

Phyllida Barlow

Cast

26 February – 1 May 2011

This show is the first ever in Germany to present the works of Phyllida Barlow (b. 1944 Newcastle upon Tyne, lives in London), whose colossal structures dominate the spaces that contain them. As early as the 1960s, Barlow constructed her invariably large sculptures out of simple, commercially available materials. Her works are based on situations in the everyday world, which duly inspire her. This “street” vernacular ultimately finds expression in her extremely magnified, defamiliarised structures. Barlow constructs her sculptures using simple materials, such as wooden battens, lattice structures, planks, plastic elements or tubing. Using plaster, paint, cement, fabric, adhesive tape, as well as many other materials, she then applies a further pastose, tactile layer.

For her show in Nuremberg, Barlow alludes to the industrial language of form that once determined the function of the building, which houses the Kunstverein today: the Milchhof built by Otto Ernst Schweizer in 1931. Historical photographs of the milk churns and the play of light created by the architecture of this former administrative building, inspired these sculptures which Barlow has devised especially for the exhibition. The shapes of the machines used in milk production, as well as the skeletal modern architecture resonate in the works. The artist has built a ten-metre high, scaffoldlike sculpture (*untitled: structure*, 2011) for the 300 sq m distribution hall, which veritably overwhelms the visitor upon entering the exhibition. The work resembles a gigantic, three-dimensional drawing that disrupts the space.

Barlow's spatial method of working confronts the visitor in each of the exhibition rooms. Thus the work *untitled: staircase* (2011) initially blocks the way, only then for it to open out again later. The construction of the sculpture is visible, as indeed is that of the large structure in the hall, the respective vertical sections of which have been left untreated on one side. As is often the case in her works, Barlow treats the surface and the interior space of the sculpture with equal importance and plays with contrasts, such as soft and hard, tension and void. Everything is laid bare for one to see: the process of construction and subsequent treatment, as well as Barlow's desire to try out and dynamise the space, which can itself be physically experienced in her exhibition *Cast*.

Phyllida Barlow is not merely renowned—above all in artist circles—as a result of her extensive teaching activity in London since the 1960s. Her work has also become more widely received in Europe through exhibitions curated by the Berlin-based Kunstraum Silberkuppe (cf. exhibitions at the Museum für Gegenwartskunst Basel, Switzerland; Bergen Kunsthall, Norway). Studio Voltaire in London staged the solo exhibition *BLUFF* in 2010, and Barlow also featured in a joint show with Nairy Bahgramian at the Serpentine Gallery. Likewise in 2010, the BAWAG Foundation staged a solo exhibition of the artist's work, and Barlow also had a show recently at the migros museum für gegenwartskunst in Zurich. Since last year, the artist has had gallery representation for the first time in her career (Hauser & Wirth - Zurich/London/New York). This exhibition has been devised in conjunction with Studio Voltaire, London.

Opening times: Wednesday until Sunday, 12 – 6pm, and also by appointment

We should like to thank the following sponsors of the exhibition

and our partners:

