

Jeronimo Voss
Восстание рыбаков (Aufstand der Fischer)
02.08.2011 - 19.11.2011

Eröffnung am Freitag, dem 02.08.2011
19:00 - 21:30 Uhr

For his first solo show at Galerie Cinzia Friedlaender, Jeronimo Voss reconstructs the story of "Восстание рыбаков (Aufstand der Fischer)", a movie directed by Erwin Piscator, based on a novella by Anna Seghers. A first version of this installation was shown at Frankfurter Kunstverein earlier this year.

Begun in 1931, Piscator's film "Восстание рыбаков (Aufstand der Fischer)" was intended as a direct means of anti-fascist mobilization. To this effect, Piscator changed Seghers' tale of a failed fishermen revolt to give it the ending of a successful upheaval. However, finally released in 1934 - one year after the handover of power to the Nazis - in light of the political developments in Germany Piscator's "Revolt of the Fishermen" failed as well.

The central piece in the installation is a projection arranged to look like a live presentation. An overhead projector is set up on the floor in the middle of the room, while a hand appears to change the transparencies on the machine's flat light surface and a first-person narrator comments the images from the points of view of Erwin Piscator and Anna Seghers. But the projected shadow of a hand is bodiless, and the images do not originate from the projector; nor does the sound originate from a present narrator. A beamer and speakers are used to produce the audio visual presentation, while the projector, in turn, helps to buttress the optical illusion, the suggested phantasmagoria of a spectral narrator.

The presentation of transparency slides begins with the story of the phantasmagoria show, originating in Paris in the years after the French revolution. The phantasmagoria was a popular form of entertainment, their format a cross between theater and exhibition. A modified *Laterna magica* projected portraits of dead people (mainly figures of political life like Robespierre, Danton or Marat) onto walls, smoke or semi-transparent screens, to the music of a glass harmonica. Phantasmagoria-showmen, like Étienne-Gaspard Robertson, defined their work as a tool of enlightenment demystifying the fear of ghosts.

Jeronimo Voss connects this phantasmagorical use of projectors with Erwin Piscator's Epic Drama - an experimental theater-practice that emphasized the socio-political content of drama. Piscator's Theater enhanced the stage with film montage and projections, not only to bolster the narrative but also in order to turn the stage itself into an independent narrative construction. Therefore, certain transparency-slides of Voss' video-installation reappear as physical elements in the installation like, for example, the wall construction of an overlapping transparency photomontage illuminated by a theater spotlight.

In his wave drawings, Voss translates Anna Seghers' descriptions of stormy seascapes into the installation. A plinth titled "La vague" has a reversed overhead projector fresnel lens at its top with a light source on the bottom projecting an ink drawing of an abstract wave. Installed on the gallery's window is a 1927 photomontage by Sasha Stone of Piscator in front of his theater in Berlin, to which Voss adds the perspectival rendering of a wave.

Voss transforms the gallery space into an epic stage, with each individual component participating in a common dramatic narrative. This phantasmagorical reconstruction revisits Seghers' and Piscator's "Revolt of the Fishermen", thus using the failure of both revolts as a starting point for a contemporary observation, rather than a uniquely historical one.

Text: Hili Perlson