

e-flux

January 24, 2018

Berlinische Galerie



Installation view at Berlinische Galerie. © Monica Bonvicini and VG Bild-Kunst, Bonn 2017.
Photo: Jens Ziehe.

Monica Bonvicini

3612,54 m³ vs 0,05 m³

September 16, 2017–February 26, 2018

**Berlinische Galerie, Landesmuseum für Moderne Kunst,
Fotografie und Architektur**

Alte Jakobstraße 124-128

10969 Berlin

Germany

Berlinische Galerie is pleased to present the solo exhibition *3612,54 m³ vs 0,05 m³* by the renowned artist Monica Bonvicini. The exhibition was opened on the occasion of the Berlin Art Week in September 2017, and it is on view through February 26, 2018. The title of the show relates to the volume of the museum space occupied by the exhibition in relation to the volume of the artist's body. Bonvicini, who is known for re-examining minimalism, conceptual art and institutional critique, took the gallery room as the first reference, and conceived the entire exhibition as an appropriation of the institution and its museological processes, commenting on the themes that she found outside its white cube—inclusion and barriers, subjugation and freedom.

The visitors of the Berlinische Galerie enter the museum through Bonvicini's intervention *Passing* (2017)—a blind scaffolding wall constructed behind the museum's reception. The door that leads inside shuts down with a strident bang upon every visitor entering, its sound re-echoing in the other spaces of the building. It might be perceived as a rough tool to count the audience numbers, and an alert to people in the galleries every time somebody gets in or leaves. The architectural installation and its sonorous activation by individuals going through it resonate with geopolitical areas, their borders, and the movement of people and labour, prevailing and troublesome issues in the ever-increasingly enclosing world.

Political architecture in both physical and conceptual appearances is further explored through the sculptural works inside the exhibition room *Waiting #1, Breathing, Belts Ball (double two)* (all 2017), *The Beauty You Offer Under the Electric Light* (2016) and the series of *Diener*. A structure of stainless steel railing is a borrowed component of disciplinary micro-architecture, ubiquitous in airports, transitory stations, cash desks etc., where people masses are organised in waiting lines. The bars are bent, and a pair of handcuffs is hanging attached by a chain, creating a minimal yet haunting scenography of conflict, escape, fleeing and disobedience.

The main volume of the room is occupied by the kinetic installation *Breathing*. A brush made out of leather belts and acrylic hair is attached to a pneumatic system, hanging suspended from the ceiling. The title of the work refers to the movement of cylinders that pump the air from the Berlinische Galerie art storage, located in the floor level below the exhibition space, which in turn moves the brush in a programmed 9-minute cycle, making it to wipe or hit the floor and walls. The installation and its seemingly uncontrolled movement

orchestrate directions that the museum visitors take in order to avoid and bypass it. The circuiting brushing can be seen as a metaphor of cleaning, the sculptural element of *Breathing*—as of a "broom," dealing with the debris left after the modernist purism. One recalls Tristan Tzara's invitation of the Dada Manifesto in 1918: "We must sweep and clean. Affirm the cleanliness of the individual after the state of madness." Joseph Beuys, his sculptures and cleaning performances of the 70's inform the piece's interpretational background too. Could the automated and almost unpredictably moving broom of leashes sweep away populist opinions, discriminatory policies and derogatory rule, the leftovers of the neoliberal state? $3612,54 m^3$ vs $0,05 m^3$ can be seen as Bonvicini's complex and perspicacious response to the current sway of paranoid politics everywhere.

Monica Bonvicini (b. 1965 in Venice, Italy) studied in Berlin and at Cal Arts, Valencia, CA. Since 2003 she holds a position as Professor for Performative Arts, Space Strategies and Sculpture at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna. Beginning in October 2017 she assumed the professorship for sculpture at the Universität der Künste, Berlin. She lives and works in Berlin. Bonvicini has earned several awards, including the Golden Lion at the Venice Biennale (1999) and the National Gallery Prize for Young Art 2005, Berlin. Her solo exhibitions were held at Palais de Tokyo in Paris (2002), Sculpture Center, New York (2007), the Art Institute of Chicago (2009), the Kunstmuseum Basel (2009), the Kunsthalle Fridericianum in Kassel (2011), BALTIC Center for Contemporary Art (2016), among many others. Some of her permanent public art commissions include *She Lies* in the harbour of the Oslo Opera House (2010), and *RUN* in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, London (2012).

The exhibition catalogue is published by the Kerber Verlag. ISBN Museum Edition: 978-3-940208-50-7, ISBN Book Trade Edition 978-3-7356-0388-3

This exhibition and catalogue were made possible by the Capital Cultural Fund.