

SEPTEMBER

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LARISSA FASSLER: *PALACE / PALACE*

Press Release

11.09.2012 - 13.10.2012

Opening: Friday, September 10, 7 pm

We are pleased to announce *Palace/Palace*, Larissa Fassler's third solo exhibition at SEPTEMBER. The point of departure for Fassler's recent sculptural works is an investigation into the demolition of the Palast der Republik and the planned reconstruction of the Berlin Stadtschloss. In her work, the Canadian artist repeatedly addresses the symbiotic relationship between people and the urban areas they inhabit. Fassler investigates the way in which these places affect people psychologically and physically and vice-versa—how perception and an understanding of the environment become manifest in buildings themselves. This is also true for her current installation at September: *Palace/Palace* explores the question of who can lay claim or has a right to historical memories, what should be left standing, what should be demolished or rebuilt, and how this changes the meaning and interpretation of the city again and again. In her earlier works *Alexanderplatz* (2006) and *Kotti* (2008), Fassler sought to use the means of drawing and sculpture to make visible locations that are otherwise overlooked or deliberately neglected. Her recent works based on urban locations and major hubs in Paris, such as *Les Halles* (2011), have adopted a political stance as they address questions of urban renewal, gentrification, class difference, and the struggle over the right to use public city space.

Palace/Palace: One palace stands opposing the other — the Palast der Republik versus the Stadtschloss. Berlin has always been characterized by city building projects that seek to forge an identity for the city. In this vein, then, the Prussian kings, the Nazis, and the East German government, among others, all attempted to shape the city as a refraction of their ideology and vision. Since the Wilhelminian era, it has been a tradition here to erase the legacy of the previous generation in order to create a new concept of history. The city buildings created throughout the various different epochs and forms of government are however left behind: elements of a city that has remained thoroughly heterogeneous to this day. With the exhibition title, Fassler plays on the attempt to homogenize the city's image and to cleanse it of undesired relics: in the English translation of "Palast/Schloss" to "Palace/Palace," the two terms are blurred, the sides become interchangeable and the political and ideological conflicts smoothed. For critics of the rebuilding of the Stadtschloss, however, the planned historicizing structure is a historical forgery, an anti-modern, Disneyfied façade that deliberately omits the 20th century to suggest a historical continuity that has never existed in this form.

The central sculpture of *Palace/Palace* is a large-scale, 12-square-meter model of a façade composed of architectural elements of the Stadtschloss and the Cinderella Castle, the Disneyland trademark. The structure is open on two sides. In the same scale, its interior is lined with the negative form of the Palast der Republik, with the architectural elements resembling casts. The whole interior is lined with bronze foil, creating a shiny empty space. Accompanying this work, Fassler has created a series of three high steel sculptures based on the concrete stairwells that remained on the site after the Palast der Republik's demolition—minimalistic, reduced structures they contrast radically the Schloss sculpture's effect-filled façade architecture.

Fassler's installation probes the borders between architecture, model, and sculpture. At the same time, it is based on a fundamental distinction between historical relic and monument. It counters the ideological goal of the "made" monument with the "remaining" relic, which can be read and interpreted in a variety of complex ways. Her Schloss sculpture is reminiscent of a stage set or a glittery empty package. It stands for an architecture that is built to generate an established meaning and symbolism, which is itself a subjective

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historical interpretation. Fassler combines aspects of packaging and display with a critique of the widespread city marketing that increasingly dominates a city's image and creates an architecture that is as pleasant, tourist-friendly, and easily consumable as possible.

Extensive information on the artists and exhibition program at SEPTEMBER can be found at our website www.september-berlin.com. You're also welcome to contact us by mail at: office@september-berlin.com or telephone at: + 49 30 263 674 05. The gallery is open Wednesday through Saturdays from 11 to 6 pm.