

Background information

"The beginning" (2023) by Anna Bogouchevskaia

The German-Russian sculptor Anna Bogouchevskaia makes extensive use from the vocabulary of various art historical positions. Old master positions in painting are just as important for her as modernist sculptors. Her first and inconspicuous work "The beginning" in the entrée of her retrospective in Rostock refers to Johannes Vermeer, the great unknown of Dutch Baroque painting. In his art of painting, he brings the invisible to light through the visible.

The currently important museum exhibitions in Dresden and Amsterdam became the starting point for Bogouchevskaia's sculptural adaptation. Bogouchevskaia's bronze "The beginning", a bronze cast by Noack, tells the great story of a small painting from 1657. Although the Dutch painter Jan Vermeer never left his country, the work "The Soldier and the Laughing Girl" by the Baroque painter shows, among other things, the birth of globalization.

His masterpiece is now on display in the Frick Collection in New York, where the wide-brimmed hat of the man depicted still attracts attention. In doing so, he gets to the heart of the history of inventions and discoveries relating to the economy from its beginnings. From today's perspective, the way too large hat painted by Vermeer on the head of the soldier in the foreground of the painting, which is 50 centimetres high and 46 centimetres wide, shows the birth of globalization.

Acquired in the autumn of 1911 by entrepreneur Henry Clay Frick for his private collection, the canvas shows at first glance a very classical painting: "The Soldier and the Laughing Girl" by Jan Vermeer from 1657. The masterpiece of art history shows a man sitting at a table from behind, in conversation with a pretty young woman sitting opposite to him. Behind the two is a geographical map, which already shows the intertwining of the continents. Dominant in the picture and a detail whose true significance Vermeer's contemporaries surely could not have missed is the soldier's huge hat, which had the aura of wealth in the highest social circles in the heyday of the Netherlands in the 17th century at a price comparable to an entire house at the time.

The exceptional: The beaver fur made the hat unique and soon led to an extinction of the beaver in Europe. Bogouchevskaia's bronze "The beginning" tells the extraordinary story of how an oversized hat ended up on the soldier's head. She had a traditional hatter in Amsterdam reconstruct the soldier's hat based on Vermeer's painting so that it could then be cast in bronze. Today, this hat should be understood as a symbol, as in Vermeer's painting, leads to the place of the origins of capitalism.

From Vermeer's home town of Delft via Amsterdam to New York and Quebec. In order to continue to secure beaver fur for a hat of this size, a new economic chain emerged between the continents, involving hat makers, traders and trappers. The unabated high demand made the beaver skin business lucrative in the Dutch Golden Age. Dutch merchants laid the foundations by setting up a capital investment company to finance the beaver skin venture. This gave rise to the first public limited company and, at the same time, the financial market with the world's oldest securities exchange in Amsterdam.

The import and export business with its logistics was born. The institutional foreign trade with the challenges for people and the environment has started and continues to this day.

For information, queries, interview and picture request:

Kunsthalle Rostock
Hamburger Str. 40
18069 Rostock

Telefon: +49381 3817000
Mail: kunsthalle@rostock.de

www.kunsthallerostock.de

Studio Anna Bogouchevskaia
Am Spreebord 9
10589 Berlin

Telefon: +49 152 2415 2582
Mail: studioannabogouchevskaia@gmail.com

www.bogouchevskaia.com