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THE WAVES ARE RUMBLING SO LOUD

Karolina Breguła

4 July - 29 September 2024

EXHIBITION

Project coordination: Ulrich Kreienbrink

Technical realization: Carlo Bas Sancho, Mathis Oesterlen

Educational programme: Sandrine Teuber, Jan Blum

Graphic design: Katarina Šević

Press: Haus für Medienkunst



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The Waves Are Rumbling So Loud, a solo exhibition by Polish artist Karolina Breguła, features the artist's newly commissioned video installations, *The Fish* and *The Storm*, alongside her earlier moving-image works and photographs that share the same concerns and conceptual queries.

Breguła is a storyteller who works in a deeply research-based and collective manner, digging deep into questions of architecture, societal shifts, and urban spaces that affect communities. The exhibition revolves around a poetic and rather troubling account of the collective experiences of and reflections on the condition of the seas in the face of the climate crisis.

The Storm portrays an image of the sea and a distant island observed by five characters who reveal their most hidden emotions as the destructive wind and waves grow bigger. The threatening weather uncovers social tensions and conflicts within the small community, which seems to be unprepared to face the coming dangers together.

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Through her extensive and experimental film language, the artist creates situations in which collective storytelling becomes possible. Breguła considers collaborative fiction writing a political activity that supports the process of diagnosing, expressing, and discussing societal problems.

The artist's latest film, *The Fish*, imagines the poetic transformation of a fisherwoman into a sea being. After she comes to understand the severe condition of her beloved sea, the protagonist rather abruptly changes her alliances and decides to stay under the water's surface.

The film adapts one of the stories from Breguła's ongoing collection of tales of communities facing serious disturbances caused by the climate crisis and the devastation of the sea. Its narrative is based on the life experience of a Swedish fisherwoman, Manjula, with

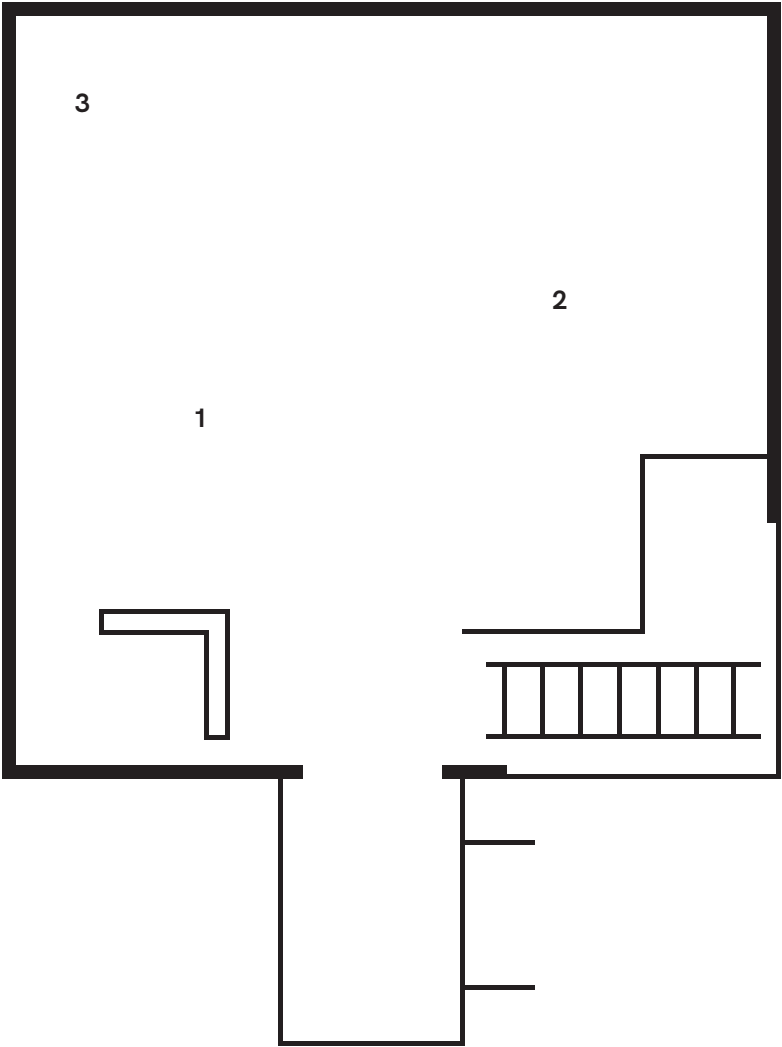
whom the artist worked closely, not just as a protagonist but also as a co-creator of the story. Many of Breguła's film projects—which demonstrate a rich filmic language and elaborated conceptual approaches—are co-created with their protagonists and participants, blurring the boundaries between professional and amateur artistic activity. Short stories collaboratively written by Breguła and the participants of her projects are also included in the exhibition.

Her earlier featured works—such as *Dust* (2019) and *The Tower* (2014)—portray the clash between the desires of individual lives within an oppressive societal and urban structure.

Dust follows two women living in an old district marked for demolition, from which all their neighbors have already left. The film is a slow and troubling portrait of the two women, who are determined to stay in the abandoned building, as they observe the methodical deconstruction of their neighborhood as bulldozers roar around them. The project documents the real life struggle of Ms. Zou and Ms. Huang from Banqiao, in New Taipei City, who fought alongside their neighbors against the evictions in the district.

The opera musical *The Tower* is about the inhabitants of a block of concrete flats who are planning to construct a sugar tower in their district. The rather absurd and upsetting story of this utopian project alludes to postwar residential architecture, analyzing it from the perspective of its users and inhabitants rather than its creators and architecture historians. Memories of desires, dreams, and beliefs for a better future are confronted with hard reality and the contradictions inherent in modernist designs.

Karolina Breguła was the 2023 recipient of the Media Art Grant from the Stiftung Niedersachsen at the Haus für Medienkunst.



1 THE FISH

2024
Video
27:15 min

The Fish is a story of the transformation of a fisherwoman into a sea being. After she comes to understand the severe condition of her beloved sea, the protagonist changes her alliances and decides to stay under the water's surface.

The film's narrative is partially based on real people, and in particular the life experience of a Swedish fisherwoman Manjula Gulliksson and her husband Stefan Nordin with whom the artist worked closely, not just as protagonists but also as co-creators of the story.

Collaborators:

Cast: Manjula Gulliksson, Stefan Nordin
Sound: Weronika Rażna
Editing: Robert Mleczko & Karolina Breguła
Cinematography: Robert Mleczko
Partners: Institute for Urban Research, Malmö University, Polish Institute Stockholm, lokal_30/ Fundacja Lokal Sztuki

Commissioned by Haus für Medienkunst and Stiftung Niedersachsen

2 THE STORM

2024
5 channel video installation
14:20 min

The Storm portrays an image of the sea and a distant island observed by five characters who reveal their most hidden emotions as the destructive wind and waves grow bigger. The threatening change of weather uncovers social tensions and conflicts within the small community, which seems to be unprepared to face the coming dangers together. The work was produced in collaboration with local artists whom Karolina Breguła met in Buncrana during her visits to the northwestern coast of Ireland.

Collaborators:

Cast: Cara Donaghey, Brendan Farren, Martha McCulloch, Carl Taylor, Rebecca Strain
Cinematography: Robert Mleczko
Sound: Liam Hirrell and Adam Majczek
Production: Haus für Medienkunst & Artlink (Ireland)

3

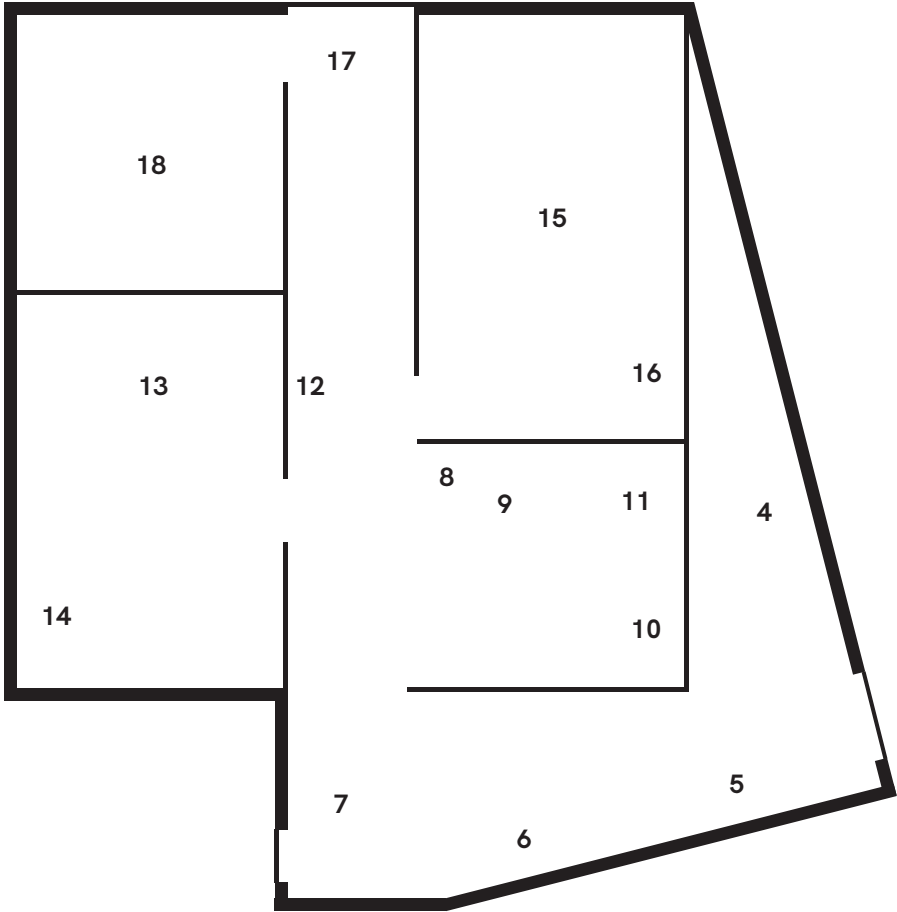
FLOODED HOUSES

2023

2 photographs

Pictures of houses permanently
flooded by the sea in the western
coast of Taiwan.

BASEMENT



4

HISTORIES OF ART

2016

Photograph

A picture from a cycle of photographic stories devoted to destruction in art. Accidental damage done to works at museums, acts of deliberate devastation, programmatic destruction of art, lost heritage of modern culture, censorship and philosophical reflection on destruction – they all materialise in this cycle in the form of strange outgrowths in the daily life of the protagonists of the photographs. In *Histories of Art*, all events receive a photographic interpretation from Karolina Breguła, who perceives the act of destruction as a sort of interaction, a performative activity. Her surreal photographs embody her fascination with errors, accidents and attacks on the works she engages with – objects that derive a special power and value from their status as works of art.

The picture in the exhibition addresses the accidental destruction of the painting by the Baroque artist Paolo Porpora made by a twelve- year-old as he tripped during a visit to the museum.

5

HOUSES EARMARKED FOR DEMOLITION

2018

3 photographs

Fragment of a series of photographs of the interiors of abandoned apartments, whose residents were forced to move out due to urban renewal, called dushi-gengxin in Taiwan. Descriptions of buildings earmarked for demolition can be found in the book *Exercises in Losing Control* on pages 83–86.

6 HALF-DEMOLISHED HOUSES

2021
10 photographs

The city of Tainan in the south of Taiwan is currently modernising its railway station. This is why the municipal authorities decided to demolish 340 houses in the immediate vicinity of the railway line. Some of them have been pulled down only in part, such as the house of the last resident to protest against expropriation, Chun-Hsian Huang. The history of the modernisation of the Tainan railway station and the story of Chun-Hsian Huang's house is described in the book *Exercises in Losing Control* on pages 49–55.

7 DUST FROM A DEMOLISHED HOUSE

2021
Photograph

Miss Chen, one of the protagonists of the book *Exercises in Losing Control* (her story is told on page 73), was wondering where the dust scattered by the wind from the demolition site of her house flew. Karolina Breguła approached Professor Chih-Wei Chiang, who researches the trajectories of dust in the air to investigate where the dust from Miss Chen's house reached. She obtained a simulation of its potential route. The photograph shows the exact place where the dust might have landed, according to Professor Chih-Wei Chiang's study.

8 THE AGORA

2024

Site specific social space made by
Tim Lorenz

The Agora is an open space which is designed to serve workshops, screenings, lectures, discussions and relaxation. It was designed and produced by Oldenburg-based artist Tim Lorenz whom Breguła invited as a guest artist in the exhibition.

9 EXERCISES IN LOSING CONTROL

2019

Book

The book tells the stories of people who lost their homes due to gentrification and presents the histories of buildings in which they had lived. Aside from Karolina Breguła's texts, it also includes articles by scholars invited by the artist and texts co-created with the book's protagonists.

Collaborators:

Authors who contributed to the book:

Ai-Yun Huang

Xiang-Ping Zhou

Pu Hao, PhD

prof. Chih-Wei Chiang

Meng-Tsun Su

Shi_mei Huang

Zhu-Ting Huang

Rong-Yu Li

Shi-Fen Zhang

Ya-Qiao Li

Publishers: lokal_30 and Wydawnictwo
Akademii Sztuki w Szczecinie

10

TALE ABOUT THE MARKET

2021

Video

18:05 min

Collaborators:

Sound: Nigel Browns and Weronika

Ražna

Performance: Teng-peng Suyace Su

After the finished shooting for the film *Dust*, Xiang-Ping Zhou asked Karolina Breguła to add the real story of Daguan to the display of the installation. Her request inspired the idea to write the book *Exercises in Losing Control*. Breguła began working on it a year later, when Daguan had already been destroyed and Xiang-Ping Zhou and Ai-Yun Huang were living in new apartments. During one of their meetings, Breguła asked them to write the story of Daguan together. They answered that those were painful memories, which they had decided to forget. As a consequence, they only had a dim recollection of their former houses, and their story would now resemble a fairy tale, with facts and myths intertwined. Their fairy tale-like memories became the basis of their jointly written *Tale about the Market*, which Breguła gave to Teng-peng Suyace Su, a renowned Tainan musician who plays the moon guitar and sings traditional Taiwanese songs that tell stories of places and people. He composed his own song on the basis of *Tale about the Market*. Conversation with Xiang-Ping Zhou and Ai-Yun Huang can be read in the book on pages 181–191, and the tale written together with them – on pages 191–196.

11 INSTRUMENTS FOR MAKING NOISE

since 2016

Objects

Instruments for Making Noise is an ongoing series of objects made of remnants of exhibitions collected in galleries and museums as well as waste from the production of artworks found in artists' studios. The objects may be rented out for demonstrations. *Instruments for Making Noise* mark a symbolic transformation of something that used to be art into a tool of political activity. They concern the questions of the usefulness of art, artists' involvement in the social and political situation as well as the status of artistic 'waste'.

12 THE TIDIED APARTMENT IN CHANG-AN XI ROAD

2019

4 photographs

In 2018, Karolina Breguła found herself in a partly torn down house, whose demolition had been temporarily halted. She invited a group of friends to lend her a hand in tidying up the mess in one of the apartments. They spent a few days thoroughly cleaning and furnishing the place, which made it look like someone was living there. Breguła only used the equipment left by the residents of the building to furnish the apartment. The history of the project is described in the book *Exercises in Losing Control* on pages 17–19.

13 DUST

2019
4 channel video installation

100:40 min
9:07 min
10 min

Dust is a story about two women living in an old district earmarked for demolition. Since their building is due to be demolished soon, all the neighbours have already left. Yet, the women decide to stay in their flat. The protagonists spend time in the abandoned building and observe through the window bulldozers working around. The films were made in collaboration with Ms. Zou and Ms. Huang from Daguan in Taipei. When the project was in production, their houses in Daguan were bound for demolition while Ms. Zou, Ms. Huang together with their neighbours kept fighting against the evictions in the district. The first two films were shot in a house undergoing demolition in central Taipei, the third film is a conversation between Ms. Zou and Ms. Huang in their home district Daguan while the fourth film is a documentary of the demolition of the house where the first two films were made.

Collaborators:

Sound: Weronika Rażna
Cast: Xiang-Ping Zhou, Ai-Yun Huang
Production: Kyoto Art Centre

14 DAGUAN

2019

Photograph

A picture of a field where the houses of the community of Dagua used to be. After years of protests, all inhabitants were evicted in 2019, three months after the production of *Dust*. The official reason for eviction was a new construction planned by the owner of the land. Today in 2024 the field still remains empty.

15 LIVING ROOM UNDER THE FLYOVER

2019

Video

14:10 min

Living Room Under the Flyover is footage of a spectacle staged by Karolina Breguła in collaboration with Shi-fen Zhang, Rong-Yu Li and Ya-Qiao Li, who have been engaged in organising the protection of inhabitants expecting eviction caused by gentrification. The film portrays a place which served as a home of Chun-Hsian Huang whose house was earmarked for partial demolition. The spectacle script consists of memories and nightmares which the artists collected from people expecting expropriation and eviction in Tainan. The drama on which the spectacle is based can be read in the book *Exercises in Losing Control* on pages 55–64.

Collaborators:

Cast: Shi-fen Zhang, Rong-Yu Li, Ya-Qiao Li

Co-creators of the script: Shi-fen Zhang, Rong-Yu Li and Ya-Qiao Li

Sound: Nigel Brown and Weronika Rażna

16 MISS CHUN-HSIANG'S HOUSE

2019
Photographs

Pictures taken from the inside of the house which is the subject of *Living Room under the Flyover*. The history of the modernisation of the Tainan railway station and the story of Chun-Hsian Huang's house is described in the book *Exercises in Losing Control* on pages 49-55.

17 DEMOLITION DEBRIS

2021
Photograph

A picture of the demolition debris dump outside of Tainan city where the leftovers from 340 houses were transported to and sorted.

18

THE TOWER

2016

Video

79 min

The Tower is an opera musical about a group of people living in a concrete block of flats and planning to construct a sugar tower in their district. The quite absurd and upsetting story of a utopian project alludes to post-war residential architecture, analysing it from the perspective of its users, inhabitants of modernist districts and residents of the city, rather than its creators and theoreticians of architecture. Memories of desires, dreams and the belief in a new better future are confronted with hard reality and contradictions inherent in modernist designs.

Collaborators:

Music: Ela Orleans

Cinematography: Robert Mleczko

Sound: Weronika Rażna

Editing: Stefan Paruch

Cast: Joanna Cortes, Nina Czerkies,
Roman Holc, Borys Jażnicki, Ewa Kon-
stanciak, Sylwester

Kostecki, Anna Lubańska, Krzysztof
Łapiński, Maciej Nawrocki, Ewa Mikuls-
ka, Wojciech Parchem

Production: Fundacja Witryna

Karolina Breguła (born 1979) is a visual artist and filmmaker. She creates stories about art, architecture and urban spaces, which are a field of her anthropological and sociological observations. She is interested in storytelling – the roles of retelling memories, the favourable and detrimental effect of fiction, the remedial and destructive force of imagination. She considers collaborative fiction writing a political activity which supports the process of diagnosing, expressing and discussing social problems. Many of her works are co-created with their protagonists and participants. Her works have been exhibited at institutions such as the Jewish Museum in New York, Museum of Contemporary Art MOCA Taipei and at international events such as Venice Art Biennale and Singapore Biennale. She is the winner of the Views Deutsche Bank Foundation Award, the Samsung Art Master, the EMAF award, Golden Claw at the Gdynia Film Festival among others. Her works are included in collections such as Tokyo Photographic Art Museum, Zachęta National Gallery of Art, Wrocław Contemporary Museum and ING Polish Art Foundation. She is an associate professor at the Academy of Art in Szczecin, she collaborates with lokal_30 Gallery. Since autumn 2023, together with Weronika Fibich, she has been running Lokatorne – Space for Antidisciplinary Activities. Karolina works between Poland and Taiwan.

karolinabregula.com

EXHIBITION WALK

**Tuesday, 10 September,
5 p.m.**

with Marcel Schwierin – Haus für
Medienkunst (in German language)

**Tuesday, 24 September,
5 p.m.**

with Edit Molnár – director Haus für
Medienkunst (in English language)

GUIDED TOURS

Every Sunday during the exhibition at
3 p.m.
(Attendance free, regular entrance).

Group tours on request.

The exhibition was made in collaboration with:

Carlo Bas Sancho, Mathis Oesterlen and their team Richard Kachel, Leon Tibbe, Gerrit Stecher, Tim Lorenz, Jakob Kästle, Kristina Wassiljew, Paul Weber; Ulrich Kreienbrink, Mary Szydtowska, Zuzanna Fluder, Robert Mleczek, Agnieszka Rayzacher, Czesław Derlacz.

Institutional partners:

lokal_30 gallery/Fundacja Lokal Sztuki (Poland), Polska institutet i Stockholm (Sweden), Artlink (Ireland), Institute for Urban Research at Malmö University (Sweden), Fotoaura Institute of Photography (Taiwan).

OPENING HOURS

Tuesday till Friday
2 a.m. – 6 p.m.
Saturday and Sunday
11 a.m. – 6 p.m.
Monday closed

ADMISSION

2,50 Euro / 1,50 Euro

Free admission on
27 Juli, 24 August and 28 September 2024

Admission is free for school children, visitors up
to and including the age of 17 and students at
Oldenburg universities.

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