

## PRESS RELEASE

**galerie burster** berlin

Finja Sander | *Felsenfest*

14 September – 7 October 2023

Opening & Performance

Thursday, 14 September 2023, 6 – 9 pm

We are pleased to present *Felsenfest*, Finja Sander's second solo show at galerie burster berlin. The exhibition *Felsenfest* presents another moment from Finja Sander's engaging exploration of the contemporary concept of monuments and its influence on our culture of remembrance today.

Almost naturally, Sander marks the beginning of her new exhibition with a live performance in which she explores both the static and transformational potential of the concept of monument. A mobile crane serves as the artist's tool for heaving massive cuboids of paper into the air and ultimately keeping them suspended. The artist has already used the poster convolutions with the inscription *Für Morgen* (For Tomorrow), lashed together with tension belts, in several previous performances and sculptural settings. The phrase refers to the multimedia work series of the same name, *Für Morgen*, which Sander has been continuing since the beginning of 2023. The heavy paper cuboids that hang in the air far above Sander's head at the end of the performance are reminiscent of images of deconstructed, or destroyed, monuments: the severed, stone head of Lenin, or, more recently, the removal of Soviet memorials in Ukraine.

In April, the artist was still arranging the paper into steals, with which she posed and assumed iconic postures, thus approaching the figurative expression of various memorials and honorifics. The photographic work „Denke groß, sei aktiv, halt dich fit“ (Think Big, Be Active, Keep Fit) 2023, captures this performance on Polaroid photographs and provides a referential frame for Sander's recurring use of the posters.

Another work in the exhibition is the five-meter-long curtain, which was printed with the photographic motif of a dystopian-looking rocky landscape. The work *Felsenfest* is both the eponym of the exhibition and the pivotal point for a new thematic focus in Sander's artistic work.

In her reflection on the dimension, texture and formal language of monuments, Finja Sander now goes back to the original material of many monuments: stone. Since the motif shows not only the mere material, but rather a scenic arrangement of large boulders that pile up to form a mountain, the work combines with the artist's theoretical research on the symbolic value of the mountain in the National Socialist context.

As Susan Sontag pointed out in her 1975 essay "Fascinating Fascism," the works of Leni Riefenstahl, for example, whether in her role as an actress or as a director, stylized the mountain as a central element in propagandistic narratives. As Sontag describes Riefenstahl's film "The Blue Light" (1932), "the mountain is portrayed as both supremely beautiful and dangerous, as that majestic force that invites ultimate affirmation and escape from the self – into the brotherhood of courage and into death." Sander, in turn, derives from these approaches a parallel to the construction of many honorary monuments and memorials, exposing them as a continuation of ideological formal language. Text: Nikolas Geier

Finja Sander (\*1996 in Hildesheim, Germany) chooses the medium of performance as a recurring constant. Her own body is the impulse-giving initiator, a kind of seismograph. Her performances have been shown, among others, at the Barlach Museums, Güstrow (2023), at the Skulpturen Triennale in Bingen (2023), at the Museum für Fotografie, Berlin (2021), and at the Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin (2021). Sander graduated in the summer of 2022 with a master's degree in fine arts from the Universität der Künste Berlin in the class of Valérie Favre. She is this year's winner of the UdK Berlin Art Award.

For more information please contact Miriam Schwarz: [miriam@galerieburster.com](mailto:miriam@galerieburster.com)

Opening hours:

Wednesday – Friday 12 – 6 pm | Saturday 12 – 4 pm and by appointment.

Opening hours during Berlin Art Week September 13 – 17, 2023:

Thursday 14, 12 – 9 pm

Friday, 15 + Saturday, 16, 12 – 6 pm and by appointment.