

Anna Jermolaewa

Opening: 18.06.2009, 7 PM

Duration: 19.06.2009 – 31.07.2009

press release:

“In the Gorbachev era our country stood at the edge
of an abyss...

Since then, we made a step forward...”

(Quote of Kremlin Doppelgänger, 2009)

A certain ambiguity can be sensed in the works of Russian video artist Anna Jermolaewa, which she is presenting in her solo show at Engholm Engelhorn Gallery. Whether in the lightbox, which shows a picture of the interior of Mies van der Rohes German pavillon in Barcelona, in the two channel video installation „Step Aside“, in the video „Kremlin Doppelgänger“ or in the continuing work „Five Year Plan“, to which the third video sequence was added.

Anna Jermolaewa continues in her new works her structural approach of documenting ordinary and familiar situations in a distant manner. Through her view, the montage and the choice of the moment, she reveals the absurdity and bizarreness behind common situations. Through simple narrations and stories, she manages to point out in a playful, but accurate way, complex situations and discrepancies between reality and the idea of reality.

In Anna Jermolaewas new video work „Kremlin Doppelgänger“, Moscow is one of two locations. The Red Square, the architectural symbol for this city and for Russia, is the first. The second setting is „The Kremlin Palace Hotel“ in Antalya, an all - inclusive hotel where one can sleep, eat and drink in a reproduction of the Kremlin and the Basilius Cathedral. In the video the hotel guests describe their holidays at the fake Red Square, while at the original location a Doppelgänger of Gorbatschev tells about his life as a politician and retired engineer.

This retired engineer could also be one of those people whom Anna Jermolaewa filmed with hidden camera on the escalator of the St. Petersburg subway for her three piece video work „Five Year Plan“. The difference between the three shots is almost indistinguishable, even though five years lie between them. The fur caps and vodka bottles are the same, only the changing advertisements mark the change in time. The utopian idea of the five year plan collides with the harshness of a documentary camera. The use of this camera refers to the Soviet film pioneers Dziga Vertov and Sergei Eisenstein, but undermines their revolutionary statements through a loop of sameness, at the same time recalling our memory of those ideas.

Anna Jermolaewa (born 1970, in St. Petersburg) lives and works in Vienna. Amongst others she had solo shows at Kunstverein Friedrichshafen (2009), XL Gallery Moscow (2008), Museum of Modern Art, Passau (2004), Magazin 4, Bregenz (2002) and Blickle Stiftung (2002). She participated in several international group exhibitions, as for example at the National Centre for Contemporary Arts, Moscow (2009), Mumok, Vienna (2005), Kiasma's Collection, Helsinki (2005), Sprengel Museum, Hannover (2003), Frankfurter Kunstverein (2002), Stedelijk Museum (2001), Herzliya Museum of Contemporary Art, Tel-Aviv (2008) and at the Venice Biennale (1999).

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