

ARTFORUM

Katinka Bock

SYNAGOGUE DE DELME CENTRE D'ART CONTEMPORAIN
33 rue Poincaré
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The Synagogue of Delme was desanctified nearly thirty years ago, but its transformation into a contemporary art center hardly dimmed its poignancy. The work of young German artist Katinka Bock, whose interest in displacement and equilibrium already makes her a kind of mystical physicist, has no problem integrating into such a charged milieu. Bock's exhibition "Kanon" presents sixteen recent works, some created for the space, and the rest readily precipitating into its pathos.

Ja, 2008, one of the former, is a pipeline that routes water from the women's bath (now the reception room), up through the gallery, down into the central hall, and back. The pipe is punctured at various spots, dribbling into puddles that convert the water of ablution into humid contamination. This lachrymal theme turns dirgeful in the video *Couler un tas de Pierre* (Sinking a Pile of Stones), 2007, in which a coffin full of rubble drifts down river until it finally and suddenly sinks with Faulknerian distemper.

Conversation, 2008, a series of tablets sliced from a single block of sandstone, dominoes through the room and the lawn outside. In a synagogue without a congregation, these tablets without commandments are full of mute potential—a quality more powerfully wielded by the architectural golem *Sechs Flächen und ein Raum* (Six Planes and One Room), 2008, six sheets of unfired clay that reproduce the dimensions of the synagogue's former ark. In Bock's work, clay and stone suggest *arte povera* mysticism and, above all, aesthetic appeal, but in the synagogue they become sacramental. That a given material should absorb so much meaning from its context is a telltale sign of its initial porosity—conceptually, that is. The synagogue seems to have a richer relationship with clay than Bock. Yet here, liturgical sense, like characters inscribed on the golem's forehead, animates the show into a maturing canon of meanings.

— Joanna Fiduccia



Sechs Flächen und ein Raum (Six Planes and One Room), 2008, clay, dimensions variable. (Photo: Olivier Dancy)

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