

CRITICS' PICK LODZ, POLAND

Aura Rosenberg

Muzeum Sztuki | MS1 | Więckowskiego 36

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By Gabriela Acha

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View of "Aura Rosenberg: Statues Also Fall in Love," 2024-25. Photo: Anna Zagrodzka.

Caught in the middle of a metaphorical storm, Walter Benjamin's famous "Angel of History" allegory—inspired by a Paul Klee painting—portrays the march of history as an angel that cannot close its wings, perpetually propelled toward the future. Aura Rosenberg revisits this figure throughout her solo show here, so as to draw out notions of overlapping temporalities from her own sculptures, prints, and films. Her psychedelic, digital-new-age animation *Angel of History*, 2013, for instance, depicts the rubble that piles up in the wake of progress, as witnessed by the winged entity.

In *The Missing Souvenir*, 2003-24, an unlimited batch of souvenir-like replicas from Berlin's Siegessäule monument, Rosenberg points to the conflicting historical narratives that can amalgamate within a single icon, highlighting our shifting canonical standards and the devaluation of original meaning. The nineteenth-century victory emblem—relocated by Adolf Hitler during the Third Reich and since turned into a tourist attraction—illustrates the constant reframing of history, which ultimately transforms historically significant symbols into hollow, disposable images.

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Key for Rosenberg was the confrontational placement of Kristen Visbal's *Fearless Girl* (2017) across from Arturo di Modica's *Charging Bull* (1989) in New York's Financial District in 2017, before it was relocated nearby. The symbolic tension between the two archetypes is developed in her recent film with Veronica Gonzalez Peña, *The Space Between Us*, 2024, a freestyle narration that places the bull and the girl in dialogue with the ancient myth of the Minotaur. A voice-over declaration—"you look at a face, you become the face, you become the act itself"—creates space for identification between the two opposing figures.

Rosenberg's appropriated icons operate in another gray zone: the space between original and copy, between "low" and "high" forms of representation. "Statues Also Fall in Love," 2018–24, a series of photographic juxtapositions between classical sculptures and their contemporary copycats found in pornography, which lends its title to the exhibition, captures timeless anxieties around desire and the formation of identity. As we drift through increasing polarization and diminishing access to original sources, Rosenberg's hybrid mythologies take on Baudrillardian, hyperreal forms in their quest for conciliation.