

ETH Zürich
D-ARCH Departement Architektur
Institut für Geschichte und Theorie der Architektur gta

Exhibition

Organizer: gta Exhibitions

Date : Thursday the 28. September 2017 to Wednesday the 20. December 2017

Location : Institute for the History and Theory of Architecture (gta), ETH Zurich, Hönggerberg

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Petra Blaisse / Inside Outside, Jubilee in Gold

Curtain for the exhibition Phantom Theory

Institute for the History and Theory of Architecture (gta), ETH Zurich, Hönggerberg

28 September–20 December 2017

Concept and design: Petra Blaisse / Inside Outside, in cooperation with gta Exhibitions

On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Institute for the History and Theory of Architecture (gta) and the exhibition Phantom Theory conceived to mark the event, Petra Blaisse and her studio Inside Outside have designed two curtains, acting as exhibition architecture components to frame the exhibits and at the same time providing a commentary on them. The designer and landscape architect previously developed an “enfilade” for the gta Institute’s exhibition space in autumn 2016 with the title Wings, consisting of black PVC and white semi-transparent curtains. This idea of the curtain as a flexibly deployable architectural element, allowing a reconfiguration of the space in accordance with the respective curatorial objectives, now takes on a new appearance for the current jubilee exhibition. In Phantom Theory the curtains manifest themselves in an ostentatious gold. Multiply printed, punched and pleated, their imitation-leather look elevates them to a striking visual feature of the exhibition. The juxtaposing of “economical” material, imitating its high-end counterpart, the opulent design and the gold colour, which likewise exudes a festiveness and status, can be read in numerous ways as a commentary on the presented subject matter, namely Swiss architecture (and architectural theory) of the previous 50 years. Consciously utilising the idea of kitsch, the curtains constitute a collage, their mannerist play interweaving elements from the gta’s corporate design with quotes from fashion and pop aesthetics to form a large-scale architectural ornament, or indeed a flexible facade that embraces the exhibition like a fastening. Petra Blaisse founded the studio Inside Outside in Amsterdam in 1991, which since then has been involved in realising projects worldwide, ranging from landscape to interior architecture. As the name would suggest, the relationship between internal and external is a crucial concern in the studio’s design practice, which combines numerous interdisciplinary fields of knowledge and craftsmanship. Site-specific, yet at the same time dynamic and impermanently adaptable, Petra Blaisse’s designs respond to the contemporary requirements placed on different spaces. Using a precise orchestration of light, shadow, visual axes and acoustics, the projects demonstrate how perceptions of space can be moulded, allowing it to be queried time and time again. Inside Outside’s most prominent interior architecture projects include, for example, the curtain for the Piper Auditorium at Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass. (2010–2012), Re-Set for the 13th Venice Architecture Biennale (2012), the curtains for the private residence Maison à Bordeaux (2011–2012) or Damask in the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam (2011–2012).

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