

SILKE SCHATZ

ST JOHN FOR AUGSBURG

Lower Gallery: 16 January – 22 February 2009

Wilkinson is pleased to announce its fourth exhibition by German Artist Silke Schatz.

Schatz will be showing a complex installation made up of various elements including slides, sculpture, drawing and found objects. Together the individual components create a personal portrait of the city of Augsburg. Taking an investigative approach to the environment the artist explored the city through the eyes of architects and tour guides, absorbing its unique history and building up a photographic library of the geography, architecture and the traces of societal change within the landscape. The information garnered from these visits, inspired by both the romance and poetics of space and the formal indexes present within the architecture and monuments, reveal the city's history.

This body of work was originally conceived to celebrate the 175th anniversary of the Kunstverein Augsburg Gallery when five artists, Josef Dabernig, Rita McBride, Manfred Pernice, Gerold Tagwerker and Silke Schatz were selected to take part in an exhibition *Aesthetic Complexes* curated by Axel Jablonskii: A collection of sculptures inspired by the city of Augsburg which took place from 4 October-2 November 2008.

The installation is dominated by construction fences which contain and support the main body of work whilst forcing visitors to view the work from a distance. Large scale drawings backed with extravagant French walnut and cherry wood panelling are hung from the fences with simple cable binders, echoing advertisements and covers seen on construction sites throughout Augsburg as well as the architecture of the hall dating from 1607 for which the piece was first conceived. One wooden panel mimics the floor of the Schaezler Palais, the Bavarian picture-gallery in Augsburg, where a portrait of Jakob Fugger, *The Rich* (1459-1525) by Albrecht Dürer is hung. Fugger was of one of the richest families in the Renaissance era, and provided Charles V with the money needed to bribe the seven electors and to make him Holy Roman Emperor in 1519. Charles enabled them to have sovereign rights over their lands including the means to create their own currency. The drawing on the front of the wooden panel shows the *Damenhof, 2008* (Ladies Yard) one of the four Yards of the Fuggerhouse in central Augsburg.

The front of the second wooden panel depicts a Barrack, the *Luftabwehrkaserne*, built in 1938 by the Nazis. Beneath the saddle roof is a hidden concrete structure, so strong it remains intact until today. After WWII Augsburg was a US garrison with over 30.000 soldiers and their families, the barracks remained in use by the American Army until 1998.

Today the site's reconstructed barracks and left over concrete structures have become new housing developments. These urban structures together with other Augsburg buildings and sculptures, often mirrored or inverted to reflect the complexity and aesthetics of the buildings (*Aesthetic Complexes*) can be seen in the slideshow as part of the installation. The carousel stands in the middle of the square space on a tree trunk, a reference to the columns of the Kunstverein Augsburg. The slides are projected onto a thin silver sprayed paper with a colourful ink drawing on the reverse. This reflective surface complements the metallic sheen of the fence.

St John for Augsburg, a small clay figurine is modelled on *Johannes in Extase* (1938), a sculpture representing the Crucifixion Group by Ewald Mataré 1887-1965. St John appears frequently in the bible ; As well as being the witness to Jesus' death he is also the storyteller of Jesus' life. In the way that Mataré's figure holds a strong presence in the city of Augsburg, Schatz is interested in the possibility of her own modest sculptural effigy of St John, with his head leant far back to hold presence within the installation as a whole, to contain and occupy the air around him.

Silke Schatz has exhibited extensively in Europe, recent shows include *Aesthetic Complexes*, Kunstverien Augsburg. *Radical Self/Wurzelkind*, Bomann-Museum Celle and *Beloved*, le Plateau, FRAC, Paris.