

CONCRETE ARGUMENTS

Sanna Helena Berger

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With materials dense but transparent, heavy but handheld, cheap but exclusive, Artist Sanna Helena Berger formulates CONCRETE ARGUMENTS during but off-schedule and in contrast to Gallery Weekend. Berger's installation seeks not to be clandestine or ambiguous but direct and straight-forward. Architectural structures with critical agencies reference rigid systems within the arts. A literal critique of a system which attempts obscurity to the point of banality. A glass not in the hand but in the shelf.

Sanna Helena Berger is born in Sweden, lives and works in Berlin and works with site and situation specific installations with critical agency and auto-biographic transparency. Her auto-didactic narrative exists as both commentary and reflection of the situation in which her work is experienced. A reflexive discipline which perspectives the established tastes and standardised systems of the art world. Through her minimal aesthetic, via her maximalist auto-biographical narrative, Berger's vernacular seeks to demystify her practice and production of art by sharing her personal circumstances of both coming to be 'in' and considering the problematics of the 'outside' within the arts.

Berger has exhibited solo shows with Shahin Zarinbal, Berlin, Cordova, Vienna and Barcelona, Diorama, Oslo, Sorbus, Helsinki, Spazio ORR, Brescia, PS120, Berlin, Super, Art week Brussels, Jupiter Woods, London and others. And has taken part in duo or group shows at Skånes Konstförening, Malmö, Waf Galerie, Vienna, Kunsthalle Bremerhaven, Cittipunkt, Berlin, Kunstverein Kärnten, Modern Museum, Stockholm, Cell Project Space, London, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Berlin, Shanaynay, Paris, Le Bourgeois / 3236rls, London, Sculpture Garden Biennale, Geneva and more.

Excerpts from the exhibition text by Berger. Full exhibition text available upon request

"When translating the German 'Konkrete Argumente' you find yourself with the English 'Concrete Arguments' but when translating the English Concrete Arguments back into German you can find yourself with a Beton Gründe. A heavy foundation laid with matter which hardens and cements within it, reasons and motives, rationale and *basis*. These greifbare, sachliche and konkrete argumente become strategies for concrete objects with concrete arguments.

To put your finger on that which is sachlich and greifbar, matter-of-fact and tangible is to put your hand in the fire of the faux pas of fine arts. Because the privileged terrain laid with decorum of high culture rarely presents itself in such a clear form. The verbal and material economy of symbolism is condensed with double meanings and shibboleths which opens up for misinterpretations, displacements and alienation. But one can be equally articulate without rendering one's procedure invisible and instead make matter material."

“A concrete argument should not grow in the mouth.

It should do exactly what it says on the tin.

It can be jubilant and poetic but it is proper, and sits steadily in the institution of consciousness rather than relying entirely on the powers of interpretation.

Because critique is a messy subject, sticky and self-serving at times, memetic and little by little, in danger of exhausting its capacity to transform itself as a malleable subject and instead remains on the fringes of the form it discusses, hanging on barely by the tips of clammy fingers, as a kind of ageing stalactite, stagnating, stiff..

Because we are all in one way or another slightly exhausted by critique. The Zeitgeist of critique as an artform, seems an echo of an era rather than presently presiding. The ghost of Andrea Fraser is shared as style inspo and representational expert body, but mute mouth rather than as an acute or urgent actor with relevant agency.

Not-already-established thus non-giant artists, whose institutional critique is not housed within collections of the institutions they once critiqued, with critical practices which resist the effects of the exclusive mechanisms of repression won't enjoy the benefits of the privilege created by the same mechanisms - exhibitions. So how to balance on the edge of agency and assimilation to keep on showing?"

“One must always be careful not to offend, staying humble with one's opposition in order to survive, buy organic bananas for one's daughter and eventually not need another day job. Whilst bracing wide legged, wedging oneself against the sides of a gap of varying proportions between the potential out of pocket and the potential support in-kind. Capital is a mercurial matter. A nexus of circumstances - indissociable from the present instant and its particular popularities. And you, as your sole income, a poet of your own affairs, entirely dependent on the economy of the dialectical powers which define the prefabricated space in which you build your architectural agency, your metaphorical and very real home which is lacking a view of the whole. Banking, as much as you'd like to consider yourself not, on your tactical art, whilst recounting the tactics of art in an artful tactic during the artweekend of weak tactics, finally admitting to the disposition of the strategist.

One can sense the opportunities afforded and one seizes them.

This is clearly not an opting out. “

“Is attempting critical agency within a system which is precisely a matter of its own formality and its clandestine nature a tireless but quiet activity? The agency of the champagne glass is a kind of quasi-invisibility, since it shows itself as product in a shelf within the system *but where would one place them? With the art of those imposed by it?

Is it Low-culture? High-culture? E - Kultur oder U - Kultur? In good or bad taste?"