



künstlerhaus bethanien gmbh : pressemitteilung

Berlin, 13th November 2008

Dear colleagues,

We are pleased to invite you to the opening of the following exhibitions:

PIA LINDMAN

Herr Puntila – spiritual journeys

28th November – 14th December 2008, Studio 2

SOPHIA TABATADZE

All My re-Collections

28th November – 14th December 2008, Studio 3

Wed – Sun, 2 – 7 pm

JOINT OPENING

Thursday, 27th November 2008, from 7 pm

PIA LINDMAN investigates social contexts and spaces, mainly using the media of video, performance and drawing. Her work, which belongs to the tradition of minimalist performance and collective art, focuses on the inherent performative aspect of art production in particular. Starting out from the site-specific situations, conventions and customs that she examines in her works, Pia Lindman aims to shed light on social, political and economic conditions.

Lindman describes her latest project, *Herr Puntila – spiritual journeys*, as a “participatory performance, video and drawings which relate to drinking, Wuolijoki and Brecht” and makes the visitors into protagonists and thus an important component of the work.

The starting point for the project is the well-known play *Herr Puntila und sein Knecht Matti*, which Bertolt Brecht wrote in collaboration with Hella Wuolijoki in 1940. In Finland, she is regarded as the most important dramatist of all time – and the play was published under the names of both authors as a consequence. It is about the rich, powerful but mean farmer Puntila, who – when sober – dreadfully mistreats and bullies his servants and the members of his family. However, when he is drunk and especially when faced by the majestic beauty of a mountain range – which his servant Matti is forced to build from furniture in the salon so that Puntila can climb it ‘in spirit’ – he lapses into an almost ecstatic state of ‘spiritual cognition’ and positively gushes over with brotherly love for those he has bullied so much before.

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There are many diverse aspects to the play, but Lindman is interested in the unique kind of Finnish drinking culture, considered remarkable even by the Finns themselves, which aims for a loss of control through intoxication - as the basic prerequisite for extreme stimulation that can lead, e.g. when simultaneously confronted by the beauty and sublime quality of nature, to an almost shamanic experience.

The artist has collected this and other opinions and assumptions concerning the "system of belief" (Lindman) in Finland and has made them into a component of her overall work. She has also invited test persons from other countries and cultural spheres into her studio in order to act out their experiences with intoxication in front of the artist's camera. Now Pia Landman is presenting the results and materials documenting her research in Studio 2, including further visitor participation - and possibly involving alcoholic beverages as well.

Pia Lindman *1965 in Espoo, Finland, lives and works in New York and Berlin. Lindman studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Helsinki (MFA) and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge, Massachusetts (Master of Science – Visual Studies). Lindman has exhibited her work in the USA at venues incl. the P.S.1 Contemporary Art Center, The Sculpture Center and Artists Space, and also internationally in Mexico City, Tokyo, London, Berlin, Paris, Vienna and Helsinki.

In her works, **SOPHIA TABATADZE** investigates political and social changes that lead to often radical caesura in the existential circumstances of those people affected. Since returning to her home country Georgia after eight years in the Netherlands in 2005, Sophia Tabatadze mainly documents and reflects on the political, economic and social changes that have been experienced by the inhabitants in the most recent phase of Georgia's chequered history.

Tabatadze's artistic strategy is the inversion of 'inside' and 'outside': photos of house facades become interior décor as in *Humancon Undercon* (Georgian pavilion, Venice Biennial 2007), illustrations of human organs create a wallpaper pattern (*Wall-paper*, 2002/2003) and the intimacy of an apartment is publicly displayed behind transparent Perspex (*De Doorzonwoning*, 2004).

Being full of irony, Tabatadze's installations, video works or performances recount the discrepancy between form and content, façade and interior – in short: the discrepancy between "semblance" and "being" that is a permanent reality in our world. Although Tabatadze's works usually examine her home country, they do not focus on a particular place, but lay claim to universal validity. Their point of reference, and the artist's main interest, is the 'condition humaine' in our global village.

In *All My re-Collections* at Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Sophia Tabatadze is displaying collections of everyday things that she herself gathered during different phases of her life. The fact that they are not defined, finished works of art is common to them all. While these things would usually serve Tabatadze as starting points for creative work, here the inconspicuous objects themselves become the theme of the presentation; they succeed in highlighting previously unnoticed interrelations and so outline the process by which an artwork emerges.

Tabatadze's oldest and most precious collection is one of erasers: at the age of seven, she received a gift of two erasers from France – the basis of her first collection and most certainly an inestimable treasure – far beyond its material value - for a little girl in Soviet Georgia in the late 1980s.

Sophia Tabatadze *1977 in Tbilisi, Georgia, lives and works in Tbilisi and Berlin. She studied art at Nikoladze Art College in Tbilisi and the Gerrit Rietveld Academie in Amsterdam. She participated in the 10th Istanbul Biennial in 2007 with *Buildings and Strangebuildings* and represented Georgia at the 52nd Venice Biennial in the same year.

Sophia Tabatadze holds the Eastern Europe Fellowship awarded by the Schering Stiftung and is currently a guest at Künstlerhaus Bethanien for twelve months. In 2008, the Eastern Europe Fellowship for Fine Art was awarded by the Schering Stiftung for the fifth time, in cooperation with Künstlerhaus Bethanien. (Information: www.scheringstiftung.de)