

SLIGHT AGITATION 3/4: GELITIN

From 20 October 2017 to 26 February 2018 Fondazione Prada will present "Slight Agitation 3/4: Gelitin", the third chapter of the exhibition project conceived by Fondazione Prada Thought Council, whose members are Shumon Basar, Cédric Libert, Elvira Dyangani Ose, and Dieter Roelstraete.

"Slight Agitation", a four-part project of newly commissioned, site-specific works hosted in sequence within the Cisterna in the Milan venue of Fondazione, continues with a third instalment by the Austrian collective Gelitin. Their work follows on from Tobias Putrih (Slovenia, 1972) and Pamela Rosenkranz (Switzerland, 1979), while Laura Lima (Brazil, 1971) will produce the final chapter.

Following Tobias Putrih's installation which engaged with ideas of play, politics and emancipation and Pamela Rosenkranz's intervention that offered visitors a multi-sensory immersion into a new perception of embodiment and collectivity, Gelitin present a project titled *POKALYPSEA-APOKALYPSE-OKALYPSEAP*. Three large sculptures explicitly address classical architectural archetypes (the triumphal arch, the obelisk and the amphitheater), subverting their rhetoric and monumental components. Symbols as much as structures conceived for everyday inhabitation, these sculptures draw an arc from the insular and individual to the open-ended and collective, from the overtly erotic to the sublimated joy of togetherness. This intervention is indicative of the group's artistic practice which, since the 90's, has experimented with the reinterpretation of totalitarian art and performance, developing a radical attitude towards institutions. Their work has anticipated the codes of relational aesthetics and invented a sculptural language and approach to installation that are anarchic and irreverent.

The central space of the Cisterna is occupied by *Arc de Triomphe* (2003 / 2017), the reproduction of an elephant-high male figure, bending over backwards, made of plasticine. As much as the shape and the dimensions of this sculpture are reminiscent of the roman arch, the presence of a fully functioning water fountain, incorporated as a phallic element, transforms the exhibition space into a collective one, truly manifesting Gelatin's liberating artistic approach.

In the left-hand space there is a giraffe-high sculpture, made up of polystyrene blocks, that could resemble a typical Inuit construction, a monumental obelisk or a cigar on top of a big table. The third of the three sculptures, a wooden upward spiral, is reminiscent of an antique amphitheater. Not only can visitors enter the sculpture and sit on the bleachers, but they are also invited to smoke a cigarette in the center of the installation. Those who decide to share this banal action with the other members of the audience become the protagonists of a short, ephemeral act that, according to Gelitin, positions itself somewhere between Samuel Beckett's Theater of the Absurd and a karaoke performance.

As stated by Dieter Roelstraete, “in the tripartite story of POKALYPSEA-APOKALYPSE-OKALYPSEAP the fundamental question is one that quite literally questions the fundamentals of sculpture as given, for instance, in the traditionally three-fold way of matter’s manifestation in the known universe: solid (plasticine, styrofoam, wood), liquid (the triumphal arch’s well-aimed water jet), gas (cigarette smoke, the settling dust all around); or in the liquid logic of matter’s preferred paths of ‘transitioning’—freezing and melting; condensing and evaporating”

The title of the project - “Slight Agitation”- was inspired by the poetic expression “une légère agitation”, employed by the French historian Fernand Braudel to describe the tidal movement of the Mediterranean. This metaphor reflects the Thought Council’s starting point in presenting interventions by artists whose practices differ considerably in philosophical and material terms, all of them commissioned to interfere and dialogue with the spatial context of the Cisterna, and to influence the viewer’s physical experience and all her or his attendant senses through their works.

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Gelitin – biographical notes

Austrian collective Gelitin comprises four artists (Wolfgang Gantner, Ali Janka, Florian Reither and Tobias Urban), who first met during a summer camp in 1978. Since 1993, they have been working together and taking part in international exhibitions.

In 2001 Gelitin represented Austria at the 49th Venice Biennale, and subsequently took part in the 2007 and 2009 editions, and in 2011 exhibited artwork *Some Like It Hot* at the Gelatin Pavilion during the 54th Venice Biennale, curated by Bice Curiger. Gelitin have also been included in various biennials and international shows such as the Aichi Triennale at the Nagoya City Art Museum in Japan (2010), the Anzengruber Biennale in Vienna, Austria (2009), the Moscow Biennial of Contemporary Art in Russia (2005), the Yugoslav Biennial of Young Artists in Serbia (2004), the Gwangju Biennale in Korea (2002), the Shanghai Biennale in China (2002), the Liverpool Biennial in the UK (2002, 1999) and the In Between EXPO 2000 in Hannover, Germany (2000).

Among their most recent exhibitions and performances are *New York Golem* at Greene Naftali in New York, *Gelatin Gelitin Gelitin* at Galerie Perrotin in Hong Kong, *The Guild of Giving* for Manifesta 11 at Cabaret Voltaire in Zurich and *Prosospopoiea* at Galleria Massimo De Carlo Gallery in London.

They were recently included in collective shows *How To Live Together*, curated by Nicolaus Schafhausen at Kunsthalle Wien in Vienna, *Franz West - Artistclub* at 21er Haus - Museum of Contemporary Art in Vienna, *Home Improvements*, curated by John Waters at Fraenkel Gallery in San Francisco, *The Avant-Garde Won't Give Up: Cobra and Its Legacy*, curated by Alison M. Gingeras at Blum & Poe in Los Angeles, *Punk. Its Traces In Contemporary Art* at CA2M - Centro de Arte Dos de Mayo in Madrid and *Tribute to Flux Labyrinth (1976/2015)* for Frieze Projects New York, on the occasion of Frieze Art Fair in New York.

www.gelitin.net