

Exhibition October 7, 2022 – April 9, 2023

Parque del Retiro, Palacio de Cristal

Pauline Boudry / Renate Lorenz

Glass is my skin



View of the exhibition *Pauline Boudry / Renate Lorenz. Glass is my skin*, 2022. Photo: Annik Wetter

Glass is my skin

Song

Watch me
Mírame
Transparencia
Check me out

Watch me
Verme
Con mis ojos
Transparency
My currency

Museo
Mi destino
See myself through the eyes of a stranger

Cristal es mi piel
Fog is my drug
Non-binary smoke
Glass is my skin
Fog is my drug
Check me out

Straight ghost?
Non-binary smoke
Pasando a mis espaldas

Mírame a través de los ojos de un extraño
See myself through the eyes of a stranger

Watch me
Verme
Con mis ojos

I was in control
And now I am falling
Check me out

Mírame a través de los ojos de un extraño
See myself through my eyes of a stranger

Related activities

Aérea Negrot live performance

Thursday, 6 October 2022 – 1:00 p.m.

Friday, 7 October 2022 – 5:00 p.m.

Saturday, 8 October 2022 – 5:00 p.m.

Sunday, 9 October 2022 – 11:00 a.m.

Parque del Retiro, Palacio de Cristal

Performance: Aérea Negrot.

Music: Aérea Negrot & Royal Dust

Vocals: Aérea Negrot

Costume: Sinpatron

Make-up: Nuria de Lario

Jewelry: House of Malakai

Programming: Sven Gareis, Telematique



Loving, Repeating, installation view, Kunststhal Wien, 2015. Photo: Jorit Aust

Glass is my skin is a new installation that Pauline Boudry / Renate Lorenz have designed specifically for the Palacio de Cristal in Parque del Retiro. The project gives the building a voice that speaks about its colonial history and presence, in a song by Aérea Negrot. Inspired by queer clubs, the artist duo also created a set of platforms or stages made out of mirrors. Reflected on the surfaces, the Palace becomes a performer, appearing *on stage* in different, multiple, and dissipated ways. At certain times the platforms exhale smoke and render the transparent building entirely opaque.

In the installation the smoke becomes an aesthetic tool for undermining the Palace's transparency as a regime of visibility. It also connects to the density

of the queer club, where individual bodies transform into one collective body while dancing.

The platforms or stages don't wait for us, we cannot enter them, their stairs are up in the air. They seem to be caught in a moment of stillness before continuing to dance, or taking off from the Palace's floor. On the verge of movement, they become protagonists in this installation as well. They thereby connect to previous work by the artists, such as *Loving, Repeating* (2015), where seating accommodation transforms into a stage, when it suddenly lights up, recasting the seated audience into actors about to perform. In *Glass is my skin*, the stages turn the Palacio de Cristal itself into a performer. The building enters the stages, slightly distorted, reflected by the mirrors.

Boudry/Lorenz's project re-imagines the Palace's seductive beauty, its shape, construction, and translucent walls. The idea of transparent architecture is connected to the history of enlightenment. It allows the gaze to take everything into possession, wandering without barriers from the inside to the outside and from the outside to the inside. The project's investigation into the regime of visibility is also an exploration of how violence continues to operate in the contemporary world.

The Palacio de Cristal, built in 1887 for the General Exposition of the Philippine Islands, is a symbol of Spanish and European colonial history and therefore the extraction of wealth and knowledge through the subjugation of the colonized people. The exposition aimed at better understanding the life and culture of the inhabitants of the Philippines, a Spanish colony since the sixteenth century and thus for more than three hundred years. The Palace's transparency embodies this unidirectional interest visually. This is why the French-Caribbean philosopher and poet Édouard Glissant famously demanded "the right to opacity" as part of anti-colonial struggle. While showing mainly art and artifacts in the Palace itself, the exposition included the humiliating display of Philippine people in their presumed living environment within the surrounding park. As is the case with all Western colonies and settlements, decolonization as a return of robbed goods and ideas has yet to take place.

Re-imagining the Palace as mirrored in the stages and hiding in the smoke doesn't



View of the exhibition *Pauline Boudry / Renate Lorenz*.
Glass is my skin, 2022. Photo: Annik Wetter

allow for an easy reconciliation. Instead, it connects the building to queer traces of a possible different past. What if the Palace had been built for different purposes, been employed for different relations? In Boudry/Lorenz's work the stage becomes an element that allows fantasies of past and future relations to appear in public. It is the stage for revolutionary moments that didn't come through, the stage for a queer dance, the stage of the drag show. The stage allows us to claim what we desire. At the same time, it confronts us with our own fragility, as when we have stage fright or nightmares about having to appear. The artists refer to the role of the stages in their work as such: "Stages are about the moment when you 'take the stage,' the moment when you begin to appear in public, when you begin to

act. There is a transition, a fragile instant between not acting and acting, between not taking the stage and taking the stage, between being invisible and being visible.”¹

Pauline Boudry / Renate Lorenz have invited composer and performer Aérea Negrot to participate in *Glass is my skin*. A song composed and interpreted by Negrot with lyrics that have been written in collaboration with the artists gives voice to the Palacio de Cristal as part of the installation. Aérea Negrot also will appear through the smoke in a live performance during the first days of the installation.

Negrot's voice moves through the Palace via loudspeakers distributed throughout the space. Consequently, if the audience

wish to follow the song, they are forced to move. They generate a choreography, and tempt the disobedience of the individual as well as the possibility of moving in concert with other people. The movements of the public make it an active installation in constant transformation that gives us a glimpse of possible ways of togetherness.

Further information:

@boudrylorenz

www.museoreinasofia.es

1 Conversation between the artists and Övül Ö. Durmuşoğlu, published in the book *Stages* that accompanies their recent exhibition *Portrait of a movement* at the Museo Centro de Arte Dos de Mayo

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