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Lena Henke
THEMOVE
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In THEMOVE, Lena Henke turns outside in and inside out. Urban space merges with the female body and New York street signs lead the way through the artist's inner life. The gallery space becomes a psycho-geographic projection, scaling the personal into a cityscape. In a life-size self-portrait, Henke poses like a pin-up, holding a photo of New York's signature phallic high-rise – the Freedom Tower – in front of her crotch. The motif of the pin-up recurs in the large bronze gate that heralds the visitor's path through the exhibition, it's curvy green and strawberry contours evoking the figures of one of Tomi Ungerer's adult cartoons. OURPORCELAINTHOUGHTS. INNERCIRCLE meets STEELPATTERN.

Henke displays vulnerability and intimacy on a monumental scale. Combining deeply personal experiences with forms abstracted from the history of art and architecture, she radically appropriates the past to build narratives that empower rather than suppress. Henke intersects iconic New York architecture with French cartoons, the legacy of Feminist body artists like Hannah Wilke with souvenir T-shirts, New York's Depression-era mafia wives with psychoanalysis. Rather than fetishizing these 'idols' and heroines, they are materials used by Henke to craft her own story. *It is about adaptations, appropriations, borrowing, recycling, dissimulating, re-shaping, referencing, lightly or / and with a crowbar, all to form your own history, something (...) of your own, the text of your biography,* writes Jutta Koether. NOTMYLIONS crossed with NOTMYCIRCUS. MYIRONFEELINGS clash with YOURCLAYBODY.

Henke uses her own body and biography as both subject and material to critically rethink how masculinity embeds a lattice of subjugation into the built world. With exhibitions and projects like *Geburt & Familie* (White Flag Projects, St. Louis, 2013), *Yes, I'm pregnant* (Kunststiftung NRW / Skulpturenmuseum Glaskasten Marl, 2014) and *An Idea of Late German Sculpture; To the People of New York* (Kunsthalle Zürich, 2018) Henke has created her own dense cosmos of autobiographical and art historical references that imbricate sculpture, intimacy and feminism. In her cosmos, multilayered narrations become distorted, details are projected into distant horizons, micro and macro perspectives interlace, melt into each other, mingle and alloy. THEMOVE continues to explore how the grammar of dominant, male narratives of art can be denaturalized by writing the artist's self into the picture. We cannot gaze upon the phallic Freedom Tower in her crotch without meeting the eyes of the artist with her phone camera. Surrealist Leonora Carrington wrote: *The task of the right eye is to peer into the telescope, while the left eye peers into the microscope.*

– Stephanie Seidel