

Krobath

Eschenbachgasse 9
A-1010 Wien | Vienna
T +43-1-585 74 70
F +43-1-585 74 72
office@galeriekrobath.at
www.galeriekrobath.at

curated by_ vienna 2012

art or life – aesthetics and biopolitics
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Opening Hours: Tue. – Fri. 1 – 6 p.m., Sat. 11 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Karel Císař
Dominik Lang

The Lovers

When encountering the work of the young Czech artist Dominik Lang, it might well seem that its main goal is an intervention in the gallery space and, figuratively, into the temporality of the history of art. However, the real focus of Lang's attention is an inquiry of the distribution of visibility. His works either intervene in the architecture of the gallery, wherein he installs or constructs new elements of structure, or else they present a strategic interpretation of the history of art. This is so, for instance, in the numerous cases when he as an artist includes in his exhibitions either a reconstruction or the originals of other artists' works. His purpose in doing so is not merely to reveal the hidden assumptions of the administration of exhibits (like the proponents of institutional critique do), or else to examine the possibility of bringing the unfinished past into the present (as attempted by the so-called archival turn). His primary intent is to create a certain context for the attention of the viewers, and to demonstrate to them the spatial, historical and institutional conditioning of all that they can actually see.

Lang's most explicit achievement in this direction is probably the installation "Sleeping City", commissioned for the Pavilion of the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic at the 54th Venice Biennale (2011). Here, Lang offered a radical interpretation of the late modernist sculptures of his own father, Jiří Lang (1927–1996). The artist's primary goal was not a simple presentation of the figurative plastic works, tinged by abstraction, which Jiří Lang created in the Communist 1950s, nor did he intend a reconstruction of the museum architecture where the works could have been exhibited in their own day. Rather, this particular installation incited the viewers to ask themselves what conditions guarantee the visibility of art, which are the causes of its falling into oblivion, and by extension, what will happen with the highly, unavoidably visible art of today in fifty years' time.

In *The Sleeping City*, Lang's focus – based on a large collection of his father's sculptures – was the afterlife of art; in *The Lovers*, his latest project, he employs several variants of the motif of loving couples for the purpose of inquiring into the representation of bare life. While letting the viewers observe the naked bodies and the uncovered faces of sculptures resigned to a loss of their individuality and melting in an embrace or a kiss, he simultaneously lets the viewers be observed by means of two arched panels. The architectonic ordering, far from a mere basis for the presentation of the sculptures, also organizes the space of the gallery. Even as we believe that the folds of the wooden barriers provide a private space for observing intimate scenes, we can be surprised by a newcomer at any moment. The bare life that is being exhibited here is a life not only of the sculptures but also of ourselves.

Text: Karel Císař

Biography

1980 born in Prague, Czech Republic, lives and works in Prague.

Solo Exhibitions (Selection): 2012 hunt kastner, Prag 2011 "Sleeping City", Czechoslovak Pavilion, 54th la Biennale di Venezia, Venice, IT, Krobath Berlin, 2009 Dominik Lang: Storage - Karlin Studios, Prag, Dominik Lang - Moravska Galerie / Moravian Gallery, Brno, 2007 THINGS FOR VIEWING AND WALKING AROUND - Impex, Budapest, 2005 Dominik Lang: Vau! - Galerie Jelení - Center for Contemporary Art, Prag

Group Exhibitions (Selection): 2012 La Triennale, Intense Proximité, Triennale, Palais de Tokyo, Paris 2011 Auxiliary Constructions – behelfskonstruktionen – Kunsthaus Dresden Les amis de mes amis sont mes amis, hommage à Ján Mančuška - Galerie Jocelyn Wolff, Paris, The Art of Urban Intervention - Emil Filla Gallery / Galerie Emila Filly, Ústí nad Labem 2009 Prague Biennale 4 - Prague Biennale, Prag, Azioni molto semplici senza uno scopo preciso - Artra, Mailand, Memories of the Future - Václav Spála Gallery, Prag, 2008 MOVE ON - Futura, Prag, VÝSTAVA HUMHALA - Galerie Jelení - Center for Contemporary Art, Prag, Inaugural exhibition: WELCOME TO CAPITALISM! - DOX - Centre for contemporary art, Prag, BEWOHNTE ORTE / OBYDLENÁ MÍSTA • Illusionen über die Stadt und das Land - Kunstverein Springhornhof, Neuenkirchen, Love at first Site - Futura, Prag, MANUAL CC. Instructions for beginners and advanced players. - CSW Centrum Sztuki Współczesnej / Centre for Contemporary Art Ujazdowski Castle, Warschau, 2007 Prague Biennale 3 - Prague Biennale, Prag, (in)visible things - Trafo House of Contemporary Art, Budapest 2006 Jindrich Chaloupeck award 2006 - The Brno House of Arts - Central Building, Brno M'ARTIAN FIELDS. 1st International Youth Project - M'Arts Gallery, Moskau.