architect Bernhard Hoetger originally erected in 1922 on the Weyerberg in Worpswede as a war memorial. The idea of construction, of building something ‘stone for stone’, upon which all architecture is predicated, becomes visible in Michele Di Menna's performance developed for the Kunstverein, as well as in her sculptures and collages. Even if the materials used have been put together in a light, easy, home-made way, they are nonetheless compelling, by virtue of their free and individual composition which contextualizes fundamental questions of construction in a conscious and precise manner.

We should like to thank the following for their support of the exhibition:



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