



Artist features

Lena Henke



Lena Henke (b. 1982 in Warburg) is one of the successful international artists of her generation. She tests the conditions and possibilities of sculpture with technically innovative methods.

At the same time, she expands the range of meaning of traditional sculpture by incorporating questions of femaleness and the production of power relations in urban space.

Text Vivien Trommer All images Courtesy by the artist

The possibilities of plastic art and sculpture serve Henke as a basis for understanding the molding (and as a changeable process of design. Thus, in groups of works like Hooves, Boobs, and Sand Bodies, the process of the work becomes a work finds representation; motifs of memesis link up with motifs of phantasmagoria. It becomes apparent that the artist does not take her bearings from ideal conceptions but designs her sculptures to match her subjective mental images. In doing so, she not only engages the myth of masculinity; she also unravels strands of historical tradition—the questions of pedestal and space—to interrogate the logic of sculpture and representability. She holds the reins with great self-assurance, controlling the representation of women, the symbolic power of horses and intervening in the mechanisms of urban architecture. It is Henke's far-reaching reflections on the capacity of the sculptural that enable her, conversely, to grasp urbanity as a historically mutable sculpture, whose social mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion can be altered and redefined by means of artistic interventions. Thus, Henke relocated the entrances to her solo exhibitions (at the Kunstverein Braunschweig and the Dortmunder Kunstverein) and intervened, with her street signs, in the psychology of existing urban structures (recently in Siegen). Operating this side of social and architectural power structures, Henke's works open up a pleasurable imaginative space in which the sculptural itself expands to encompass feminist and biographical perspectives and thus acquires a new topicality.



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Installation view: I Think I Look More like the Chrysler Building, 2021 at Vleeshal Center for Contemporary Art, Middelburg, NL.

Photo: Gunnar Meier. With Kasper Bosmans, Lena Henke, Win McCarthy, Annelies Planteijdt and Diane Simpson. Guest curator: Ju



Lena Henke
Babyblue House after Orsini, 2021
Glazed ceramic on plexiglass pedestal
Courtesy the artist and Bortolami New York
Photo: Gunnar Meier



Lena Henke
Organic Architecture III, 2020
Digital print on textured paper
Courtesy the artist and LAYR Vienna
Photo: Maximilian Anelli-Monti



Lena Henke
The Holy Trinity or Three Points In Time (Detail), 2020
iron rack, iron pole, and a forton and steel baby sculpture
Courtesy the artist and Galeria Pedro Cera
Photo: Bruno Lopes



Lena Henke
R.M.M. (Power Broker Purple), 2020 & R.M.M. (Organ, Organ, Organ Red), 2020
Steel, fiberglass, rubber, paint
Photos: Frieze at Rockefeller Center, New York, 2020



Lena Henke
Love Nest in Wisconsin, 2021
Soldered and burned leather on wood

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