

m y c a s t l e y o u r c a s t l e

Set up as a somewhat retro TV talk show my castle your castle operates from within the skeleton of the Prussian castle that is currently being re-built in the center of Berlin. Erected on the foundations of the dismantled GDR parliament building called Palace of the Republic, the castle is not only an imperialist architectural remake, in its future function as exhibition space for the 'Ethnographic Collections' of Berlins National Museums it literally embodies Germany's legacies of colonial violence. The video performance work engages the building site as a stage for the material and social construction – as well as the queer contestation – of 'nation' and (white) 'masculinity': Interviewed by a talk show host over a piece of cake from porcelain dishes with reproductions of the castle and its disappeared counterpart, two construction workers evoke an opaque third in a language of structural matter. Peter Friedrich had supervised the construction (1973-76) of the Palast der Republik, and Gunter Teichert worked as the head of its deconstruction (2006-08). In the matter of fact conversation between the 'makers of the palace', their body of work – in other words architecture, political representation, memory – disintegrates in the builders' jargon.

However, the material and machinic vocabulary of construction site itself resonates the massive urban reconstructions, redistributions of properties and redefinitions of political meaning through architecture that have followed the disappearance of state socialisms in Europe. This vocabulary is emphasized and queered in short interludes to the talk show in which the talk show host, who is performed by the artist herself incorporating elements of drag, appears sitting on a huge excavating machine or between metal poles that stabilize casts for concrete. Here, from within the construction site, the talk master lip-synchs the ideological statements of (male) voices on their oppositional but all too similar longings for the palace and the castle. My Castle Your Castle ends with a camp cowboy reenactment of the Ray Price song 'I saw my Castles fall today' that subversively quotes the hegemonic figure of the settler colonialist while at the same time celebrating – with glitter and high heels – the demolition of patriarchal Western phantasies of omnipotence.

Suza Husse_exhibition and talks: Drag Kings, Phantoms, Mirrors, Hands. (one hundred years of dis-/appearances) at SixtyEight Art Institute Kopenhagen, 2017