

Radical interventions in the exhibition-galleries of Kunsthalle Bern were manifest in recent exhibition projects with Corey McCorkle (2005), Rita McBride/ Koenraad Dedobbeleer (2008) and Gerwald Rockenschaub (2008). For his first solo-show in Switzerland, American artist Oscar Tuazon ties in with this tradition and will create a new, site-specific installation contaminating the exhibition-spaces of Kunsthalle Bern.

According to the artist it is impossible to make architecture in an exhibition space because all of the problems that architecture needs to solve have already been solved: there's already a roof overhead; a heating system; walls and a floor. But what if an artwork creates new problems for the building? What if the existing structure has to adapt, re-engineer itself, in order to accommodate the work? The premise of his most recent work considers architecture as a form of appropriation: buildings do not primarily represent a form of design or a thought-out concept, rather, Tuazon conceives of them as manifestations of a way of life, influencing the surroundings. At Kunsthalle Bern the artist will search the limits of the building by constructing another structure inside. Searching to describe his undertaking Tuazon talks about "one structure laid over another, one structure growing inside another, a plan for a renovation laid over an existing building, a redevelopment, two structures fucking one another."

Being an archetypal exhibition space, Kunsthalle Bern's big empty halls are somehow still modelled after domestic space, as a kind of home enlarged and magnified (with a grand foyer, a kitchen, a dining room, a master bedroom, a children's bedroom, a library and a guest room downstairs). Its walls are enlarged and expanded to hold paintings. It is a structure designed to house artworks—but a structure is never designed to accommodate another structure. Tuazon's structure will put holes in the walls—all walls that have a carrying function. The piece attacks the building—this old bourgeois idea of art at home, the idea of a space for art. The idea that there could be or can be ever any space for art. And of course even despite all the effort, it fails. It fails to do anything permanent, to disrupt the single, impossible, eternal condition of an exhibition space: that it remains empty. Somehow the grand effort emphasizes that failure. The piece depends on the building; those holes in the walls will become part of the structural system that supports the new structure. So the struggle for a kind of autonomy is futile anyway, or it's a false aim.

It appears that Tuazon is inspired by the contradictions, which originate in different uses of space, by strategies of coping with limited means or remote places, by parasitic tactics with regard to different economic systems. He is interested in the resistance and the challenges, which an independent human survivor-instinct can mount against its environment. Tuazon envisions potential dwellings according to a DIY-aesthetics. To him, these dwellings represent maximal freedom, since

they can be erected and inhabited independently of organizations and civilizations. His models of autonomy often refer to the most basic strategies and means of survival, such as shelter, food and camouflage. These explorations of alternative and individual ways of life are not meant to be a commentary on the current economic crisis, but they do evoke other currently popular models of remembrance and retrospective reflection, which strive for a simplification of the social order.

Oscar Tuazon also works as a writer, publisher and curator, and he could be called one of the most radical sculptors of his time. Tuazon's artistic practice constitutes a kind of contemporary sculptural *bricolage*, which is reminiscent of Arte Povera because of its inventive use of natural and industrial materials. In today's 'art-system', which is developed and institutionalized to a larger degree than ever before, such 'underground'-activities are an impetus to reflect on artistic possibilities that retain a certain independence. This brand of autonomous occupation entails working without a fixed 'plan', adapting to local circumstances and being ready to react very quickly to changes.

During his exhibition at Kunsthalle Bern, the first comprehensive and richly illustrated catalogue on Tuazon's work in the last few years will be published. The catalogue is the result of a cooperation of Kunsthalle Bern with Do.Pe Press, Paraguay Press, both Paris; the Centre international d'art et du paysage de Vassivière and Parc Saint Léger – Centre d'art contemporain du Pougues-les-Eaux.

Oscar Tuazon, born 1978 in Seattle, Washington, USA, lives and works in Paris, France since 2007.

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