

# KÜNSTLERHAUS BETHANIEN

P R E S S R E L E A S E

Berlin, 6th January 2020

Dear Colleagues,

we are pleased to invite you to the opening of the following exhibition:

## TALYA LUBINSKY

Marble Dust

Opening: THURSDAY, 16TH JANUARY 2020, 7 PM  
Showroom at Kottbusser Straße 10

Exhibition: 17TH JANUARY – 9TH FEBRUARY 2020  
Tuesday – Sunday, 2 – 7 pm

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RECHTSFORM: Künstlerhaus Bethanien GmbH · SITZ: Berlin · AG Charlottenburg

GESCHÄFTSFÜHRUNG: Christoph Tannert · Andrea Boche · HANDELSREGISTER: HRG 8089

# KÜNSTLERHAUS BETHANIEN

P R E S S R E L E A S E

Marble Dust is both solid and ephemeral, as are our bones: Lubinsky's work contemplates the material relationship between permanence and disintegration embodied in memorial sites and the landscapes of cemeteries. It is at these places where the ostensibly permanent comes into contact with the ephemerality of the disintegrating body. From this inherent tension the artist poses questions about loss and return, absence and presence.

Research on cemeteries in South Africa led Lubinsky to a cemetery in the Mamelodi township, North of Pretoria. This cemetery is the place of burial of black political prisoners hanged by the Apartheid state in the 1960s. They were buried as paupers, with no gravestones. From 2016 – 2019, the human remains of the murdered activists have been exhumed and returned to the families of the deceased. Almost 60 years after their burial, the bones have disintegrated to the point that they have become dust, indistinguishable particles dispersed within the earth. In some cases, it is piles of earth, dug up from the gravesites that are placed in coffins and returned to the families. In the cemetery offices, pages of old ledger books containing grave numbers, names and dates of burials are strewn across the floor and piled in boxes. The paper is disintegrating and torn.

For her exhibition at Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Lubinsky has traced the contours of these decomposing pages and carved them out of marble slabs that she arranges in the exhibition space. The fragility of the paper archives is inverted when it is rendered in marble, a stone that is commonly used for headstones. Marble is also a substance made from the calcium of bones and shells of sea creatures, compacted by heat and geological time. Here, taking seriously the inherent material qualities of commemorative forms becomes a productive tool for contemplating their meaning.

For Lubinsky, the process of digging up and returning something that has almost fully disintegrated is a powerful symbol for that which has been lost: the impossibilities of reconstitution and restitution on the one hand, and the profundity of the gesture of return as recognition of injustice on the other.

With thanks to the Centre for Humanities Research and the Department of History at the University of the Western Cape, South Africa.

TALYA LUBINSKY \*1988, is an artist from Johannesburg, South Africa. She received an MFA with distinction from Wits University, Johannesburg and is currently a PhD candidate in the Department of History at the University of the Western Cape, Cape Town, based at the Centre for Humanities Research.

Solo exhibitions include *Floating Bodies*, Iwalewahaus, Bayreuth, Germany (2017), *If we burn, there is ash*, Wits Anthropology Museum, Johannesburg, and *Between Mess and Order*, The Point of Order, Johannesburg (2015). Selected group exhibitions include *Nesting Narratives*, GoetheonMain, Johannesburg (2014) and *Out of Thin Air*, Stevenson Gallery, Cape Town (2012).

She is currently a **KfW Stiftung** grant holder in the International Studio Programme at Künstlerhaus Bethanien. | [www.talyalubinsky.com](http://www.talyalubinsky.com)

Other KfW Stiftung grant holders taking part in the International Studio Programme for the period 2020/ 2021 include Gladys Kalichini (Zambia), Hamlet Lavastida (Cuba) and Daniel Lie (Brazil).

The **KfW Stiftung** is an independent, not-for-profit foundation founded in October 2012. Fostering cultural diversity is one of its top priorities. To promote intercultural dialogue, KfW Stiftung offers artists from Latin America, Africa, the Middle East and Asia the opportunity to live and work in Berlin for 12 months and to take part in the International Studio Programme of the international cultural centre Künstlerhaus Bethanien.

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