

# ARTFORUM

INTERVIEWS

## KATINKA BOCK

April 24, 2018 • Katinka Bock on her exhibition for Glasgow International 2018



View of "Radio Piombino," 2018, The Common Guild, Glasgow.

*Katinka Bock is a German, Paris-based artist whose debut exhibition in Scotland, "Radio Piombino," is currently on view at the Common Guild in Glasgow through July 8, 2018. The show is presented as part of Glasgow International 2018, which runs until May 7, 2018. Here, she discusses her approach to materials and sites, as well as the effects of natural processes, such as the weather, on her works.*

**THE INSIDE AND THE OUTSIDE**, the dry and the wet, the hot and the cold, the visible

and the invisible: these oppositional modes have dramatic effects in the world. However, I want to bring my work back to something that is much more precise, and much smaller. I am a sculptor. I work with materials, each of which has certain possibilities and impossibilities. I never decide what I want to represent, but with what material I want to work.

The pieces in “Radio Piombino” were all affected by interactions with Glasgow or took objects from this locality as a starting point. Several of the works were produced by casting local fish directly in bronze, poisoning the material with their organic bodies and thereby causing faults in the resulting sculptures. They appear now as aged, diseased, or damaged.

*Conversation suspended, Glasgow* is a mobile composed from ceramic cylinders I placed in various locations around Glasgow (a restaurant, a Loch Lomond woodland, and the Firth of Clyde estuary, among others) for several months. Time and space became models for changing and shaping these ceramics. I see the works as sculptural ambassadors. They started their own dialogue with the inhabitants, with the water, or with the problems of the city.

I am not directly concerned with ecological issues, although they come into my work. I'm more interested in how natural systems are approaching an end point and how successful societies tend toward self-destruction. In postindustrial areas like Glasgow and Piombino, Italy, progress has outrun built systems. Industrial sites and materials are anachronistic and affect, infect, or change the present landscape and population both physically and psychologically.

When I place an object, like the sheet of blue cotton of *For your eyes only* on the roof of the Common Guild, for that period it is not an artwork, but only another object in the world. The resulting changes are not spectacular. Indeed, the story of placing the objects is much more spectacular than what you see. There is something modest or not so heroic about them.

The works have their own independence from myself and from where they were before. In the gallery, I put them in a certain configuration and relation to each other. They are in dialogue with the space and with the light. It is important to perceive them like this and not to return to a bigger history at every opportunity.

I would never want my work to point directly to issues of environmental damage, frontiers, or identity. It's not really the way that I work. Politics is not my starting point. On the other hand, political issues of course affect my life and my thoughts—but more as a human being than as an artist. I live in a society, and I am confronted with cultural and political crises, which integrate into my being.

I think it is difficult to have only one opinion, politically. I honestly feel confused about so many things. I can't just say that this is wrong and this is right. I just feel that everything is connected and influenced and complicated, and maybe there's also a lot of beauty in that. This is what I want to show.

— *As told to Calum Sutherland*

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