

SONIA LEIMER *Lack of a proper word*

Exhibition from September 12 to October 31, 2014

Sonia Leimer is interested in the point where great, official history intersects with private ones and remains there, adhering to specific things, such as everyday objects or architectural set pieces. She takes these fragments of reality, permeated with time, memory and meaning, and puts them into new constellations, which become the starting point for an alternative version of history. In the new works of art that she has created for her first solo show at the Barbara Gross Galerie, Leimer deals with places and objects that reflect post-war utopias.

Sonia Leimer has visited the “Large Space Simulator“ in Noordwijk, Holland, where the photographs for the installation *Lack of a proper word* come from. The simulation of the cosmos—a distant place laden with notions of freedom and vast space—serves the purposes of industry: since the 1960s satellites and materials have been tested under extreme conditions, to see if they are suited to outer space. Leimer takes photographs from the dark interior of the vacuum chamber and applies them to two large room dividers, curved like panoramic panels. These in turn make it possible to see the space model chamber for what it is: a model. Yet, what the long exposures reveal is the unattainability of the longed-for place: a profound, impenetrable, nocturnal blackness out of which glitter a few scattered points of brightness, blurred architectural stripes, gaps, threads of light.

In between the wall segments, *Schwarze Löcher* (*Black holes*) hover like blinking satellites on top of filigreed, reinforced iron—colorful, glazed ceramics with unfathomable, black eyes. The bizarre, fragmented surfaces of these so-called “space-age vases“, which Leimer acquired from a private collection in Berlin, derive from a special enamel glaze, which is heated with a Bunsen burner until it bubbles. Beneath the crust and lesions glows the neon of the 1960s and 1970s, like a colorful dream. The big history of optimistic future technology finds expression in the futuristic designs of ordinary, functional objects.

Also from the domestic sphere are tables, which Leimer has turned into a large *Runder Tisch* (*Round table*) with the help of a concrete plate: an old kitchen table, a round cafe table, small tables, which differ in size, shape and material. Due to their different heights, only some of them stand firmly on the ground; one is on tiptoe, and the legs of the third dangle in the air. These unequal pieces of furniture enter into a dialogue, respond to the gallerist working space, thus creating a place for communication: you sit down at the table in order to talk to each other, to deal with crises, to think up ideas, or to tell stories—many little ones inside of a big one.

Sonia Leimer (*1977 in Meran) studied architecture at the Technische Universität and the Akademie der Bildenden Künste in Vienna. Among her awards are the Österreichisches Staatsstipendium für bildende Kunst (Austrian State Grant for the Visual Arts, 2009), the Margarethe Schütte Lihotzky Grant (2007), and the MAK-Schindler Grant (2005). In 2011 she received the Audi Art Award for New Positions for her presentation at Art Cologne. The artist lives and works in Vienna. She has participated in the Moscow Biennial (2013), the Linz Triennial (2010), and the Manifesta 7 (2008). Her solo shows include: Los Angeles Museum of Art; Centrum Kultury Zamek, Posen (2014); abc, Berlin (2013); Artothek, Cologne; Galerie Nächst St. Stephan, Vienna; Museion, Bolzano (2012); Kunstverein Basis, Frankfurt am Main (2011); BAWAG Contemporary, Vienna; Salzburger Kunstverein (2010).