

In her most extensive solo exhibition to date, *Available Light*, sculptor Lena Henke presents her new body of work, that was especially created for the Kunstverein Braunschweig.

A bronze casting positioned in the courtyard opens the show. Here, the artist links the shape of a horse's head with the outline of the island of Manhattan in a sculptural miniature format and creates a surreal urban landscape on its surface. To achieve this, the artist adapts New York's grid-like street network as her design principle and uses utopian city plans, furthermore, she references her own life in her adopted home town, New York City. This psycho-geographical miniature is key to her works, both inside the Kunstverein and in its exterior spaces. By way of the balcony-like wood installation, which turns the Villa itself into a sculptural object, the visitor experiences a significant shift of perspectives. Lena Henke's walk-in installation turns the relationship between body, space, and social reality into a subject of discussion and thus draws attention to understanding and reflecting upon borderline experiences.

Just like several artists before – for example Claire Barclay or Olaf Metzel, to name but two – Lena Henke has intensively dealt with the architecture and the garden of the Villa Salve Hospes. Architecture and periphery are not only the framework of her exhibition, they themselves have, in a way, become exhibits: The installation along the façade expands the exhibition space and significantly changes the known sequence of rooms. Painted in a vibrant lilac, the work establishes a connection with Tom Burr's *Deep Purple*, which was created for the garden of the Kunstverein in the year 2000.

By way of her architectural intervention, Henke opens new views on the house and its exterior spaces as well. By making visitors enter the interior of the Kunstverein through the back door, she insists on an alternative exploration of the building. Due to the visitors' elevated position and the fact that they can view the illuminated yet locked rooms on the left side of the house only from the outside, visitors are turned into involuntary voyeurs. From here, another work comes into focus that Lena Henke created in the garden of the Kunstverein: In the style of Land art, the artist made nature itself the very material of her art, "drawing" circular forms with trotting horses into the green areas of the garden. The circle, as perfect form and formative element alike, constantly reappears in both, the exhibition and the sculptures in the interior spaces of the Kunstverein.

Curated by: Jule Hillgärtner, Christina Lehnert / Curatorial assistance: Sebastian Schneider

Both, the examination of city and landscaping projects of large dimensions and the way these projects influence the individual, are the point of departure for many of Henke's works. The artist

often deals with the development of the city of New York in the middle of the 20th century, which was hugely shaped by city planner Robert Moses (1888 – 1981), but as well by his counterpart, the activist Jane Jacobs (1916 – 2006). Gardens and landscapes, for example the Italian 16th century Sacro Bosco Park whose history and ideology Henke explores in large scale research projects, stand in a clearly defined historical and geographical distance to Moses' and Jacobs' interventions in the urban landscape.

Lena Henke (\*1982 in Warburg) lives in Frankfurt am Main and New York. She studied at the Frankfurt Städelschule as a master student of Michael Krebber and at the Glasgow School of Art. In 2015, she received the GWK-Art Award. She participated in numerous international group shows, among others in the Kunsthalle Bern (2014), at the 13th Fellbach Triennale of Small Scale Sculpture and the 9th Berlin Biennale (both in 2016). After solo exhibitions at White Flag Projects, St. Louis, and in the sculpture museum Glaskasten, Marl (both in 2014) and S.A.L.T.S., Basel (2016), her presentation at the Kunstverein Braunschweig to date is her largest solo show in Germany.

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