

KÖNIG GALERIE

MONICA BONVICINI | GUILT

3 MARCH - 15 APRIL 2018

ST. AGNES | CHAPEL

OPENING 2 MARCH, 6 - 9 PM

KÖNIG GALERIE is pleased to present GUILT, the second exhibition of Monica Bonvicini at the gallery, presented at the Chapel space on the ground floor. The exhibition is conceived as a constellation of works that go beyond the framework of a conventional gallery display. With GUILT, Bonvicini comes back to the language-based works, the strand of her practice that was previously presented in exhibitions and public art commissions worldwide.

Bonvicini's works often relate to the material realities of popular culture, architecture, modernism, and art history. She seeks to perform critical gestures - investigate, assess, discuss, disclose, mock, and point to vulnerable and flawed parts of our society. Her art practice is an unruly response to discrimination, bigotry, and misogyny that she picks up in everyday situations and happenings surrounding us. The work in KÖNIG GALERIE draws on widely distributed and accepted images of masculinity and class - the social factors that play the key role in the abuse of power.

In the square space of the gallery's Chapel, a bulky typographic work, titled 62 Tons of Guilt, is lying on the floor. Visitors wonder whether the sculpture has fallen down from the ceiling into the chapel, and got suspended in a paused frame of motion, caught in a permanent status quo. Its surface is glossy, gilded in gold. The relief-like sculptural composition is composed of five different letters, each of different height. Their kerning is particularly tight, which makes the word hardly legible. Industrial steel chains are hanging from the ceiling, holding the piece. The work resembles a scaled-up pendant, a rather pretentious fashion accessory that would herald its owner's wealth, social status and cultural identity. Other items that enter the exhibition - a baseball cap and a necklace - feature fonts that recall high school jerseys or corporate branding. The works exemplify wit and irony, typical to Bonvicini's practice.

The five-letter golden word "GUILT" becomes the leitmotif of the exhibition. "Guilt" is a ubiquitous concept that we learn early in childhood, yet it is also an abstract term, and one that keeps being revised and redefined constantly. Guilt is also one of the key ideas that overrun both our juridical and religious systems. It can be individual or collective, and it can be accumulated, just like capital, and the two often go hand-in-hand. But how heavy is guilt, so to ask?¹

Following the recent torrent of various disclosures, personal and political scoops and scandals, one might ask what kind of potential the publicised

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and mediated guilt still holds. Public apologies have become rather vacuous appearances as they have been transformed into condescending confessions. The lexicon and words as 'sorry' are mere placeholders, empty forms of language. Such guilt does not bear any promise of change. The heavy golden pendant, the 'quasi-presidential' cap, and the ironically tacky necklace materialise this problematic social development.

Monica Bonvicini (b. 1965 in Venice, Italy, lives and works in Berlin, Germany) studied in Berlin and at Cal Arts, Valencia, CA. Since 2003 she holds a position as Professor for Performative Arts, Space Strategies, and Sculpture at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna. Beginning in October 2017 she assumed the professorship for sculpture at the Universität der Künste, Berlin. She lives and works in Berlin. Bonvicini has earned several awards, including the Golden Lion at Biennale di Venezia (1999) and the National Gallery Prize for Young Art 2005, Berlin. Her solo exhibitions were held at Palais de Tokyo in Paris (2002), Sculpture Center, New York (2007), the Art Institute of Chicago (2009), the Kunstmuseum Basel (2009), the Kunsthalle Fridericianum in Kassel (2011), Biennale di Venezia (2015), BALTIC Center for Contemporary Art (2016), Berlinische Galerie (2017) among many others. Some of her permanent public art commissions include She Lies in the harbour of the Oslo Opera House (2010), and RUN in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, London (2012).

The artist is part of following institutional Collections (selection): Arco Foundation, Madrid, Spain; Castello di Rivoli, Turin, Italy; Coleccion Jumex, Mexico City, Mexico; Fonds Regional d'Art Contemporain (Frac) des Pays de la Loire, Carquefou, France; Galleria d'Arte Moderna (GAM), Turin, Italy; Istanbul Museum of Modern Art, Istanbul, Turkey; Lenbachhaus, Munich, Germany; Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zürich, Switzerland; Museion, Bozen, Italy; Museum of Modern Art (MOMA), New York, USA; Neue Galerie, Graz, Austria; Neues Museum, Weimar, Germany; Sammlung Falckenberg, Hamburg, Germany; Sammlung Hoffmann, Berlin, Germany; Sammlung Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen (IFA), Berlin; Sammlung Julia Stoschek, Berlin, Germany; Sammlung Wemhöner, Berlin, Germany; Schaufler Sammlung Sindelfingen, Germany; Sharjah Art Foundation, Sharjah; Thysen-Bornemisza Art Contemporary, Vienna, Austria and Volpinum Kunststammlung, Vienna.

A version of GUILT was presented at the 15th Istanbul Biennial and will be featured in the group exhibition Faith Love Hope in Kunsthaus Graz, opening April 2018.

www.monicabonvicini.net

¹The question comes from the German idiom "die besondere Schwere der Schuld," literally translated as 'the special heaviness of guilt.'