

For his first major solo show in London in many years, Thomas Hirschhorn presents a new work entitled *In-Between* at the South London Gallery. Based on and highlighting the quote; “Destruction is difficult. It is as difficult as creation.” by Italian Marxist theorist and politician, Antonio Gramsci, a new artwork made for the SLG’s main space continues the artist’s exploration in recent works, of the aesthetic of ruins. In his explanation of *In-Between*, provided in full at the end of this press release, he states: "The aesthetic of *In-Between* borrows from pictures of destruction- destruction by violence, by war, by accident, by nature, by structural failures, by corruption, by fatality. I want to establish a body of work which encompasses Antonio Gramsci's quote. Without being anecdotic or literal, I can testify that to set-up a work in an exhibition space which gives form to destruction is indeed as difficult as anything else. With *In-Between* I want to create a new form, I want to propose an experience, an art-experience in the range of 'successes', failures and in-betweens."

Having emerged as an artist in the 1990s, Thomas Hirschhorn is internationally regarded as being one of the most important artists of his generation. Using low-grade materials - cardboard, plastic sheeting, packing tape, aluminium foil - variously combined with newspaper and magazine cuttings, mannequins, furniture and a wide range of other miscellany, together with references to radical theorists such as Gilles Deleuze and George Bataille, he has established an expansive but distinctive visual language with which he creates extraordinary, provocative artworks imbued with political content. Over the past twenty years Hirschhorn has exhibited in museums and galleries worldwide, and equally importantly in more openly public locations, from city streets to housing estates. For example, his *Gramsci Monument*, a major public artwork installed during summer 2013 with the help of residents at Forest Houses, a New York City Housing Authority development in the Bronx, New York, culminated in the publication of a substantial book documenting the project produced by Dia Art Foundation.

At the South London Gallery, *In-Between* contributes to a body of work made over the past three years informed by a process of researching, collecting and analysing the formal composition of ruinous and bomb-damaged locations all over the world. As an expression of the aesthetic of destruction, ruin and disaster, it further develops ideas explored in the artworks *Concordia*, 2012, shown in New York, *Break-Through*, 2013, presented in Naples, *Abschlag*, 2014, in Saint-Petersburg, and *Höhere Gewalt*, 2014, exhibited in Berlin. Reflecting on the Gramsci quote at the centrepiece of *In-Between*, Hirschhorn said; “I see this as the in-between-status of a journey or trajectory. To me, the quote is not about separating or opposing ‘creation’ and ‘destruction’, but about the difficulty of positioning oneself in the midst of the moving world. The challenge of confronting the world’s reality stands between ‘creation’ and ‘destruction’. ‘*In Between*’ is the affirmation of precarious dimension, the dimension of the non-guaranteed.”

*"In-Between"* is the title of my new work at the South London Gallery. *"In-Between"* wants to give form to a kind of 'in-between'-state, neither unconscious nor dreamy, a non-determined state, such as my indetermination when I read for the first time the quote of Antonio Gramsci: "Destruction is difficult. It is as difficult as creation". This affirmation – in its logic, its clearness and its incommensurability – is pointing to a dynamic, a movement. *"In-Between"* is the vibration, the uncertainty which appear when separation between two terms that are apart, two objects of thinking, two geographical places or two moments in time don't make sense. 'Somewhere in between' means a 'somewhere' not defined, but also a 'somewhere or something' to work on, continue, develop - to become.

"Destruction is difficult. It is as difficult as creation", I see this as the in-between-status of a journey or trajectory. To me, the quote is not about separating or opposing 'creation' and 'destruction', but about the difficulty of positioning oneself in the midst of the moving world. The challenge of confronting the world's reality stands between 'creation' and 'destruction'. *"In-Between"* is the affirmation of a precarious dimension, the dimension of the non-guaranteed. But nevertheless, Antonio Gramsci's quote contains the non-corruptible and non-negotiable will to survive – and this is where 'precariousness' stands. Antonio Gramsci expresses the contradictions of our today's world and the difficulty to reach its reality. I love this quote for its simplicity and complexity.

*"In-Between"* is an artistic assertion. The assertion is – following Gramsci's quote –: To give a form to destruction is difficult, to give a form to ruin is the problem and to give a form to disaster is the aesthetical challenge. Creating destruction is difficult – to me as artist – because it means: Removing things, destroying things, demolishing things start in the mind, as an 'idea', as the work's guideline, as the artistic logic. It is to understand – of course – not literarily, but as an artistic gesture which allows changing everything.

Nothing is added and nothing is supplemented means, that everything to see, to touch, everything given to the visitor is something coming from an 'idea' of disaster and destruction. Again 'nothing added' is my guideline to give form to this work, not literally or anecdotally working without extra material or without adding intellectual or physical implication and effort. Make the hidden connections visible is the gift or the chance for something to come out and reveal itself within destruction. For example, destruction makes unseen structures behind the façade visible. Ruins show what the materials of the making really are. Ruins – in their state of Ruins – want to tell us something. Ruins stand for something. A Ruin stands for a structural, an economical, a cultural, a political or a human failure.

The aim of *"In-Between"* is to create a work which achieves Form by questioning: "Why do I think what I think?", "Why do I do what I do?", "Why do I use the instrument which I use?" and "Why do I give the form I give?" This is how I can create Form, something essential to me. I want to create the conditions for provoking the essential questions: "Where is my position? What do I want?" This is the challenge of Form. My ambition is that *"In-Between"* fulfill a dynamic questioning – addressing myself and the visitor in the gallery. I also want – in and with my work – to avoid related issues around, or 'about' such as: 'Why?', 'Where?', "When?" or 'How was it done?' which are matter of information, comments, facts and opinions. I want *"In-Between"* to be the question as such, the question itself, the form.

To create destruction is an aesthetical challenge. To make it - precarious and floating but dense and charged is the challenge. To do a work beyond 'the spectacular' - and I am not afraid of this notion, because I know, I have to pay the price for my aesthetic. But the work must by its aesthetic, give credit to the affirmation that only what touches the surface has a chance to reach profoundness. To touch the surface is the impact 'In-Between' wants to create and extend under the surface.

The aesthetic of *"In-Between"* borrows from known pictures of destruction – destruction by violence, by war, by accident, by nature, by structural-failures, by corruption, by fatality. I have been working since two years with this aesthetics: *"Concordia, Concordia"*, 2012, *"Break-Through"*, 2013, *"Abschlag"* and *"Höhere Gewalt"*, 2014. I want to establish a body of work which encompasses Antonio Gramsci's quote. Without being anecdotic or literal I can testify, that to set-up a work in an exhibition-space which gives form to destruction is indeed as difficult as anything else.

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