

Sofie Thorsen Cut A-A'

accompanying booklet

Sofie Thorsen is interested in places with special stories to tell, that she finds and scrutinises with regard to their meanings past and present. In her work she examines spaces and architectural phenomena, what they look like, how they work, and how they change as a result of processes. What do we know of places when we see them for the first time, and what determines how we perceive, how we see them?

With a detached eye from the outside, Sofie Thorsen reveals phenomena with their information and stories.

Section A-A'

The film *Section A-A'* shows the open-air cinema of the Slovakian National Gallery in Bratislava, that was built by Vladimír Dedeček in the course of conversions in the 1970s. Little used and rarely screening films, today it faces demolition. We see the open auditorium through a concrete grid, that allows the projection to escape to the outside and the viewer to glimpse inside. The permeable wall becomes a pattern, creating shadows and bringing the light of the film itself to the centre of attention. The projection, devoid of any plot, plays to the empty auditorium, whose function is stuck in the three-dimensional presentation. The pictures succeed each other like slides, only the soundtrack is running, clearly indicating the passage of time and how the film comes into being in the mind.

On the tables lies the elongated drawing, a kind of thematic "script" for the structure of the film. It depicts the old plans of the whole building, abstracted in the form of hard shadows.

The open-air cinema becomes a shadow of the museum that largely eluded identification.

In the language of architects, *section A-A'* is a defined cross-section of a planned building. Sofie Thorsen reveals her cross-section of the open-air cinema in a double sense in a long version at Kunsthaus Graz. The film trailer created for Diagonale 2012 in co-operation with Kunsthaus Graz, parallel to the film, shows a one-minute probing view of the picture-theatre from the outside.

Play-sculptures

The City of Vienna commissioned artists to design “play-sculptures”, as they were known, in the 1950s. On the one hand, they were intended to enliven public space sculpturally, while on the other allowing children to play with them. Based on a photo documentation of the City of Vienna, Sofie Thorsen translates this peculiar marriage of function and art after World War II into diagram-style wall pictures, drawings, collages and large paper works. Greatly blown-up archive images are suspended from the ceiling, expansive details turning them into sculptures themselves. The “play-things” are wrenched away from the images, as voids they denote their absence in the urban space, where – now outmoded and, in many places, completely replaced – they no longer exist. Reminiscent of the colourful play-sculptures, on the other hand, are the coloured poles around the room and the concrete slab, that give an impression of their size, their now unreliable foundation, and their aesthetic, without the real forms being visible.

The Achromatic Island

On the island of Fur in Denmark there existed, until the 1930s, a locally restricted phenomenon of a particular eye-disease – achromatopsia. People with this hereditary disease cannot see any colours but only shades of light and dark in high light levels. According to descriptions, the images that they see are not only colourless but also blurred and coarse-grained. Sofie Thorsen attempts to give generally visible images to this achromatic world, without claiming them to be universally valid. Moving images, photos and texts pertaining to the landscape of this island draw our attention to current problems of rural regions afflicted by migration, sprawl and deterioration of infrastructure, and that are depicted from the viewpoint of achromatopsia. The disease became increasingly uncommon when the island’s rather closed community began to open up to the outside world at the beginning of the twentieth century. As the public became aware of this genetic defect, the disease disappeared, but the achromatic view presented here still illustrates that objective vision does not exist.

Biography

Sofie Thorsen was born in Århus, Denmark, in 1971. She studied in Budapest, Copenhagen and at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna, where she currently lives and works. Thorsen received special mention in the Innovative Cinema category at the 2011 Diagonale. For this year’s Diagonale she made the festival trailer and designed the Diagonale cloth bags.

Dates:

13/3/2012, 7pm, Space 02

Art discussion in co-operation with DER STANDARD daily newspaper

Sophie Thorsen speaks with Anne Katrin Feßler (Der Standard) about her way of working and her interest in culturally determined forms and their political, social and art-historical links.

17/4/2012, 7pm, Space 02

my own private cinema. Robert Smithson

Hotel Palenque – In the context of the filmed slide show by Robert Smithson (1972), Sofie Thorsen and art theorist Christian Teckert discuss the status of the dimension of space as a vehicle of societal mechanisms in her works.