



OLA VASILJEVA: LONG FAREWELLS

20.03.–30.08.2020

Hall

Borrowing from moments of history, literature, and counter-cultural movements, **Ola Vasiljeva** creates imaginary environments in which sculpture, drawing and found objects commingle. The props and furnishings in her installation often evince a vibrant disorderliness, as though they stood surrogates for the offstage characters to whom their existence seemingly testifies. As if theatre sets at intermission, her environments are often littered with telling clues of unseen performances, obscure and often absurd activities.

Vasiljeva engages with the Pori Art Museum primarily through its architectural ancestry. Formerly a weigh house, the building in the town port had a transitive, measuring, evaluating function. It was a threshold space, made for the passage of goods, for their transition via a temporary halt, display and estimation.

As if subjected to a similar transition, Vasiljeva's artworks are passersby in this liminal space. The exhibition, consisting of a multi-layered arrangement of artifacts, materials, and media, brings together works, old and new, and echoes the artist's longstanding interest in the relationship between display and backstage — that is, the relationship between the displayed and the allegedly never displayed, or rather: the effectively concealed. This relationship is mediated through devices that double as thresholds or membranes, instruments such as the cinema screen, the curtain, the dressing room, props, costumes and tools suspended between use and ritual, mimicry and fiction. This interest finds a natural host in the threshold space that became the museum, and informs an all-encompassing environment that might include drawings, sculptures, textiles, ceramics, writing, video and song.

Institutional structures that mirror society, such as the theatre, the museum and the academy, play a major role in Vasiljeva's practice, yet her work is never about them *per se*. It has more to do with their backspaces, underpinnings, internal infrastructures and the detritus of these places, their forgotten histories.

In recent years Vasiljeva's work has recycled several themes that are concerned with the idea of knowledge production. These ideas were exercised in her *Jargot* projects (the triumph of nonsense over common sense) as well as *University* projects, which focused on the notions of anti-pedagogical experiments and disobedient structures. Vasiljeva's most recent works, Haus Der F. at Kaiser Wilhelm Museum, Krefeld (2019) and N'attendons pas M.Lapatine at Antoine Levi gallery, Paris, though very different in their approach, both address the problems of hierarchy, displacement and forgetting.

Ola Vasiljeva (b. 1981, Latvia) lives and works in the Netherlands. *Long Farewells* at Pori Art Museum is her first exhibition in Finland.

Opening of the exhibition on Friday 20 March at 6 p.m. A tour to the exhibition with the artist and curator on Friday 20 March at 12 p.m.

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