

Kerstin Engholm Galerie

ANNA JERMOLAEWA

Opening: 27.06.2013, 18 Uhr
Exhibition: 28.06.2013 – 03.08.2013

Press release

According to a current Japanese scientific study, photographs from animals do improve efficiency at workplaces. But tsarina Elisabetha Petrovna had not this effect in mind, when she ordered over 250 years ago the first cats into the Eremitage, which was built out of wood at those times. The animals just had to follow their instincts to protect the artworks from rats and mice. Except of a few years disturbed by the war, the cats have always done their job perfectly and are a constant part of the museum's staff until now. Anna Jermolaewa visited them at their workplace, which is also their home, and portrayed over 40 of them. The photographs, strictly hung in four lines on the gallery wall, remind of the socialist roll of honour through which diligent workers got honoured by the system. However, in comparison, Anna Jermolaewa's portraits negate hierarchy, order and priority. The cats, which were too shy for the camera, are pictured in haste and are a bit blurred, whereas the confident cats who could keep still for a moment, are portrayed in a crisper manner. Hierarchy is not completely denied, but removed in Anna Jermolaewa's sculptural works. On the long wall of the gallery two shelves are placed, filled with trophies from various private households. They are specially constructed in order to make the trophies end at the same height. That is regardless of the price, regardless of its material or what kind of achievement any given trophy honours, the shelf makes them all even. Their alleged exclusiveness and luxuriousness disappears in the collectivity of the collection.

Two more video installations deal with the subject of ups and downs. Anna Jermolaewa shows in a dark room a documentation of the breadsellers of Havana. The men go along the streets and praise their products with a loud voice. Windows are opening up, bags and baskets on strings are led down. Inside of those the seller finds money, which he exchanges with the bread.

The other video work shows the artist while trying wigs in the USA. Her father, sister and daughter are by her side. As if she would play a game, Anna Jermolaewa is changing her appearance. She tries every wig, from a conservative pageboy haircut to a most absurd curly hairdo while she receives feedback from her family and the very talented, American shop assistant.

In the final work of the exhibition, animals are again the focus of attention. A large black and white photograph shows a detail of Cologne Cathedral.

There, where the figure of a venerable saint formerly was placed, now sit two pigeons - „The Holy Place Is Never Empty“!

Anna Jermolaewa (*1970 in St. Petersburg, Russia) works mainly with video and photography. Her works are exhibited in numerous national and international solo- and group- exhibitions, like at CAC Vilnius (2013), Kunsthalle Krems (2012/13), ZKM Karlsruhe (2012), Salzburger Kunstverein (2012), Berlin Biennale (2012), Winavod Contemporary Art Center Moscow (2012), Kunstverein Wolfsburg (2010), Calvert 22 (2010), Venice Biennale (1999).

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