



LIANE LANG

FALLEN

10 April – 11 May 2013

Liane Lang's new exhibition combines elements of her ongoing series of works undertaken during her residency at the Memento Sculpture Park in Budapest (the resting place of discarded and exiled monumental sculptural works from the socialist era in Hungary) with a new series of sculptures that take as their subject defaced and destroyed monuments to dictators and deposed leaders – the sculptures themselves derive from documentation of these acts of symbolic violence: from the black and white footage of the Czar's statue being torn down by horse-power in Eisenstein's 1928 film *October*, to contemporary footage of a different kind of horsepower at work on the iconic statue of Saddam Hussein in 2003.

Throughout Lang's work there is a fascination with the contextual and historical influence on the way we perceive the figure in sculpture. Lang writes:

I am interested in the idea of the sculptural object that has forfeited its role to be treated and seen as an artwork. Traditionally the sculpted figure loses its status as artwork the closer it becomes to being life-like, ranging from the marble carving down to the tawdry side-show reputation of the wax work. The Socialist statues, many made with great skill by important sculptors of the time, became culpable by association and lost their status as artwork in this way. Central to this series is the notion of iconoclasm, which continues into other projects. The statue becomes the object of bodily punishment in acts of iconoclasm, being treated as a symbolic site for physical humiliation, injury and execution in lieu of the real body. The symbolic act of deposition is often more powerful and long lasting than the fate of person portrayed.

The works, both sculptural and photographic, in the exhibition address the role of scale in our perception of art. In the case of monumental sculpture the sense of subjective appreciation or interpretation is determinedly overridden by the artist – the work has a distinct purpose and employs tried-and-tested mechanisms in its approach to materials and scale to achieve its function – to depict the subject as heroic; all-powerful; permanent. By tweaking one of these vital mechanisms – scale – Lang is able to create space for a much broader range of interpretations. The statuesque subjects of her works are variously belittled (in their reduction to sculptural miniatures) or revealed as grotesques as Lang introduces her life-size simulacra to them, highlighting the absurdity of their heroic poses. The resulting original works thus retain the echo of the appropriated sculptures polemic message, but create room around them for humour and a strange and haunting beauty, born of empathy – for the mighty (however tyrannical) brought low, and for the very human condition of impermanence.

Liane Lang is an artist based in London. Born in Germany she studied at NCAD in Dublin and completed a BA in Fine Art at Goldsmiths College followed by a Postgraduate Diploma at the Royal Academy, where she graduated in 2006. Lang has shown her work widely both nationally and internationally since graduation. In 2012 she won the Hotshoe Magazine Photography Prize at Photofusion Gallery and participated in group shows at Focal Point Gallery, Southend, *Flights of Fancy* at Babylon, Berlin and a Cultural Olympiad project at Griffin Gallery in London. She is currently exhibiting at the German Historical Museum as part of Berlin's *Year of Culture* 2013. She has been selected for the prestigious Art Omi Residency 2013 in New York State.

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