

Eastern Europe Fellowship in the Fine Arts Awarded to Uršula Berlot

The Mystery of Light and the Logic of Beauty

The Slovenian artist Uršula Berlot examines the connections between art and science, between emotion and intellect. Her kinetic light installations put both the eye and the mind to the test.

What are the connections between art and science? How do a sense of beauty and logic go together? What connects emotion and intellect?

Those who know Uršula Berlot's work have probably asked these questions for a long time. They had another opportunity to do so at the Künstlerhaus Bethanien in November 2007, when the recipient of the Ernst Schering Foundation's Eastern Europe Fellowship presented her most recent work, "pulsation/Cross-sections." The light-space installation was created during her fellowship stay in Berlin.

An exhibition full of bright spots – in the truest sense of the word: visitors were confronted with an installation that, in its interplay of transparent surfaces, mirrorings, projections, light reflections and shadows, was not only aesthetically convincing but also intellectually inspiring.

In this virtuoso crossover, different light installations, video projections, Perspex glass and mirror images overlapped, reflected or defamiliarized each other to form a seemingly organic scenario. Strange landscapes, abstract outlines and organic structures of the microcosm presented themselves to the viewer.

Nothing was as it seemed: ephemeral light phenomena projected into the air created the impression of solid matter. Things you had just perceived disappeared like a fleeting hallucination only to reappear where you would not have expected them to. You almost got the impression that the brain creates a mental landscape for itself: shimmering, oscillating and mysterious.


The centerpiece of the installation was a video work entitled "pulsation": a pulsating light phenomenon created by cross-fading a video projection of an x-ray photograph and digitally reworked images of the artist's brain with different light reflections.

This is not at all unusual for Uršula Berlot. Her artistic style makes multiple references to the natural sciences. She is inspired above all by the elementary physical and chemical processes and the laws governing light and matter. Light – including its physical by-products such as shadow and reflection – is her basic means of expression.

A distinctive feature of Uršula Berlot's work is that she again and again explores the analogies of these physical natural phenomena and our mental processes of perception. Only on the face of it, her visually brilliant works invite us to enjoy them uncritically. In reality,



The Eastern Europe Fellowship supports Eastern European fine artists whose work is of high quality showing continuity and an original artistic vision.



Uršula Berlot, *pulsation/Cross-sections* (2007)

they subtly encourage viewers to unravel their mystery by means of intellect and logic: What is real and what is illusionary? What is material, what is immaterial? Why do we see the way we see? What are the conditions of our perception? And what are the connections between feeling and understanding?

Working at the interface of science and art, Uršula Berlot also exemplifies the philosophy of the Ernst Schering Foundation. With its Eastern Europe Fellowship, the Foundation seeks to both intensify the cultural exchange with Eastern Europe and support talented young artists. The fellowship recipients spend a year at the Künstlerhaus Bethanien in Berlin to work on new projects and make contacts in the art scene.

Uršula Berlot, *1973

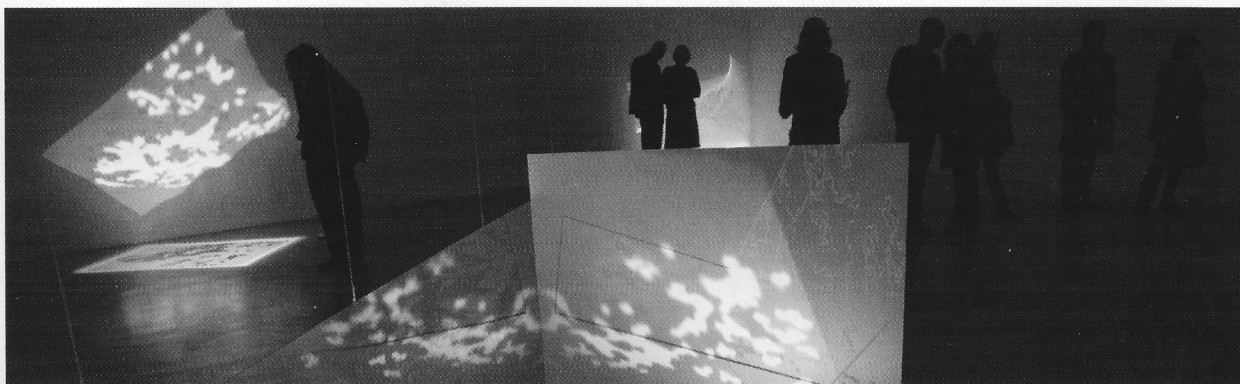
Born in Ljubljana, she graduated from a high school specializing in science and math and studied two years of philosophy before studying painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Ljubljana and at the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts in Paris. In 2002, she earned a master's degree from the Academy of Fine Arts in Ljubljana.

Selected Fellowships & Awards

2005 — Pollock-Krasner Grant, awarded by The Pollock-Krasner Foundation, New York, NY (USA)

2004 — Henkel Art.Award. Youth Artist's Prize and Artist-in-Residence Grant, awarded by KulturKontakt Austria, Vienna (Austria)

2003 — Artist-in-Residence Fellowship in New York, awarded by the Slovenian Ministry of Culture



Exhibition opening at the Künstlerhaus Bethanien