

## Analog

The exhibition “Analog” was developed as a survey of Dorit Margreiter’s artistic exploration of architecture, architecture as representative of characters in film production, architecture being built as entertainment and shopping worlds next to and outside our real one, architecture being re-built for science and funding. She focuses not only on high-culture-architecture made by star-architects like John Lautner or Frank Lloyd Wright. She’s also interested in the fake plastic of those designed for commercial purposes and satisfaction of the masses. Let’s call this low-culture-architecture. What does each special building or space-ensemble represent (or what has it represented) and how is it used? The exhibition was divided into three equally sized spatial sequences. Central to the first work is a late modernist house by the architect John Lautner, “10104 Angelo View Drive” (2004). This is followed by several work groups close together that connect the first and third parts of the exhibition. The work “zentrum” (2006), which was created in Leipzig, concluded the exhibition and shows Margreiter’s attempt to reanimate the legacy of socialist modernism – or more precisely its neon lettering. All the works combined an interest in images from print media, film and entertainment. The artist investigates the influence of these images on collective and individual social memory; she asks how they create or hinder identification, or indeed produce reality itself.

The focus of the film installation “10104 Angelo View Drive”, which was conceived for MUMOK 2004 in Vienna, is a late modernist family house by the American architect John Lautner, which has served in numerous Hollywood productions as the home of ‘evil’. Margreiter questions the conventions of filmic representation; in fixed, observational shots she portrays the moving house, e.g. the television appearing from a block of granite at the touch of a button, or the sliding roofs and windows. At the same time she stages unexpected forms of utilization or social togetherness within the building itself: documentary and fictional film elements combine with second-long flashes of the feminist performance group Toxic Titties engaged in absurd actions. Margreiter projects this 16mm film onto a simple three-part partition wall that was recently the starting point for the d/o/c/k project at the HGB Leipzig on space and spatial mediation.

The next spatial sequence contains six different works that in their close proximity become a kind of treasure trove at the exhibition’s core: In the slide series “Failed Model for an Enclosed System” (2006) Margreiter investigates the experiment carried out in the USA during the early 1990s on an artificial biosphere – a failed attempt to survive outside of our own atmosphere. Celebrated by the media, it in fact collapsed into its own artificiality. Under a glasscover the projector itself becomes the observing object, opening up an illusory space and capturing what it

projects.

The work “Original Condition” (2006) is composed of three photographs and a twelve-part series of advertisements. One photograph shows a still life with props from the first Alien film and parts of Frank Lloyd Wright’s Ennis Brown House (1924). The other depicts a book teaching American actors how to learn foreign accents. The third photograph shows the Ennis Brown House itself. Here Margreiter investigates the visible legacy of a myth: (staged) modernism and its promise of a better world. In their isolation the props and the fake accent instructions have a strangely sober appearance. The twelve individually framed prints “Original Condition (Modernist Interpretation)” (2006) show advertisements for real estate in Southern California. Some are adverts for houses by so-called celebrity architects like Neutra, Frank Lloyd Wright and Lautner, others for houses whose imitation of the style of these modernist architects is used as a selling point. The diagonal wall in this exhibition space is an architectural quote from the Guggenheim Museum in Las Vegas, which was designed by Rem Koolhaas. This small replica, “Event Horizon” (2002), is a contrasting comment on the production of space in the GfZK. Since we know that Las Vegas is the mecca of entertainment, “Event horizon” also has an effect on how we view the works gathered together in Room 2 of the exhibition. The before and the beyond give rise to mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion. An aura of star architecture in scaled-down miniature corresponds to several of the surrounding works and to the exhibition space itself. “The She Zone” (2003/06) is an image sequence shown in video format about the construction of public space in Dubai – or rather the shopping malls of this city, famous now for its urban visions of the future. Together with the cultural critic Anette Baldauf, Dorit Margreiter takes the failed project of a shopping mall “for women only (She Zone)” as the starting point for thinking about the longing for imagination in public space and its various malls. Issues such as gender and commerce play a role here.

In 2006 together with film-maker Rebecca Baron, Margreiter developed the draft for a film “Document (Global Village Discovery Center)”. Two photographs of this slum theme park in Georgia (USA) show an exact 1:1 replica of a slum in South Africa. Built in order to raise money for charity, the staging links to Margreiter’s investigations of the media-reconstructed environment, whose simulation can at once fascinate, attract and repel.

The starting point for Dorit Margreiter’s new work in Leipzig – created during the time she received the Blinky Palermo Scholarship of the East German Savings Bank Foundation in the Free State of Saxony – is the disappearance of socialist modernism and its former utopian promises of public consciousness. This work forms the third and last part of the exhibition.

In “zentrum” (2006) Margreiter on the one hand describes the impossibility of reanimating the project of modernism, while on the other she updates certain

achievements of modernism and brings them into our time. Margreiter developed two blueprints for this film project, which deconstructs and reassembles Leipzig's typical neon lettering – which can also be found on the buildings on the Brühl. The typography provides the basis for a projected new script, and a making-of video showing the reanimation of the signs, left unused for so long. This digital material was copied onto analogue 16mm film, and can be seen in the cinema in the form of a short black-and-white sequence, which makes no reference to the present time, of the shining Brühl Centre lettering. The filmic work refers to another time. “Only film can make the new architecture comprehensible,” commented Siegfried Gideon in 1928 in reference to buildings by Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret. With this he wanted to explain that film is the only medium suitable for documenting and describing buildings. This is also the approach Margreiter takes in her filmic debate with architecture. The ANALOG becomes a digital fake.

On the basis of the debate about criticism, Margreiter's contribution for the *againstwithin* project is a rather direct approach: The artists play with common desires, values and images being produced for and by the media. Be they connected to either high or low culture. Her examinations and de-codings also question issues of accessibility – questions, which are raised in any newly formed culture, state and in politics as well. The range of Margreiter's references is huge. It leads us not only from high to low (culture). It also takes place all over the world: from “10104 Angelo View Drive”, a work that took place in Los Angeles up to “zentrum”, located in post-communist Leipzig, East Germany or “The She Zone” in Dubai, a place known for its gigantic architectural visions and utopias, which also strictly leads to in- or exclusion.

Julia Schäfer