

## Reviews

Lena Henke and Klosterfelde Edition



## Lena Henke *Auf dem Asphalt botanisieren gehen*

Managing to be both bland and magical-looking, the kitchen objects of Lena Henke's latest exhibition descend down an ever-widening ramp through the gallery and into the busy decadent sprawl of Potsdamer Straße. The artist often works with patriarchal legacies that lie hidden in modern culture and after seeing images of Berlin's famous Hansaviertel – a nearby post-war initiative to revolutionise the urban space – she discovered that the kitchens were often hidden behind curtains. These pioneering homes – all designed by men – showed how gendered notions of labour are embedded in even the most utopian visions of the future. In response, Henke 3D-scanned and cast Braun appliances that kitted out more than half the homes. There's an oddness to this collection of lemon squeezers and dough mixers: though swollen and oversized, in their sparkling blankness they feel desirable too – the radical simplicity of Dieter Ram's design brilliantly translating into these repeating multiples of playful modernism. It's a wonderfully oblique urban inquiry, using domestic labour-saving tools to subtly examine ingrained power bias. The title of the show draws from a text by Walter Benjamin about the city and the flâneur, and adds to the multiple strands of complexity, which a work this well considered, effortlessly sponges up. — DB

Klosterfelde Edition, Mitte *Through Jul 30*

Photo © Thomas Bruns / @thomasbrunsphotography



## Under Construction

With an acquisition budget of €60,000 a year (shared between a bunch of other Berlin museums), you might imagine that an exhibition dedicated to recent additions to the Hamburger Bahnhof collection would be fairly lacklustre. In fact, the opposite is the case: whilst it



Olaf Holzapfel, 2022 © Jens Ziehe

## ALL HANDS ON: *Basketry*

Humans have been making basketry for thousands of years and yet no robot can match the skills required to master this deeply intricate handicraft. From its importance in clothing as seen in the 5000-year-old woven shoes of the iceman Ötzi, to the exploitative conditions under which colonial era rattan was produced and its rapid post-industrial decline, this show does an admiral job of exploring the history and varieties of basketry from around the world. At times it is inspired, like the intricate African made bowl from white, yellow and red telephone cables. There are some contemporary examples of artists probing the medium, like Nathalie Miebach's 'Berlin in a Basket', a work that draws connections between weaving and digital networks. A little further on Olaf Holzapfel's 'The Woven Garden' is a momentous willow labyrinth – you just have to touch it. The tactile element is important and – even with the more precious examples displayed in vitrines – they've really indulged the haptic elements. So you can weave all sorts of ropes and threads or sit in an example of a Filipino peacock chair made famous by one of the founders of the Black Panther Party. Mesmerising if you are into that sort of thing, intriguing to those who aren't. — DB

Museum of European Cultures, Dahlem *Through May 2024*

flexes its progressive muscles by prioritising work from outside Europe and North America, the team has put together a series of politicised and highly topical works that problematise the structures underpinning Western museums. Near the start are the blood red paintings of Dierk Schmidt – a brutal and ambitious mix of infographics and abstraction, that attempt, with some success, a detached examination of the savagery committed by imperial powers in Africa. Beside it, Sandra Gamarra Heshiki's painted figurines and pots from Indigenous peoples of the Andes are devastating indictments of the vitrines of looted art on display in many Western museums. The show is intentionally demanding, but rewarding to those willing to fully engage with it. Some of it is lighter, like Melvin Moti's video work 'No Show' that refers to a bizarre and blokey tour of an empty Hermitage art gallery in Saint Petersburg during World War II. A must-see this summer. — DB

Hamburger Bahnhof, Mitte *Through Jan 15, 2023*

## DON'T MISS

### Creamcake

The ever-changing digital-queer-art clubnight is celebrating its ten year anniversary at Berghain with an inspired choice of performers including Total Freedom and Jam City and long-time collaborators bod [包家巷] and DJ Paypal. **Clubnight: Berghain, July 29**

### InterPlay. Tabea Blumenschein – Ulrike Ottinger

This hugely significant performer and actor in Berlin's contemporary cultural history was also a skilled artist, the Berlinische Galerie is showing her drawings and celebrating her collaboration with the director Ulrike Ottinger. **Opening: Berlinische Galerie, July 15**