

klosterruine berlin

anything, anything Kate Newby

9 June 2024 – 27 April 2025

Opening: Saturday, 8 June 2024, 19:00



Kate Newby, *anything, anything*, Klosterruine Berlin 2024. Photo: Robert Hamacher

For her exhibition *anything, anything*, Kate Newby has developed a new site-responsive work that addresses Klosterruine Berlin as a place of continuous change. For the intervention, the artist worked on more than nine hundred bricks before the firing process and integrated them into the floor of the monastery ruin in the form of two lines, each fifty meters long. In doing so, she emphasizes process in the production and presentation of the work, which is constantly changing in relation to its surroundings. Her work subtly and unobtrusively touches on interactions and exchanges, often-overlooked aspects of social texture and conditions of dependency.

klosterruine berlin

In collaboration with the Rairies Montrieux brick factory in Les Rairies, France, Newby processed the soft brick blanks directly after they had been extruded.¹ She inserted shapes, recesses and patterns that she observed in urban space – site-specific traces that document transience and social occupation. Her attention is focused on how social conditions are inscribed on an environment, often contrasting with the official interpretations of architecture and urban planning. In some cases, she inserted shards of glass into the clay that were collected around the Klosterruine and Alexanderplatz in the months leading up to the exhibition. By firing them with the bricks, they fused inseparably. Like a container, the work preserves these unofficial stories of the area.

Bricks have characterized the city of Berlin since the Middle Ages. The Gothic architecture of the former Franciscan monastery church is made of bricks that were extracted from the clay-rich soil of the area in the 13th century and formed in a brick factory located in nearby Tempelhof.² A fieldstone building already existed on the site, which was integrated into the construction of the monastery church – the remains of which can still be seen on the northern wall today. Kate Newby's work *anything, anything* takes up these connections, superimpositions and transformations and integrates itself directly into the architecture, blurring the boundaries between the work and its surroundings.

After various uses as a church, school and printing press, and its destruction during the Second World War, Klosterruine Berlin is now a public space that brings together history and contemporary art. It is freely accessible and open to a diverse public. In a sense, the Klosterruine offers a counterpoint to the city and its nearby consumerist spaces. It is one of the few remaining sites that is largely free of the constraints of commercialization in a city where rising rents, privatization, housing shortages, marginalization and homogenization exert pressure.

Kate Newby's work is situated in a city whose reality is characterized by a pluralistic and changing dynamic. Her installation *anything, anything* extends over the entire length of the Klosterruine, mapping countless details that invite close observation. The viewer's gaze is directed both into the distance, along the length of the work, and to the ground at one's feet. Together, these surfaces and details imagine an archaeology of the city, woven together like fragmentary stories.

For the intervention, Kate Newby used bricks with a pointed surface that are normally employed for façades. These bricks are mass-produced and largely uniform, but through small carvings and uneven textures they become noticeable as handmade works. In sculptural gestures, Newby removed clay and modelled the bricks into landscapes with depressions and rises, joints and ruptures. They bear traces of their carving, with drawings, furrows, puddles, holes and incisions. Over time, the work absorbs rainwater and detritus carried by the wind, and it is thus constantly activated.

klosterruine berlin

Depending on the viewpoint, the work simultaneously opens up abstraction and representation. It subtly points to the incompleteness of one's own perspective, to what is missing from view or only apparent on closer inspection. Kate Newby's intervention invites the viewer to adopt various positions of proximity and distance to observe the work and its relationship to the architecture and surrounding public space.

In addition, the changing rhythms of light and weather influence perception of the sculpture. Working in this open space requires consideration of environmental conditions, the vulnerability of materials and their erosion. The sculpture will evolve with the site over the course of the exhibition, exposed to sun, rain, heat and storms – conditions that are becoming increasingly harsh due to climate change. It interacts with the environment and is thus subject to degrees of uncertainty and instability. These relationships of instability also play a central role in the history of land art, perhaps most impressively in the work of the still little-recognized artist Beverly Buchanan. Hidden in the tall grasses and brackish waters of the Glynn marshes on the southeast coast of Georgia in the USA, Buchanan's work *Marsh Ruins* exists in constant tension between persistence and decay.³

Kate Newby's works appear in dialogue with land art and post-minimalist sculpture but refuse clear classification. They are closely linked to the unnoticed and overlooked, epitomizing moments of fragmentation, disappearance and "localized detail."⁴ Reflecting on overlooked or marginalized aspects reveals public space to be a contradictory and often conflictual zone.

In addition to the site-specific installation, Kate Newby has produced a limited-edition series of postcards. As a handmade work of art, each card is unique. They are freely accessible, can be kept or sent, and are thus easy to distribute – a logic that contradicts the usual economics of art. The haptic quality of these postcards is reminiscent of analog printing techniques, drawing a connection to the Klosterruine as the site of one of Berlin's first printing presses in the 16th century.

Kate Newby's work is characterized by an appreciation for the materials, labor, knowledge and people involved in its production, while also remaining open to change with the environment. Her work consists of multiplied relations and fragmentary elements that combine with each other and their surroundings to become complete. In a world fixated on individuality, Kate Newby's work recognizes the interdependencies through which coexistence takes place. In this sense, *anything*; *anything* can be read as a consideration of interwoven and layered histories, perspectives and timeframes that are anchored in the present.

–Juliane Bischoff

klosterruine berlin



Kate Newby, *anything, anything*, Klosterruine Berlin 2024. Photo: Robert Hamacher

¹ The color of the clay is determined by its mineral composition and firing method, in this case, with a wood-fired kiln. The clay used, known as *Lumière*, consists of a mixture of four types of clay from France and the Westerwald, Germany.

² The brickworks and the site of the church, right next to Berlin's city wall, were gifted to the Franciscan order by the Brandenburg margraves.

³ Amelia Groom, *Beverly Buchanan: Marsh Ruins* (London: Afterall, 2021).

⁴ Maggie Nelson, *Women, the New York School, and Other True Abstractions* (Iowa: University of Iowa Press), p. 27.

klosterruine berlin

Kate Newby (*1979 in Auckland) studied at Elam School of Fine Arts, where she received her Doctor of Fine Arts in 2015. She has had numerous solo and group exhibitions in places such as Melbourne, Mexico City, Brussels, Los Angeles, Lisbon, Toronto, Vienna, London and more. Newby has completed artist residencies in Germany, Australia, the USA, Mexico and Canada, including at the Chinati Foundation (Marfa, 2012), Fogo Island (2012/13) and ISCP (NYC, 2012). She was awarded the Walters Prize in 2012 and a Joan Mitchell Foundation Fellowship in 2019. Kate Newby lives and works in Floresville, Texas (USA).

The exhibition is curated by Juliane Bischoff.

With generous support of

