View of "Thea Djordjaze," 2019.

Thea Djordjadze

KUNST MUSEUM WINTERTHUR

Notions of provisionality and contingency have long been leitmotifs of the work of the Berlin-based Georgian artist Thea Djordjadze. Objects both found and fabricated coalesce in a particular configuration for the duration of an exhibition and are then dispersed back into their constituent parts. Djordjadze arranges elements paratactically; new resonances emerge as the physical relationship between individual objects—between, say, an angular metal sculpture, a Berber carpet, and a lumpy ceramic vessel—is reconfigured. And just as she adapts her works to the spaces in which they are installed, so those spaces are also transformed through a material dialogue with the works they contain.

For her recent exhibition "one is so public, and the other, so private," Djordjadze deployed an impressive array of sculptures and installations that responded to the specificity of the space and frequently to their own previous lives in other contexts. Each of the nine rooms of the show had it its own title. On entering the first, "Power of No Excuses," one encountered *Untitled*,

2017, a work that introduced a number of concerns that would play out in various ways throughout the subsequent galleries. Set directly on the floor, the cold-rolled-steel sculpture in its rectilinear form and obdurate materiality clearly referenced both Minimalist sculpture of the 1960s and '70s and the quotidian form of a bench. Measuring about seventeen by nineteen and a half feet, the low-slung work isolated and enclosed an area of the gallery floor, suggesting a notion of sculpture that has as much to do with the delimitation and organization of space as with the creation and placement of three-dimensional objects (or visitors' bodies) within it. In fact, this work had first been created for Djordjadze's exhibition at the Pinakothek der Moderne in Munich in 2017, where—partially covered at the time with handmade carpets—it did double duty as gallery seating for visitors viewing prints and drawings selected by the artist from the Staatliche Graphische Sammlung München, displayed in specially designed vitrines.

These display cases also made an appearance in Winterthur, in a room called "History of Display," where they had been powder-coated and repurposed to hold small metal objects of the artist's making. Meanwhile, works from the Kunst Museum Winterthur's own formidable collection were installed in a gallery named "A Guide on Wrong Path," where they hung on a group of three freestanding modular structures of black steel—each *Untitled*, 2014-—which evoked the sliding metal screens familiar from art-storage depots as well as the grid as one of modernism's paradigmatic forms.

The room-size installation *oneissopublicandtheothersoprivate*, 2019, occupied the literal center of the show's own three-by-three grid of galleries. Three of its walls were occupied by wainscoting-like paneling of black metal, the height of which shifted subtly along its length, giving the whole room a slightly off-kilter feeling. Atop or draped over this encircling low wall and across the floor of the gallery, Djordjadze had arranged a group of smaller objects fashioned of metal, plaster, papier-mâché, and painted burlap. In its dialogue between architecture and sculpture, between precision fabrication and handmade craft, between planning and improvisation, *oneissopublicandtheothersoprivate* (the words running together almost in anticipation of a hashtag) functioned as a microcosm of the larger exhibition to which it lent its title.

Artists have always been concerned with the boundaries between the intimate, private space of the studio and the public or semipublic spaces in which works are eventually shown. But social media and the accompanying unprecedented flow of private information into the public sphere, and vice versa, has made these boundaries feel increasingly precarious. In engendering a certain kind of material precarity, in which even the most monumental objects can be physically altered and conceptually transformed from one exhibition context to another, Djordjadze's practice offers us a model—an ethics, even—for contemporary looking in general, one in which a meeting of the personal and subjective with the institutional and the infrastructural results in neither acquiescence nor antagonism but in quiet but nevertheless dramatic gestures of rapprochement.

— *Jacob Proctor*