

In her multidisciplinary work the Berlin artist Hannah Hallermann combines clear, essential forms with complex social issues. In her sculptures, which partly evoke abstract architectural elements or sports equipment, she explores the relationship between bodies and objects, the contemporary narratives of constant optimization and the need for leaps of faith, new beginnings and breakups. The strong spatial presence of the work is closely linked to a metaphorical level.

For example, her series of *Startblocks* (image No.1&2), made of various material combinations, can be read in a tradition of minimalism on the one hand while on the other hand a symbolic narrative component seems inherent. A starting block is an object of taking off as well as challenge to personal limitations and a fear of heights. It is a matter of hesitation and revving up, a point of departure at which contradictory emotions are conglomerating and yet a decision has to be made.

A few neon-yellow metal stands (*Hürde(with a warm eye)*) (Image No3), reminiscent of parts of hurdles or high-jump plants, are rising straight up and seem to be waiting for a task. Without their function of challenging a body to peak performance, they appear somewhat lost in space, yet can not stop maintaining posture. In Hallermann's work impulses concerning urgent questions of our time seem to materialize: how much can and must you accomplish, how is your body formed by things and how can you stay true to yourself while participating in shaping society?

In the long foyer of the Kunstverein on Rosa-Luxemburg-Platz, a heavy cloth soaked in loam (black earth) wraps itself around a bright yellow branch, which only seems to be held up by the tension and weight of the blanket. As it is often the case with Hannah Hallermann, the implication of sculpture is a contradictory one. Is it about a tent-like shelter or a showdown of objects that drag each other to the point of exhaustion? (*O.T.*)/image No 4,5)

Handling the materials herself in her Studio, Hannah Hallermann employs intriguing, often competing pairs of materials and ideas in her work: identity with nature, reduced forms with sociopolitical observations and the past with the future. The materials she chooses are powerful transmitters of movement and energy, she often uses materials such as steel in combination with loam. One of the most ancient building materials, loam can be manipulated and reused over centuries. It is never static just as fire (*Phoenix, hex, hex*, image No7) has always been and still is a place of gathering, exchange and transformation (*Paul*, detail image No6)

Have exercising and spiritual approaches been commercialised? Not serving the purpose of gaining poise and insight but to be even more efficient in the meritocracy afterwards? In her work *Demutsübung* (image No8) Hallermann dissects religious attitudes as much as it reveals dogmatic stands in the religious and minimalistic stand.⁹ /1 Hannah Hallermann is critically aware of the minimalistic avantgarde being a man-dominated movement, yet she did learn to listen to minimalism and finds listening to be a major tool to help shape your surroundings and to reinvent the public space.

Listening is also key to understanding cause and effect. In her works from the hurricane series (image No 9) and *Eva* (image No 10) the artist questions where

female stereotypes come from and how we can reform them. Since 1930 meteorologists gave hurricanes female names. In 1979, this led to protests. Now hurricanes carry alternating male and female names female; whereas female named hurricanes statistically caused more death since then. Male names sound dangerous, female ones harmless - this is what thousands of years with this kind of stories taught us and the consequence of that is that hurricanes for example named Pauline or Dolly are underestimated.

Hannah Hallermann's works of art are never unambiguous and address individual growth as well as collective transformation. It provides paradox with form and refuses to accept stagnation.