

Cahiers de doléances II

Ingo Gerken

April 29 – July 31, 2021

mezzaterra11 - flat gallery is pleased to announce a solo exhibition of Berlin-based artist Ingo Gerken (b.1971, Lippetal, Germany) for *Cahiers de doléances II*. Gerken questions the way art survives in a capitalist society and the complex notion of the artwork's autonomy. His work appears to be a comment on the media patterns of art, dissolving their structures and contents. His distinctive artistic interventions occur in art considering its surroundings and contexts—public spaces and their rules, aesthetics and politics, reference and relevance—by translating into interdisciplinary outcomes such as site-specific installations, photographs or objects for situational and sculptural gestures.

For *Cahiers de doléances II*, Gerken presents a documentation image, modified for this exhibition, of the "Public Transport" project realized at the artist-in-residence program of the Goethe-Institut in Bangalore, India in 2018. An Indian man is walking around busy market streets of Bangalore with a reflective geometric object up on his head. People are passing by or standing with purpose or necessity, and the absurdity of what the man is carrying can barely attract them, whereas the alien object—uncategorized, of no value or materiality—is, seemingly, swimming idly above the hectic quotidian life. The mathematical form, deprived of the artist's authorship and subjectivity, is a symbol of symmetry and perfection; immateriality and universal language; and, simultaneously, a spiritual essence like a mandala. Instead of focusing on the dynamics of cultural differences and translation of the exotic landscape, Gerken participated in the local commercial environment quietly and developed a situation in which the neutral object, reflecting the people and the city, could become utterly autonomous by anonymity of a hired local carrier rather than making it as an artist's performance, which would have drawn attention, most likely, to the performer, not to the object per se.

During the show, Gerken's situational work will enable us to experience parallel realities: an Indian scenery through the illusory space at Mezzaterra street in Italy. The partial reflection of an Italian ancient merchants' street mirrored on the corner of the object, like a fading afterimage, is intermingled with a present-day Indian one as hegemony shifts throughout the time.

Ingo Gerken studied Experimental Painting and Fine Arts at Muthesius Art Academy in Kiel, Germany and Environmental Art at Glasgow School of Art, Scotland, UK. He had numerous exhibitions nationally and internationally, along with several grant awards such as Stiftung Kunstfonds, Kunststiftung NRW, Stiftung Rheinland-Pfalz für Kultur, as well as the Fine Art Grant from the State of Berlin and the Neukölln Art Prize. He has participated in international artist residency programs in India, Russia, France, UK, and Italy. Gerken works as assistant and guest lecturer for several art schools and universities in Germany, more recently for the Department of Architecture & Urban Planning at the University of Kassel.

Cahiers de doléances is a parallel platform of our existing exhibitions format to focus on creative voices such as manifestations, opinions, protests or criticism, in the society where we are interwoven.

Originally the *Cahiers de doléances* were books of complaints/grievances, collected from the Estates General of France in early 1789, the year of French Revolution, ordered by Louis XVI as a preparatory measure to understand the problems of the people.

mezzaterra11 - flat gallery is a conceptual project space that opens up new interpretations on documentation images of contemporary artworks, by creating meta-linguistic translation as a white cube is compressed to be flat. International artists are invited to present their work with one image that is selected, adapted, and ultimately, printed for the space as a format of a solo exhibition.

Curated by MinJi Kim, Alessandro Dal Pont

mezzaterra11 – flat gallery

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