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Alicja Kwade

***Something absent whose presence
had been expected***

28. February – 18. April 2015

Opening: 27. February 2015, 6–9 pm

Johann König, Berlin is pleased to present "Something absent whose presence had been expected" a solo show by Alicja Kwade. Throughout the main room as well as the south gallery and the small exhibition room Alicja shows new art works that question the structure of reality, the essence of things.

When attempting to describe time, we have recourse to images from very different areas: time 'flies', 'flows', 'flashes by', 'passes', 'runs out'. Equally, for measuring time there is a wide range of formal constructions available – time is sometimes organised in numbers, sometimes arranged in a circle, and sometimes divided into strips, as for example on the globe.

Alicja Kwade's scrutiny of the grand, fundamental ordering systems is one of unrelenting questioning. When she concerns herself with our universal consensus on what time is, what value is, what reality is, she herself seems to be standing outside this agreement.

She confronts the one, ostensibly firm and fixed structure with another system, so making the former illegible. For example, when she places a sequence of rotating clock hands linearly along a wall, so that one can actually pass by the passing of time. Or when the shattering of a pane of glass on the floor has already occurred and, at one the same time, is about to take place, as in the video installation *Die Zukunft des Vergangenen betrachtend*, 2015 [*Contemplating the future of the past*, 2015]. Her filmic approach, however, is not limited to the moving picture: as a sculptor too, Alicja Kwade, as it were, works filmically when she assigns her objects differing stages in a larger time process.

In the course of her artistic inquiries into reality, results are pulverized. It is to some extent clear that the autopsy of a lamp which is dismantled into its separate parts, granulated and poured into separate jars corresponding to the various constituent materials, will not lead to any insight into the nature of light. Yet it does create a different, novel narrative about the things we believe we know, or have stopped questioning as a given.

Alicja Kwade is concerned with what is left over. Greek marble – the material for eternity – she treats precisely not in the artistic way, as practised over three millennia. While the blocks of marble (*Something absent whose presence had been expected*, 2015) certainly do have human proportions at the outset, meeting the beholder, as it were, at eye-level, Alicja Kwade is here creating a monument to, if anything, the atom.

"It is the mix that makes the moment," the artist says. There are many possibilities of narrating what we are made of. There is the narrativity, for example, of the gold from a bequest that is melted down and put back in

circulation - this latter form also being just a further system that passes on into another, shifting imperceptibly between utmost privacy and maximum anonymity. In her work *Relikt und Bedarf*, 2015 [*Relic and demand*, 2015] Alicja Kwade only arrests this utilization cycle for a brief period - the cycle cannot be stopped. For even as a work of art, the question of value is only translated into the next sphere.

Alicja Kwade (born 1979 in Katowice, Poland) lives and works in Berlin, where she has studied at Universität der Künste from 1999 until 2005. In March 2015 Alicja is going to present a solo exhibition at Kunsthalle Nürnberg, Germany, which will be followed by solo shows at Kunsthalle Schirn in Frankfurt/Main, Germany, at Haus am Waldsee in Berlin as well as, on the occasion of the award ceremony of the *Hectorpreis 2015*, at Kunsthalle Mannheim. Her most recent solo exhibitions were at Kunstmuseum St. Gallen (2014) and Haus Esters in Krefeld (2014). Her works have also been on display in numerous group exhibitions, such as in Bass Museum of Art, Miami Beach (2014) or in Kunsthalle Wien (2014), in Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit (2013) as well as in the Public Art Fund-Exhibition at City Hall Park in New York City (2013) and CCA Wattis Institute, San Francisco (2012). Her works belong to several international private and public collections.