

"ABSCHLAG"

"ABSCHLAG" is the title, but also the form of my project at 'Manifesta 10', St. Petersburg. As a form, it means and shows that a part - an important part of its entirety - has been cut off, as for example, when facades of entire history were obliterated. If something is cut off, it's a huge damage, even if the whole building or history didn't collapse. "ABSCHLAG" means exactly this: An entirety, building or history, remains standing but is faceless, and behind the structure it offers a new view, making the inside parts obvious. 'Hidden spaces' become visible and the normally hidden connections shine brightly. The past breaks through, forgotten parts of history come to daylight again.

"ABSCHLAG" has two plastic dimensions: The vertical one - the still-standing building, the history - with its spaces cut open and its inside now visible, and the horizontal one - collapsed walls, floors, fallen bricks and stones - with obstacles on the ground which have to be by-passed. I have in mind the striking images of destroyed buildings where leftovers of living spaces are discovered through standing walls parts, remnants of wallpaper, nailed paintings, empty window frames or dangling lamps. "ABSCHLAG" asserts its own form in the incredibly post-trans-meta-architectonical new inner court-space, between the old walls of the new "General Staff Building" of the Hermitage Museum.

The forgotten history - now visible - is represented in "ABSCHLAG" by an homage to revolutionary Russian constructivist artists such as Malevich, Popova, Stepanova, Rodchenko, Ekster, Gontscharova, Lissitzky, Tatlin, Rozanova or others. All their works are works I love above all. They are a testimony of the utopian and dystopian fight they engaged with in the time they were conceived. This fight - visible for ever - gives form to the truthfulness of an artist's commitment. This artistic truthfulness reaches beyond historical facts and beyond the conjuncture of aesthetical opinions and political dogmas, and thanks to a 'cut-off' it becomes - today - visible again and obvious to everyone. This is the message, "ABSCHLAG" is its form.

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