

SCHWARZ CONTEMPORARY

Press Release - September 2012

PABLO ALONSO

SCHWARZ CONTEMPORARY takes pleasure in announcing that it will start the fall gallery season with an exhibition of new works by the Berlin-based artist Pablo Alonso (born in 1969 in Gijón, Spain).

The works - comprising large canvases, works on paper, and stone sculptures - create an exhibition that links the entire gallery space, so that the individual works stand back vis-à-vis the overall conception. The wall-sized frottages were adjusted especially to fit the gallery space, and they enter into a dialogue with the monolithic granite stones on the floor.

In frottage, the artist transfers the surface structure of an object or material by rubbing with chalk or graphite on paper or canvas. For Alonso, frottages are two-dimensional 'reproductions' of three-dimensional symbolic objects in the public space. A large gesture, aimed at the public, is thus transported into the comparatively private sphere of the gallery space. This entails not just a shift in terms of dimensions and materials, i.e. the physical qualities, but also on the level of the works' meaning. Alonso interrogates the public images and the representational qualities forced upon them, and transfers them into his own works, for which the public sculptures only provide an occasion.

The image of the state, of power, authority, self-aggrandizement (monument, memorial) is transformed by a symbolic gesture of disobedience: the action (rubbing) takes place publicly without permission. Alonso transforms the heavy monumental models into something else and moves away from their unambiguous legibility. Writing becomes image, and vice versa.

Pablo Alonso's subjects are less past events or motifs of remembrance, but rather memory itself and its visualized or depicted form.

The design of monuments has for a long time been the subject of emotional debates, especially in the second half of the twentieth century, when the formerly mandatory figuration was no longer the only and generally accepted norm.

Alonso is not motivated by wanting to take a political stance, nor is he interested in the details of the memorialized events. Rather, he engages more generally with the image itself, its inconstancy and its dependency on context. He also addresses what it means that the state calls upon society to remember events, and gives that remembrance a physical site. Such gestures were (and continue to be) often imposed by the state, intended to create a certain national image of power, a 'collective memory', and help shape a shared identity.

The dialogue with the orphaned old granite stones also raises the question of how far a memorial might actually aid forgetting more than memory. The visualization of memory can also provide closure, so that it is placed at a site and no longer engaged with, but rather suppressed.

Text: Clemens von Lucius

Translation: Wilhelm von Werthern, www.zweisprachkunst.de

The opening reception will be on Thursday 6 September 2012, from 6 to 8 pm.

For further information, please contact the gallery: mail@schwarz-contemporary.com