

Un soir, j'ai assis la beauté sur mes genoux. And I found her bitter and I hurt her is a joint exhibition by the long-time collaborators Rosemarie Trockel and Thea Djordjadze. It is the first time that the two installations from 2007 and 2008 are on view in Berlin. The works have an allegorical nature that explores a number of themes pertinent to contemporary art. Issues around the boundaries of media, and the artwork as a fixed concept are called into question, as well as the exhibition space as a representational frame.

Thea Djordjadze was taught by Trockel during her years at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf. Since then, the two artists have maintained a close artistic relationship, completing many projects and exhibitions together. In their respective practices, they seek to address concerns about the process of artistic creation, and strive to challenge its limitations, traditions, and preconceptions. The title of the current exhibition is taken from the poem, *A Season in Hell* by the nineteenth century poet, Arthur Rimbaud. Like his text, the exhibition aims to subvert the audience's expectations of art and to reconfigure notions of beauty or aesthetic pleasure that are often deemed to be inherent to the genre.

The first exhibition space is painted black, with only a few lights focused on the large-scale installation *A Ship So Big, A Bridge Cringes* (2007). The composition consists of canvases that are mounted back to back and placed in a slightly raised tank of water so that they appear to be floating. This results in an expansive sculpture that can be viewed from all sides. A length of white string runs across the four canvases, connecting them to each other. The water reflects the dark, virtually monochrome canvases and reinforces the impression that they are extending out into the room. The surfaces are adorned with wool and small hand-crafted objects made from clay and wood. They refer to domestic space or arts and craft traditions, demonstrating the artists' preference for incorporating found objects and textiles into their works. As a whole, the installation shifts between the expansive nature of the reflections and the confined narrowness of the room with its light-absorbing black walls. The artists have transformed a painting into an installation, creating a heightened, otherworldly atmosphere that is augmented by the unusual minimal lighting and monumental proportions of the work.

A small wall demarcates a second room, also painted black, in which the viewer encounters *Lob der Langeweile* (2008). The installation is comprised of a number of white neons and a cord system, made from a single line, that is mounted on the walls. The composition can be understood as a drawing that explores the spatial dimensions of the room.

Since emerging in the cutting-edge art scene in 1980s Cologne, Rosemarie Trockel has long been

considered one of the most versatile and pioneering female artists in contemporary art.

Characteristic of Trockel's practice is her cyclical approach to themes and motifs that she repeats across various media, formats and combinations. Gender issues, the hierarchy between craft and fine art and the nature of artistic production feature heavily in her oeuvre, which includes collages, knitted works, sculptures, photography, installations and film. Her practice often investigates social roles, gender-specific behaviour and cultural codes. Trockel combines these concerns with discourses from philosophy, theology, and the natural sciences.

Thea Djordjadze creates sculptures and installations that are always concerned with the dimensions of space and time. The materials she uses range from the mundane to the elegant, from rigid timber and steel structures to amorphous plaster, textiles and foam parts. Djordjadze frequently juxtaposes objects that reveal traces and impressions of the human body with industrially made materials. These arrangements are created in response to an exhibition space and are typified by an incomplete and fragmentary character that oscillates between open spatial designs and dense performative gestures. Djordjadze addresses themes that range from architecture and literature, to motifs from popular culture and the natural sciences. Her work seeks to emphasize the contrasts between mental and physical interior spaces, between intimacy and public presence.

Rosemarie Trockel (*1952, Schwerte) lives and works in Cologne and Berlin. She has held solo exhibitions at many institutions, including Pinacoteca Giovanni and Marella Agnelli, Turin (2016), David Roberts Art Foundation, London (2016); Kunsthaus Bregenz (2015); Aspen Art Museum (2014); Serpentine Gallery, London (2013); New Museum, New York (2012); Kunstmuseum Bonn (2011); Kunsthaus Zürich (2011) and Museum Ludwig, Cologne (2004). Recent group exhibitions include Wiels, Brussels (2017), Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna (2017); Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; ICA Boston and National Museum of Women in the Arts (all 2016).

Thea Djordjadze, (*1971, Tbilisi) lives and works in Berlin. Her show *Jumping out of an age we found uninhabitable* is currently on view at the Triennale di Milano. Previously, her work has been shown in numerous solo exhibitions, including the Vienna Secession: MoMA PS1 (both 2016); South London Gallery (2015); MIT Cambridge (2014); the Aspen Art Museum (2013); Malmö Konsthall (2012); The Common Guild Glasgow (2011); Kunsthalle Basel (2009) and Kunstverein Nürnberg (2008). Major group exhibitions include the 56th Venice Biennale (2015); dOCUMENTA 13, Kassel (2012) and BB5 – 5th Berlin Biennale (2008).

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