

A stack of light green lacquered stelae, industrially chromed metal elements and blanket insulators folded into firm green plastic film. Seen superficially, the objects differ very little from the things and materials one would expect to find at a construction site, for example reinforcing bars, lattices and plastic tubs. The passersby who walk along the numerous fenced-in construction sites in the town centre of Düsseldorf would hardly pay any special attention to them. Such construction site-related things lie around on construction sites where they serve construction site-specific purposes, the meaning of which one does not need to concern oneself with just as long as the building project is brought to a successful conclusion: the building stands, the subway runs, the lighting system comes into operation.

But attention of a different kind is paid to them when you come across a quasi identical stack of light green lacquered stelae, industrially chromed metal elements and blanket insulators folded into firm green plastic film arranged in the exhibition space of the Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, where they – without any difficulty – can be identified as objects that are very probably intended as art. It may be a truism, but the fact remains that things do have ‘their’ place. And also that this place very decisively determines what significance we attribute to the objects found there. However: it is advisable that whoever produces artistic things do so in places designated for this purpose. And those who want to see art greatly improve their chances in doing so by seeking out the places and venues of art. All the same, it is quite vexing that the stack of light green lacquered stelae, industrially chromed metal elements and blanket insulators folded into firm green plastic film do not look any different in the art space than they do on the construction site. And that the questions about what these things are, what they actually do and why arise here as well as there.

Stated very generally, Rosa Sijben (born 1988) occupies herself in her artistic work with things and their places. In the process, the Dutch artist integrates sculptural, installative and performative working methods into a practice that – usually in the form of situation-related choreographies – measures out the spaces of the social, economic and aesthetic, teaching how to recast them in their respective properties. Sijben very deliberately exposes herself to the question concerning the essence of art, examining whether and how materials are transformed into art and whether and how artistic ideas can be materialised in the form of works or objects of art.

Rosa Sijben’s interest in these very fundamental questions – so fundamental that they are rarely posed – encounters a time when both the material of art and art as material has perhaps become all too disposable. It is not only that art’s settling on specific techniques, media and genres is no longer adequate as regards its current practice – the objects and occurrences of art themselves seem in the meanwhile to be little more than mere carriers of symbolic and cultural attributions from which they

draw their meaning or value. In short, art has become a kind of currency.

Only a part of Rosa Sijben's exhibition *THINGS YOU KNOW* at the Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen actually takes place in the Kunstverein's exhibition spaces on Grabbeplatz. For the two-part installation "Baustelle" [Construction Site] she moves for example to an exterior location in one of the many construction sites in the town centre of Düsseldorf while several members of the Kunstverein's staff in addition to construction workers partook directly as protagonists in the realisation of the exhibition. But as much as the artist's attention seems to be focussed on the production of objects and sculptural forms, she integrates them into various presentational sequences and plotlines, over the course of which the specific quality and function of these objects and forms, their employment and availability in addition to the attributions that consequently come into play are regularly at issue again.

*THINGS YOU KNOW* is the artist's first institutional exhibition in Germany and it was only possible to realise it thanks to the unhesitating support of the city of Düsseldorf and Rheinbahn AG, to the active support of Wall AG as well as the understanding and obliging cooperation of Wayss & Freytag Ingenieurbau AG. Rosa Sijben is a graduate of the Gerrit Rietveld Academie and lives and works since January 2014 as a grant holder from the city of Mönchengladbach in Mönchengladbach.

Her project in the Kunstverein continues a series of solo exhibitions that was begun with Josephine Pryde's show *Miss Austen Enjoys Photography* and presents individual artistic working methods as a specific examination of the tension field between post-mediality and post-conceptuality.

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