

“Demonstration Room: Ideal House” will reinvestigate the interconnections between art, architecture and ideals, nurtured by the recent political developments in Venezuela: the paradoxical move from post-communism to communism. Concrete artists’ proposals will be the basis for three-dimensional architectural models.

“Demonstration Room: Ideal House” is based on El Lissitzky’s constructivist “Demonstrationsraum,” a space that in its specific design is able to blur the boundaries between the exhibition space and the works exhibited. In a broader sense “Demonstrationsraum” calls into question the distinctions between project and object in a borderline situation of materialization, conceptualizing and reification. For this reason “Demonstration Room: Ideal House” was shaped after an architect’s office.

“Demonstration Room: Ideal House” places the house once again as a laboratory for experimentation. Instead of entrusting the task of designing the ideal house to architects, contemporary artists were invited to reflect upon the house in its appearance and functionality, in a reaction to or departing from utopian narratives. The house has not only been a privileged site of experimentation for 20th century architecture. The utopian ideals of the avant-garde, such as the Gesamtkunstwerk and the integration of artistic disciplines found and still find a haven in the house. Its scale has also proven to increase the feasibility of these utopian undertakings, which in urban design remained as mere aspirations.

From the specific context of Latin-America, “Demonstration Room: Ideal House” makes a remarkable parallel: the coincidence between contemporary urban planning and the spontaneous architecture of the shantytowns in its emphasis on mobility, communal values, abolition of private property and many others that have been launched by a good part of urban theory. But what is more meaningful in relation to the shantytown is the fact that it is the anathema of utopia and in spite of this the shanty in itself constitutes a possibility of rethinking the city or architecture in a contemporary way. These ideas informed the desire to reflect upon the house as simultaneously the new locus for utopia and its anathema.

“Demonstration Room: Ideal House” was curated by Jesus Fuenmayor and Julieta Gonzalez for the Museo Otero, Caracas (2000).

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In order not to limit research to an ideology criticism of Western political and economical institutions, THE BIG SHOW chooses to approach globalization indirectly via three different views. A first way will be historical; two highly specific bodies of work will be highlighting a colonial past. The second exhibition will retrace globalization to the present, as an irreparable traumatic memory. Part three will be utopian; concrete artist's proposals will be the basis for three-dimensional architectural scale-models. Content-wise the three successive exhibitions will interconnect the ideas of history, the exotic, the traumatic and the utopian. On the level of presentation, the small-scaled exhibition will be transformed into an autonomous critical medium.

The ever more compelling confrontation with colonial history as a focal instance, but also the evolution from communism to post-communism, are triggering an exoticizing (Western) collective memory. Its means of expression are unequivocal and problematic in the desire for historical repair (as a paternalistic legacy), through

the commodification of alterity, in an "art-festival" atmosphere. THE BIG SHOW appears at a time that is in great need of critical and innovating projects on both Western and non-Western art, their interferences, the modalities of display and discursive translation. In the cultural field in Belgium, the announced reprofiling of the Royal Museum for Central Africa in Tervuren, and in the political field the research that is being conducted by the Lumumba-Commission are signaling a basis for change. On an international level in the developments towards Documenta 11 among a number of initiatives, a highly speculative debate is taking form, positing alterity and inclusivity as sole alternatives for a specific model of Western exclusionism.

THE BIG SHOW is inevitably part of a climate of postcolonial and global cultural research, without fully identifying with it. The series of exhibitions that is being presented, will rather perform an in deep questioning of how the ideas of decolonization, globalization and representation (both as image production and exhibition

model) can be subsumed to a broader debate.

THE BIG SHOW is a series of exhibitions conceived by Win Peeters. THE BIG SHOW is organized by the NICC in collaboration with the Museum for African Art in New York, Jesus Fuenmayor and Julieta Gonzalez (Museo Otero) in Caracas.

THE BIG SHOW EST UN CYCLE D'EXPOSITIONS AUTOUR DE LA GLOBALISATION

Trois expositions distinctes offriront un cadre critique et avant tout confrontant afin d'aborder des thèmes actuels tels que l'exotisme, le «politiquement correct», la mémoire collective, l'alterité et l'utopie d'une manière critique approfondie.

Afin de ne pas se limiter à une critique idéologique des fonctions politiques et économiques occidentales, THE BIG SHOW prend le parti d'aborder la globalisation de manière indirecte via trois différents angles d'approche. La première piste est historique et éclaire le passé colonial à l'aide de deux séries d'images spécifiques. Une deuxième exposition dépeint la globalisation jusqu'à nos jours en tant que mémoire traumatique irréparable. La troisième

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