

# SEPTEMBER

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**LARISSA FASSLER: *THIS IS NOWHERE***

**Press Release**

**30.04.2011 - 11.6.2011**

**Opening: Friday, April 29, 7 pm**

We are happy to announce ***THIS IS NOWHERE***, Larissa Fassler's second solo exhibition at SEPTEMBER. Continuing her interest in dysfunctional places and failed master plans, the Canadian artist looks at the symbiotic relationship between people and public space, the ways in which places affect people psychologically and physically, and in turn how the perception, understanding, and use of place is physically manifest in the built environment itself. As in her past works *Kotti* (Berlin, 2008) and *Regent Park / Regent's Street* (London, 2009), Fassler's latest body of work makes visible the use of urban planning to enable the movement of large numbers of individuals in a city while hindering the movement of groups. The locations she has chosen in Paris—*Les Halles*, *Place de l'Europe*, and *Place de la Concorde*—mark a dramatic change in the understanding, planning, and experience of urban life which privileges individuals pursuing their own concerns in a crowd, often resulting in forced tolerance and mutual indifference.

In her new sculptural work, Fassler explores the 1970s redevelopment of *Les Halles*, which is today a complex derelict knot of rail and Métro intersections, traffic feeds, subterranean retail chain stores, tunnels, and passageways that teem with 800,000 users a day. She uses damaged, filthy found cardboard to create the entrances and upper balconies; black gaffer tape covers the deep penetrating escalator holes, while the relentless mechanical rumble of the building's inner workings can be heard emanating from the bowels of *Les Halles*. Fassler has wrapped all this dereliction, negligence, and dysfunctionality in the high gloss of the national flag. *Les Halles* represents a significant development for the artist; in a departure from her past works, she has used a range of materials that reflect her emotional and embodied understanding of place. Interestingly, as they are once again scheduled for demolition, *Les Halles* as they stand today will soon only exist in collective memory.

The sculptural works in the exhibition are augmented by a series of drawings based on the Place de la Concorde and Place de l'Europe. The two works *Place de l'Europe I* and *II* take the famous painting *Pont de l'Europe* (1876) by the Impressionist Gustave Caillebotte as their point of departure, a work that depicts different classes of people side by side before an ironwork symbol of modernity. Today, the location—which was also painted by Jean Beraud, Monet, and famously photographed by Henri Cartier Bresson—is a wasteland with a prestigious name dominated by a traffic circle, parked cars, passing buses, and exhaust-filled air. On every sign, pole, and parking meter, radical right and radical left propaganda stickers—anti-abortion, pro-national identity ("A question of blood"), anti-racial mixing, "the Nationalists are back," NPA, anti-Israel, pro-revolution, pro-solidarity, "Project Apache—young Parisian and French," "No parties/No border," are mixed with personal ads—a cleaning lady looking for work, offers of Chinese massage, math lessons, painters, and someone looking for a lost person named "Benoit."

In her drawings titled *Place de la Concorde*, Fassler, over a period of weeks, traced the various different routes people use to move across the plaza. She recorded the path a group of Roma kids took as they ran from a tourist, a teenage girl as she attempted to evade police and was eventually caught, the movements of squeegee kids, jaywalkers, and a man selling candles, places where the homeless sleep and where people pee, the weather, the ethnicity of the crowd—along with stickers, posters, ads, newspaper headlines of the week, and finally the immense shadows of military planes as they flew over the plaza on Bastille Day, the 14<sup>th</sup> of July.

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