

ephemerality is the new permanent



Opening on June 30th - Aerial View

Gallerí Underpass, a new public art space in downtown Reykjavík, consists of two concrete underpass walls visible from the street. Its inaugural exhibition is the splendidly fluid Aerial View by Anna Hallin, a colourful painting directly applied to the concrete. In preparation for the exhibition Hallin drew ink images based on aerial views of Keflavík International Airport—including its runways, airplane aprons and ramps, and the various connections between these architectural elements. These delicate drawings are reminiscent of board games, yet conversational. Chance is integrated into the process such that the lines flutter on the paper. Using these as inspiration, Hallin combines ink with spray and house paint, then under-paints the lines, drips, and arcs to lend depth to the flat wall. With its sense of layering, Aerial View speaks to the infrastructure that undergirds the city—its flight patterns, car and bike paths, artificial lighting, string of restaurants, bars, and “puffin shops” but also undersea Internet cables—more so than to the random encounters that occur in its spaces, as do the drawings. Paint and ink meld with concrete, and Hallin’s vision of the city becomes the city, at least for a moment.

The sense of archeological shift is integral to Hallin’s conception of Aerial Views, as it is for the gallery, which offers viewers an opportunity to find out where and what “public” signifies in a time of technological change, natural eruptions, and of course a pandemic.

The gallery founders, Hallin and Olga Bergmann, intend to host two artists per year at Gallerí Underpass. This rotation is essential to their vision, which is the natural outcome of a decades-long collaborative practice that goes under the moniker of Berghall. In 2019, for example, Berghall created outdoor works for a high security prison in Hólmsheiði, Iceland. One of these, titled Flight Patterns, consists of elegant lines derived from bird flight patterns etched directly onto the prison walls, allowing those in confinement to see natural cycles of return and departure from a “birds eye view.” Projects such as this, which fuse modern methods with natural patterns, demonstrate Berghall’s approach while distinguishing it from postmodern practices that disrupt the urban fabric (such as Gordon Matta-Clark’s architectural slices, or even, closer to home, Richard Serra’s Milestones columns that frame Reykjavík landmarks from Viðey Island). Instead, the artists work within institutional constraints while revealing air bubbles in the concrete, so to speak.

Similarly, Gallerí Underpass provides urban strollers a view of the contemporary landscape from another site, from an underpass, which is, technically speaking, a route tunneled under the visible layer of the city to connect one area to another. Thought metaphysically, the gallery turns everyday “views” of Reykjavík inside out by suggesting that ephemerality is the new permanent.

by Dore Bowen



Aerial View X, Reykjavik, 2021



Aerial View XII, Siglufjörður, 2020

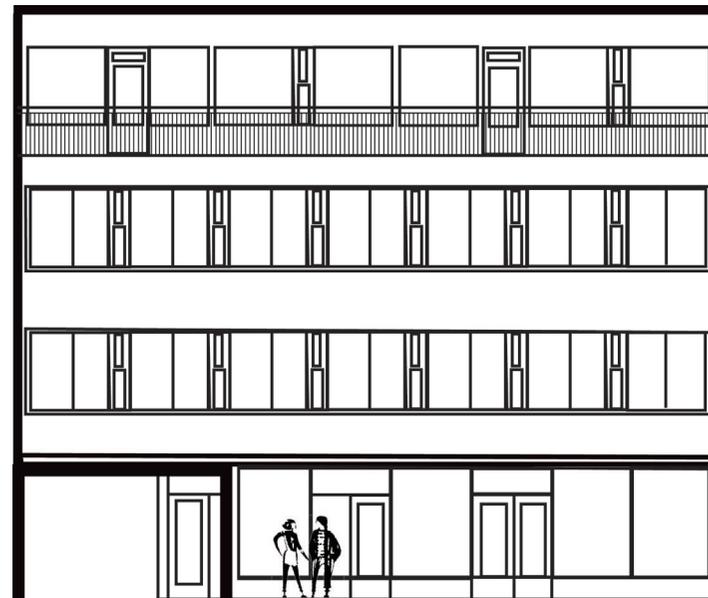
Markmiðið með þessu nýja galleríi er að stofna til vettvangs fyrir tímabundin útilistaverk í borginni auka sýnileika samtímalistar í borgarrýminu og skapa vettvang þar sem myndlistamönnum gefst tækifæri til að takast á við óhefðbundið rými og nýjar aðstæður til sýningarhalds í almannarými.

A new art space - Gallery Underpass

The aim of this new gallery is to create a platform for temporary outdoor works in the city, increase the visibility of contemporary art in the urban space and create a platform where artists are given the opportunity to deal with unconventional spaces and new conditions for exhibiting in public space.

næsta sýningar/next exhibitions:
Einar Garibaldi september 2021
Eygló harðardóttir febrúar 2022

Verkefnið er styrkt af Reykjavíkurborg/
the project is supported by the city of Reykjavik.



Gallerí Undirgöng

Hverfisgata 76, 101 Reykjavík, Iceland