

Bettina Pousttchi, A3, 2019, Leitplanken, Stahl / crash barriers, steel, 221 (h) x 204 x 94 cm / 87 (h) x 80% x 37 (h) in, Courtesy Buchmann Galerie und die Künstlerin, Foto: Michael Schulze



Bettina Pousttchi

In Recent Years

12.9.19 – 17.8.20

Bettina Pousttchi (*1971 in Mainz, lives in Berlin) works at the interface between sculpture, photography and architecture. Her temporary photographic interventions in public space often take up whole walls of buildings, referencing the urban or historical context of a place. Pousttchi articulates perceptions of reality in the digital age and explores the relationship between memory and history from a transnational perspective.

For her exhibition “In Recent Years” at the Berlinische Galerie she has created a façade for the entire entrance zone of the museum. In addition, the first of the big exhibition halls houses an overview of her sculpture and photography, including recent works.

The net-like motif for her intervention on the glass façade of the Berlinische Galerie is a hybrid drawn from architectural structures. The pattern is based on photographs of half-timbered houses taken and processed digitally by the artist. Overall an ornamental form evolves linking the architectural idiom of European civilisation to that of the Near East. These interlocking perspectives reflect a transnational ethos that is key to the artist’s work.

Through this synthesis, Pousttchi acknowledges the fluid boundaries between cultures and national identities, something that is clearly discernible in the immediate neighbourhood of the Berlinische Galerie.

At the same time, she is asking whose history and culture are narrated and represented in the public space: What local and, indeed, national identity is constructed by the decisions of urban planners and architects?

Inside the museum, Pousttchi presents sculptural works that bring themes of urban design indoors, adding deeper insights to her interest in the structures of public space. They are transformations of street furniture like street bollards, tree protection barriers and bicycle racks. These objects demarcate public spaces and regulate movement. As barriers within the urban fabric, they define access and yet, amid everyday routines, they often pass unnoticed.

The sculptural ensemble created especially for the exhibition at the Berlinische Galerie is made from crash barriers. The artist mechanically deformed the parts one by one and arranged them in sculptures up to 4 metres tall – sometimes in vivid colours. Even in their altered form, these functional objects remain recognisable, while clearly betraying the forces brought to bear on the material. Their flexibility sometimes lends these sculptures

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anthropomorphic traits. Monochrome surfaces blend the separate parts into a cohesive form. The vertical positioning of these normally horizontal elements provokes a shift in our spatial experience and underlines the referential role of architecture in the artist's work.

Another section of the indoor exhibition shows Pousttchi's photographic work "World Time Clock" (2008–2016), which originated in Berlin. To compile this extensive series of photographs, the artist travelled in phases over a space of eight years to very different time zones around the world. In each of these places she took a photograph of a public clock – always at the same time: 1:55 pm. The result was a planetary piece about the political and social organisation of time and space in cities like New York, Moscow, Hong Kong, Sydney, Tashkent, Cape Town, Rangoon, Rio de Janeiro and elsewhere.

Pousttchi's "World Time Clock" creates a philosophically thoughtful image of synchronicity and a globalised reality uncoupled from time and space. The close cropping largely cuts out any local references, distinguishing these pictures from classical travel photography, which often seeks to capture the specificities of each place. By digitally processing her photographs, Pousttchi has made them uniformly black and white. She then lines them up in equal-ranking sequence, indicating a universal validity. The world time system was standardised in the nineteenth century. It was significantly boosted by British railway operators, who introduced Greenwich Mean Time around the middle of that century, and it was a key factor in the development of global trade and communication. Consequently, it is also closely linked to colonialism, which encouraged the provision of clocks in public spaces. "World Time Clock" visualises a world order which has no center but rather a multiplicity of equal hubs.

After its debut at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden in Washington DC, the 24-part photographic series can now be seen in Germany for the first time.

Bettina Pousttchi was born in Mainz in 1971. She studied at the Art Academy in Düsseldorf and graduated from the Whitney Independent Study Program in New York. She is best known for her photographic installation Echo (2009/2010) when, just after the demolition of the Palace of the Republic, she recreated it on the façade of the Temporäre Kunsthalle in Berlin. In recent years her work has been the subject of many solo exhibitions abroad, including at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture

Garden in Washington DC, the Arts Club of Chicago, the Phillips Collection in Washington, D.C., the Nasher Sculpture Center in Dallas, the Schirn Kunsthalle in Frankfurt and the Kunsthalle in Basel. Bettina Pousttchi lives in Berlin.

The exhibition has been generously supported by Hauptstadtkulturfonds and is a contribution to Berlin Art Week (11 to 15 September 2019).

From 1 September 2019 to 10 May 2020 the KINDL – Centre for Contemporary Art will be showing the site-specific work "Bettina Pousttchi. Panorama" in the Kesselhaus: www.kindl-berlin.de/pousttchi

Press images

berlinischegalerie.de/en/press/press-information/press-images-bettina-pousttchi/

Catalogue

A catalogue will be published during the exhibition.

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Admission 8€, concessions 5€
Wed–Mon 10 am–6 pm
Tue closed