GASIMUM ET CIRCENSES

project by Katarina Šević and Tehnica Schweiz (Gergely László and Péter Rakosi)

project documentation
about the project:

Gasium et Circenses is a complex art project by Katarina Šević and Tehnica Schweiz. The research project focuses on the Óbuda Gas Factory Cultural Centre’s forsaken open air stage and its immediate surroundings. The artists explore the questions of historical remembering, the site’s connotations and “forgotten past”, as well as the “layering” of the eras. The layers reach back as far as the Roman Empire. The buildings of the factory premises – the Gas Factory Housing Development (built in the 1910s), as well as the Gas Factory itself and the Gas Factory Cultural Centre – are located in the area referred to in ancient Rome as Aquincum. As the area has been a site of significant historical and cultural development from ancient times until today, it has become a historical stage of sorts, representative of peripheries. In recent years, for instance, the abandoned cultural centre has been used as an artefact storage facility by the Budapest History Museum.

The project is an experiment in historical reconstruction simultaneously realized in a number of media: outdoor tableau vivant performance, photo series and installation. Its basic questions are contained in a correspondence, which, in the context of the project, has been transformed into a choir piece. This correspondence raises fundamental questions about the relationship between artist and museum, about historical canonization, and about the politics of remembering. Based on this research the Gasium and Circenses tableau vivant performance was created and was performed by the Heroes of the Shaft Company at the open air stage of the Gas Factory Cultural Centre. The performance was documented.

Simultaneously with the project, a booklet has been published with the title of Gasium et Circenses, containing the photo documentation of the project and the libretto of the performance. The publication has been issued by Lumen Station, the publishing program of Lumen Photography Foundation.
Gasium et Circenses, 15' HD video, 2013, stills from the video

Gasium et Circenses, performance, tableau vivant, 2013
This sculpture is a miniature replica of an important find from the Aquincum excavation. Rome sent the statue of the emperor to the provinces the head of which was replaceable.
Gasium et Cireensens, costume, wood, textile, 2 x 1.7 x 0.6 m, 2012

Gasium et Cireensens, reading performance, REHkunst, Berlin

model of the open-air stage, object, wood, 35 x 20 x 15 cm, 2012