

STAGINGS OF A ROOM

STEFFI KLENZ

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Steffi Klenz’s practice is preoccupied with the built environment, critically exploring the notion of place and spatiality. Her work unfolds in urban places and buildings and uncovers unexpected embedded narratives and traces of history .

Klenz’s recent works *Beun (*2015-16) and *He Only Feels the Black and White of it* (2016) explore the moment when a photographic image ‘fails’ to communicate as a document. Klenz’s work suggest that navigating a terrain or building can disrupt and reveal the narrational and representational potential of the photographed place.

The photographic series *Beun* begins with an Associated Press photograph of a concentration camp in Ohrdruf, East-Germany. By digitally corrupting the image file, the image becomes ruptured, deformed and disfigured into digital codec mismatch. Collapsing time and space, the resulting images re-emerge recognizable but strangely out of reach. Klenz’s new video piece *Beun (2016)* refers to an unknown World Prison Camp gathered from the same collection. Klenz constructed a life-size model in her studio as well as photographic conditions such as lighting and camera position of the archive image. Klenz filmed this architectural replica and ruptured the imagery in a similar manner to the photographic images of the photographic series *Beun*. Klenz is interested in putting the viewer of *Beun* in the position of ‘spiraling’ or ‘hovering’, unable to literally finish or exhaust the piece. She provides an experience of looking: a form of unfolding that suggests that no single visualization can offer a transparent interpretation of such a historical place.

*He only feels the Black and White of It* explores the impact of the political dictatorship in the former East Germany. The work is based on a 1973 photograph of a damaged section of the Berlin Wall, and depicts East German military guards and border police repairing the Wall. Multiple screenprints of the photograph were made, each slightly different from the others and triggered a series of reflections on the artist’s own family history, and the text highlights the loss of freedom and identity experienced by her father as a young man in East Germany.