



Little Warsaw (HU): Fightlessness

MeetFactory Gallery

Curator: Jaro Varga

Opening: 18. 2. 2016, 19:30

Exhibition duration: 18. 2. – 3. 4. 2016

The Hungarian art group Little Warsaw (András Gálik and Bálint Havas) belongs to the most striking artists of their generation, which emerged on the contemporary art scene after the year 1989. Their work is closely connected with issues specific in the context of former Eastern Bloc countries – analysis and re-contextualization of objects and ideas from the past, deconstruction of common art forms, a striking anti-establishment attitude, a critical mirror held up to modernism, retro-avant-garde, conceptualism and neo-conceptualism, the expansion of the borders of art and transfer of artistic discourse into a broader social reality. From the beginning of the new millennium Little Warsaw created some essential context-specific works (e.g. *The Body of Nefertiti* at the Venice Biennial 2003, *Time and Again* at Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, 2014, the *Battle of The Inner Truth* at the Trafó Gallery in Budapest, 2011 etc.). These works are written in the basic alphabet of the post-socialist art. Should we like to describe a few principles to characterize the work of the group in general terms, we might start with a thesis that Little Warsaw is returning to the very essence of sculpture, interested in resuscitating or reincarnating the dead sculpting mass. In almost Duchamp style they transfer objects of the past into new realities, attaching to them new meanings and trying to assemble yet another semiotic mosaic which too is just transient. Edit András compares this principle to the classical story of Prometheus, reiterated in the stories of Pygmalion or Golem, in the character of Frankenstein or in the modern versions of the Pygmalion story, such as Pinocchio or the Gingerbread Man. Another topic of Little Warsaw is investigation of manifestations and mechanisms of how ideologies work on the invisible and hard-to-recognize personal level of a human individual. This they demonstrate in their various artworks, where they develop historical micro-narratives, e.g. circumstances (factors) accompanying Hungarian sculptors András Beck or Jozsef Somogyi. The art group highlights some weak points in history, which leads to controversial questions: *Who has the right to touch history and question the established and still present forms of past ideologies?*

Fightlessness is the first solo presentation of this art group in the Czech Republic. The prevailing sculpture exhibition develops several parallel narratives that have been in the center of interest of Little Warsaw, along two basic lines: individual confrontation with the external world and with oneself (a kind of artistic introspect).

In works referring to the story of András Beck (*Sculpture Machine*, *Family Speak*) Little Warsaw moves historical artifacts to other places in order to throw them into new critical connections and interpretations, thus disturbing their static contents and demonstrating in broader terms the transient character of history and of monuments. Similarly, in the work called *Fighter* (2014), which reinterprets a wooden statue from the first half of the 20th century, a three-dimensional object – a statue of a hero – was transferred into a flat transparent image made of glass. Thus the heroic pathos of the original statue encountered its own frailty and transience. The motif of such a transfer of shape, space and context appears also in the couple's most recent artworks, where they make use of design furniture from the first half of the 20th century (*Sliding*, *Quater* 2015, *Double Locus* 2014). The art group also explores the topic of the relationship between “art production and art collection” (i.e. art versus the art market – e.g. in the color mosaic called *CMYK* (or *Relief* after the Bauhaus



artist Johannes Itten) and of questions concerning the role of contemporary artists in society, the roots of these issues going back to the avant-garde movements of the early 20th century.

Historiographical interest of Little Warsaw could refer to the question presented by the curator of Documenta 12 Roger M. Buergel: "*Is modernity our antiquity?*" If so, then we should rethink our relationship to modernist forms which in themselves have inscribed motives of ruins, decay and dilapidation. That the modernist past is in ruins, is clearly inscribed also in the Fightlessness exhibition, which – from a more distant perspective – could remain the historiographical or archaeological museum installation where the works themselves (some of them already presented in another context, time and location) recently speak through their updated forms. And that is what Little Warsaw is after (cares about). To prevent some art forms from dying out in sinkhole ruins, breathe into them a new critical potential, a new “soul”, by means of perpetual re-contextualization.

Open daily 1 – 8 pm and according to the evening program. Voluntary admission fee.

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MeetFactory – a place for live art

Our mission is to foster a dialogue between individual genres and make the current happenings on the art scene accessible to the widest public.

We aim to create a space where art is alive and artists are present, enhancing a direct exchange between international artists and visitors.

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