

Lena Henke has developed a diverse body of sculptural works, often arranged in comprehensive spatial installations. Henke's work references urban planning, Land Art, human relationships, sexuality and fetishism, consistently infiltrating the patriarchal structure of art history with a very smart and humorous tone. Her formal language and use of materials often alludes to Minimal Art combined vividly with Surrealist imagery.

For her first solo-show in Switzerland the artist has created a completely new body of work inspired by research into two separate systems of architecture and utility. The first, a catalogue of utopic outdoor sites since the 16th century—some of which still exist, others forgotten or never realized. The second, an extensive look into New York's water shed system and the flow of water from the Catskills to the five boroughs. Henke has crafted her vision of their combination and reproduced New York's famous skyline symbol, the water tank as well as various smaller ceramic sculptures.

The research into these systems was conducted during vast field trips across Europe and the US. Henke and curator Anna Goetz followed the tracks of artists pursuing radical approaches to garden and landscape planning far off from urban structures as reference.

Water is the central element of the show, changing the interior and exterior architecture of SALTS' exhibition space into a comprehensive immersive sculpture. An actual-size wooden water tank sits on top of a massive plinth-like cube between urban courtyard and wild garden. With a simple, but consequent spatial intervention Henke tilted the inside of the space as well as the water tank at an angle of four-degrees. The sloped floor and the tilted back wall force the water to flow through the space, puddling at the low points until a threshold is reached and the water can return outside. Formally, Henke has consciously altered the inside space to be in direct contrast with the lush garden. The result is an extremely artificial aesthetic where white ceiling, walls and floor seemingly merge into the mist.

The water used in the show is a direct reference to the historic water supply system of the Basel (which manifests throughout the city with majestic fountains). Henke connected the water tank to the nearby river Birs. The water is lead from the river up through the garden, into the water tank and from there, downwards into the exhibition space. Inside, colourful ceramic lily pads are loosely arranged on the wet floor and walls. The mulberry glazed ceramic object is a miniature of Pier Francesco Orsini, *Leaning House*, 1552. Although it may not be clear at first, Henke's *Mulberry House after Orsini* is the only thing in the show that stands straight.

Orsini's sculptural garden projects didn't use urban architecture as reference. In Henke's constructed

system, space is just as confusing. The monumental and the miniature are mixed up. Henke's *Mulberry House after Orsini* seems to be the focal point for this confusion. Each *LilyPad after Roberto Burle Marx* are enormous when compared with the miniaturized *Leaning House*. In turn, the perception of space changes from small to large when the *Mulberry House after Orsini* is in view. SALTS' outside venue is a small exhibition space but a large plinth from the New York water tower.

Lena Henke (born 1982 in Warburg (GER)) lives and works in New York City and Frankfurt am Main. Henke has studied at the Städelschule under Professor Michael Krebber (2004-2010).

She has exhibited internationally, recent projects include solo exhibitions at Real Fine Arts, New York 2016, two-person collaborative exhibitions at Vilma Gold, London (2015) and Off Vendome, New York (2015), as well as solo exhibitions at Skulpturenmuseum Glaskasten, Marl (2014); White Flag Projects, St. Louis (2014); and Real Fine Arts, New York (2012). Recent group exhibitions include *Surround Audience*: 2015 New Museum Triennial, New Museum, New York (2015); *The Problem Today Is not the Other but the Self*, Ludlow 38, Goethe Institute, New York (2015); and... *Revelry*, Kunsthalle Bern (2014). In 2013 Henke co-founded M/L Art Space, a collaborative curatorial project that usually resides in the streets and semi-public spaces of New York.

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