

# ZUZANNA CZEBATUL

## BAUSTELLE

29 September - 19 November 2022

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*"A cultivated man does not look out of the window: his window is made of ground glass; it is only there to let the light in, not to let the gaze pass through." \**

Le Corbusier after Adolf Loos in "Urbanisme" (1925)

Import Export is excited to present **BAUSTELLE** - a solo exhibition by the Berlin-based artist Zuzanna Czebatul, spanning photography, sculpture, video and installation in situ – commissioned for Warsaw Gallery Weekend and mimicking a giant construction site inside of the gallery.

Czebatul – who graduated from the Städelschule in Frankfurt in 2013, and later attended the MFA Program at Hunter College, New York, as Fulbright Fellow – works primarily within the realm of sculpture and large-scale installation. Her interests revolve around the relations between production, power structures and repressive social apparatuses. Through humour and playful strategies, Czebatul often blurs the line between symbolic architecture, monument, relic, fetish and commodity to question the boundary between reality and artificiality.

Translating from German to 'building site', **BAUSTELLE**, spreads across the gallery space. The exhibition takes as its departure point giant construction sites within the city landscape. Holes in the ground, empty niches that used to nest buildings, rubble, and skeletons of supporting constructions function as performative sculptures (or perhaps anti-sculptures) within the urban sphere. They are the ultimate expression of the power of real estate. Motivated by corporate investments and monetary gains, the 'logic of Baustelle' overrides the principles of social functionality and contributes to the gradual dissolution of the very bone and tissue of citizens' life in the name of restructuring and redevelopment of the cities. Czebatul explains:

*"(...) my fascination for construction sites lays within this temporary but constantly shifting sculptural aspects and those parts of a building which will never be seen again after finishing. It's like an operation on an open heart, a surgical*

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*insight into the giant body of architecture, bones and flesh and veins and all the life support around it, machines, material, euro-pallets, sometimes just rubble and dirt of completed steps in the process, a reversed archeology of the temples of our time, in which space is the highest value of all, a commodity which eats shores and pushes away everything what is related to a good life, like a hungry monster (...)"*

In the exhibition, the rhythmic narration of photographic images of construction sites from Warsaw, New York and Geneva (*Bone, Flesh & Skin* series) – suspended on actual building fences – is interrupted by the presence of three figures: *Markus, George* and *David*. Adorned in tailor-made suits, these faceless figures made from poured concrete are partly the spectators of the scene, and partly the scene itself. Resembling Roman milestones or urban barricades, they personify the movers and shapers of today's times: politicians, real estate developers and lobbyists. Closing the story is a photo-slide video *Outside Inside The Walls Bear Witness*. Visible through a rhombus-shaped peeping hole in a fiberboard, the slideshow alludes to the next chapter of works by the artist, and the inevitable fate: retail front closures and re-lets of abandoned spaces around the city – a questionable contrast to the newly arising global abundance of spaces built solely to buy and let for investment purposes.

Czebatul's sculpture was most recently included in the 2022 Geneva Biennale. In October, her work will be shown as part of Sites, the sculpture garden of Paris + by Art Basel fair, set at the Tuileries in Paris. Also, this month the artist will be awarded Werkstattpreis 2022, at the Erich Hauser Art Foundation in Rottweil, Germany.

*BAUSTELLE* by Zuzanna Czebatul will stay on view until 19 November.

\* Quote from: B. Colomina, "Intimacy and Spectacle: The Interiors of Adolf Loof," (1990).

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