

# Thea Djordjadze

20 June - 17 August 2008

Thea Djordjadze's sculptures, installations, paintings, and drawings (b. 1971 in Tbilisi, lives in Cologne) are characterized by traces of movement. They are the direct result of processes arising in the studio and during the overall process of arrangement in the exhibition space. Palpable impressions of physical bodies, but also references to history and memories, can be read in her work.

For her first major, museum-based solo exhibition in the Kunstverein Nürnberg, Thea Djordjadze has gathered together a selection of older works as well as works specially produced for the show, which, like modules or stage sets, give rise to an overall scenario. On one hand, the completed picture recalls a stage set, in which numerous references and 'props' initiate narratives. On the other, the staging is shaped by questions of presentation so that it recalls—in part—an archaeological or historical museum, in which various signs from history and the everyday world are combined.

A new rear wall was installed in the large exhibition space, acting like a backdrop for a stage to display the fine work to its best advantage. Plaster of Paris, papier-mâché, and clay objects were draped over various "canvases". The canvases themselves comprise specially selected carpets, and mostly black shelf-like structures made by the artist, but also pieces of furniture discovered on the premises, such as the imposing representational table, which once served as a conference table in the Milchhof Building.

The works are never presented as "overly auratic", but are invariably intertwined, with a self-evident, constructive ease. The individual works are inspired by a diverse array of sources from the fields of architectural history, interior design, natural science, and literature. For example, the work *The easy isn't done easy* (2006) refers to the banister of the staircase in the Villa Savoye (by Le Corbusier, which was built between 1929-31, at the same time as the Milchhof), which is governed by mathematical preoccupations in relation to human mass. Likewise, mathematical calculation and the question of the correct scale in relation to man are also evident in the works *Mathémat* (2006) or *Master Precision* (2004). The latter stands almost as a proxy or a shell, as a representative in equal measure for the human form in the exhibition space, as indeed are further objects, which might be interpreted as hats or portraits.

The oldest work in the exhibition is a small painting on Rigips plasterboard, which was painted in 1993 during her studies at the Art Academy in Tbilisi. It is mounted like a lookout or fuse box in the upper corner of the wall. At the time, the artist was studying painting in Georgia, before moving to the Düsseldorf Art Academy via Amsterdam. Since then, Thea Djordjadze's work has been chiefly characterized by installations and performance art.

In her early performances, such as *Kaffeersatzlesen* ("Reading Tea Leaves") or *Haare schneiden* ("Haircut") (both 2001), the idea of communication or exchange with others already plays an important role. This exchange is still visible today in her installations. Beyond that, the merging of ideas within a collective typifies Thea Djordjadze's method of working beyond solo or individual presentation. She was a member of the London/Düsseldorf artists group hobbypop-MUSEUM and collaborates regularly with other female artists, such as Gerda Scheepers, Nora Schulz, Manuela Leinhoß, or Rosemarie Trockel (for example, at the last Lyon Biennale and at Monika Sprüth Philomene Magers in Munich). Her installation *Deaf and dumb universe* (2008) at the Berlin Biennale in the National Gallery succeeded in opening up her work to a wider audience.

A first catalogue on the artist's work, containing essays by Catherine Wood, Mark von Schlegell, Nora Schulz, and Kathleen Rahn, was published during the exhibition by Kunstverein Nürnberg - Albrecht Dürer Gesellschaft in the Verlag für moderne Kunst.

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und Halbach-Stif

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