



# BAROQUE WORK

Videotableaux  
HDV 60min each

The new construction project of the Berlin City Palace, which replaces the demolished Palace of the Republic, deserves to be a matter of controversy. The building, which is going to be a hybrid of concrete slab construction and exact replica of the baroque facades of the palace blasted by the GDR authorities in 1950, implements a neo-imperialistic gesture, the more as it shall host the so called Humboldtforum, an ethnographic museum with the huge Prussian collection of crafted artifacts from all over the world.

You can also study the reconstruction of baroque ornamentation under the perspective of ethnographic artifact. As well as Melanesian woodcarving, Turkmen embroidery or Cameroonian beadwork it raises questions about the desire of beauty in ornamental work - and about the living and working conditions in which these objects got manufactured.

The new construction of the palace coincides with a period of meteoric development. The conjunction of digital technologies and ancient craftsmanship opens completely new perspectives.

While all premodern technical skills and styles got abandoned in Western German art schools, they used to stay an important part of artistic formation in GDR. From this results a paradox: The symbolic execution of the GDR – the replacement of a socialist building by a neo-feudal palace – can only be realized thanks to the skills of artists and sculptors, who got their education in GDR and who have to assert themselves now in a very competitive market.

The videotableaux document these artists and sculptors at work. Always filmed with fixed camera position and without cut for the duration of one hour, they give an impression of the time-based dimension of work. The working conditions of the portrayed are sketched by short texts.

The videotableaux were filmed in Berlin and Dresden from January to June 2015  
HDV, duration 60min each.

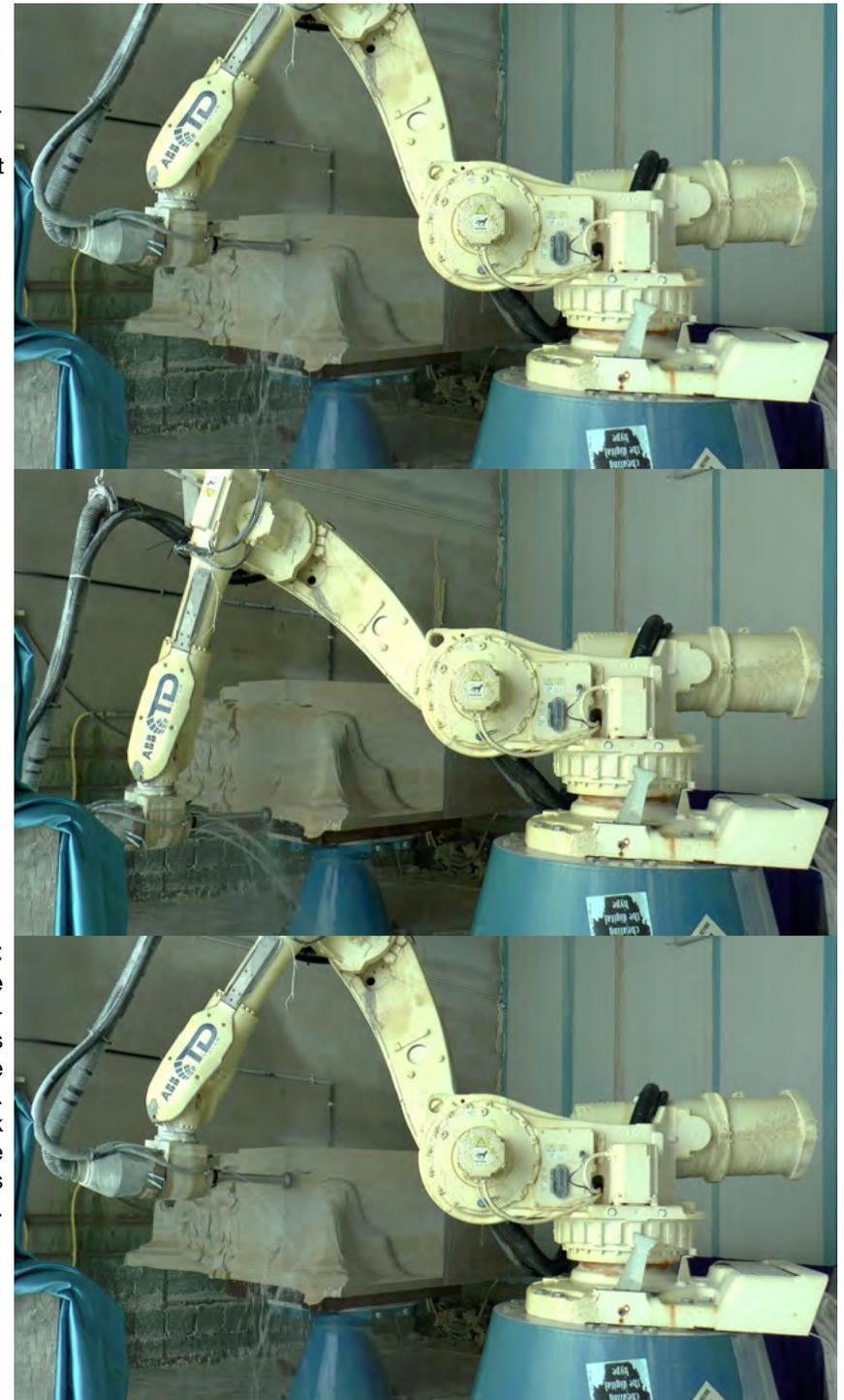
link to vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/153742644>





left:  
**le rêve du vol éternel  
- Ikarus reloaded**

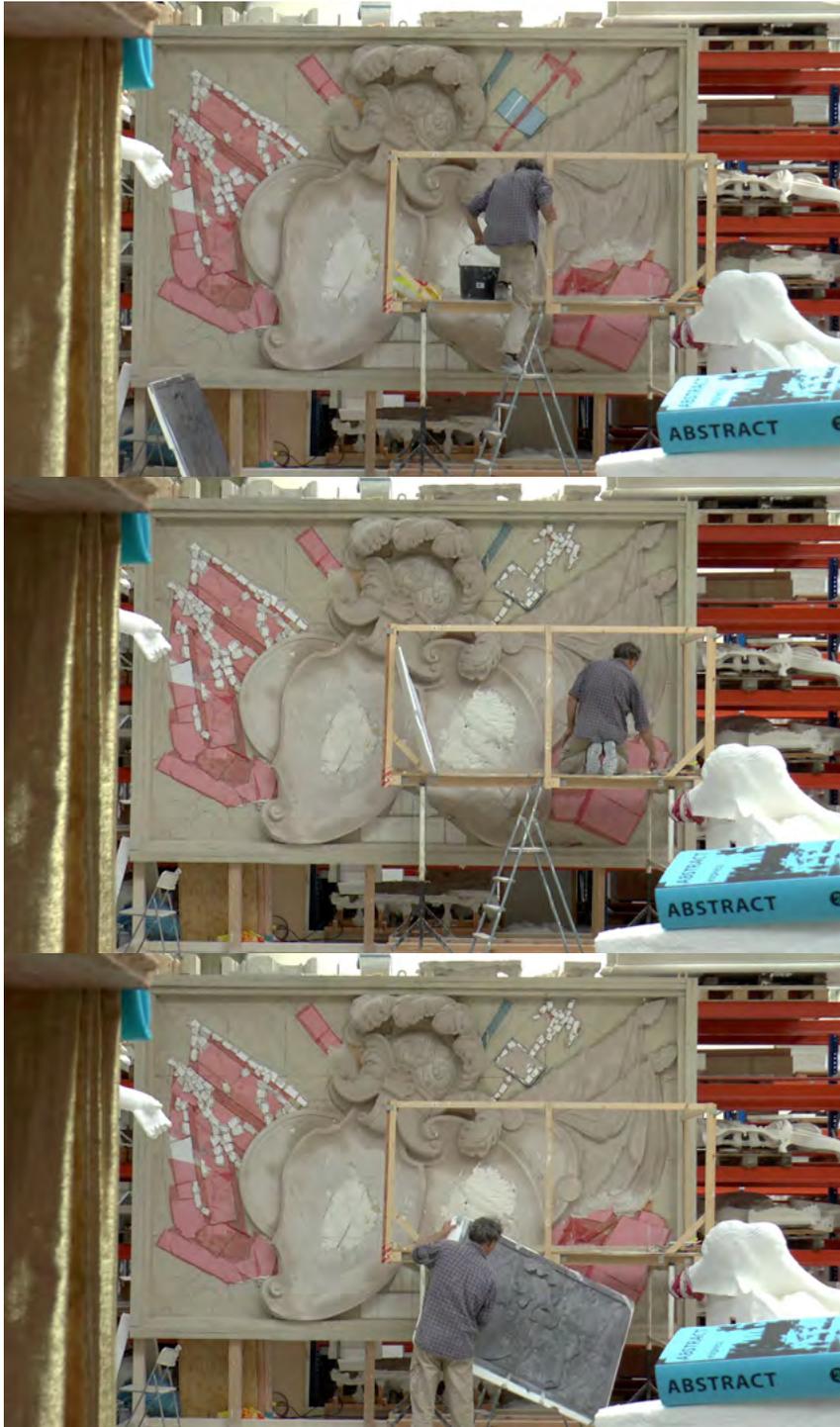
He says: Baroque has been a feeling of life, you can't reconstruct. You can copy it, yes, provided that you have an original to be copied, but you can never reconstruct this feeling. Never. We are simply unable to do it.



right:

**cheating the digital hype**

The man at the computer is geologist. He scans the plaster models and programs the robot to shape raw forms out of the sandstone. For him as a family man this work offers much more reliable income than a scientific career with its uncertainties.



left:  
**abstract**

In GDR artists had a fixed monthly income of 400 Mark. With 30.000 Mark remuneration for a bigger commission you could buy a house of your own and spent there some years of easy life. In your own studio you were free. The reconstruction work is subject to strict controls. There is no margin left to the artist for individual interpretation or little baroque baubles. Everything displeasing to the commission has to be adjusted - and in the worst case to be redone from the beginning. The risk of supplementary unpaid working hours bears the artist.

right:  
**basics 2.0**

With a hydraulic crane it takes less than five minutes to lift the basis of a column onto its foundation. Then hours of measuring have to be spent for its orientation. This work requests absolute precision. The smallest deviation would be propagated and multiplied by each layer of stone.





left:  
**copy : right : left**

To share the risk the sculptors organized themselves in a GmBH (ltd. company), which was awarded the commission for manufacture of portal III. They work for the company as freelancers.

What he is going to work once the palace is finished he doesn't know yet. But up to now he has always been lucky.

<https://vimeo.com/151624236>



right:  
**Lip**

Inclusions like conches or cristals are annoying, especially when they appear at delicate locations. That's natural stone. Mostly they can be repaired. Fortunately. That you have to reject an entire stone because of it, such a bad luck almost never happens.



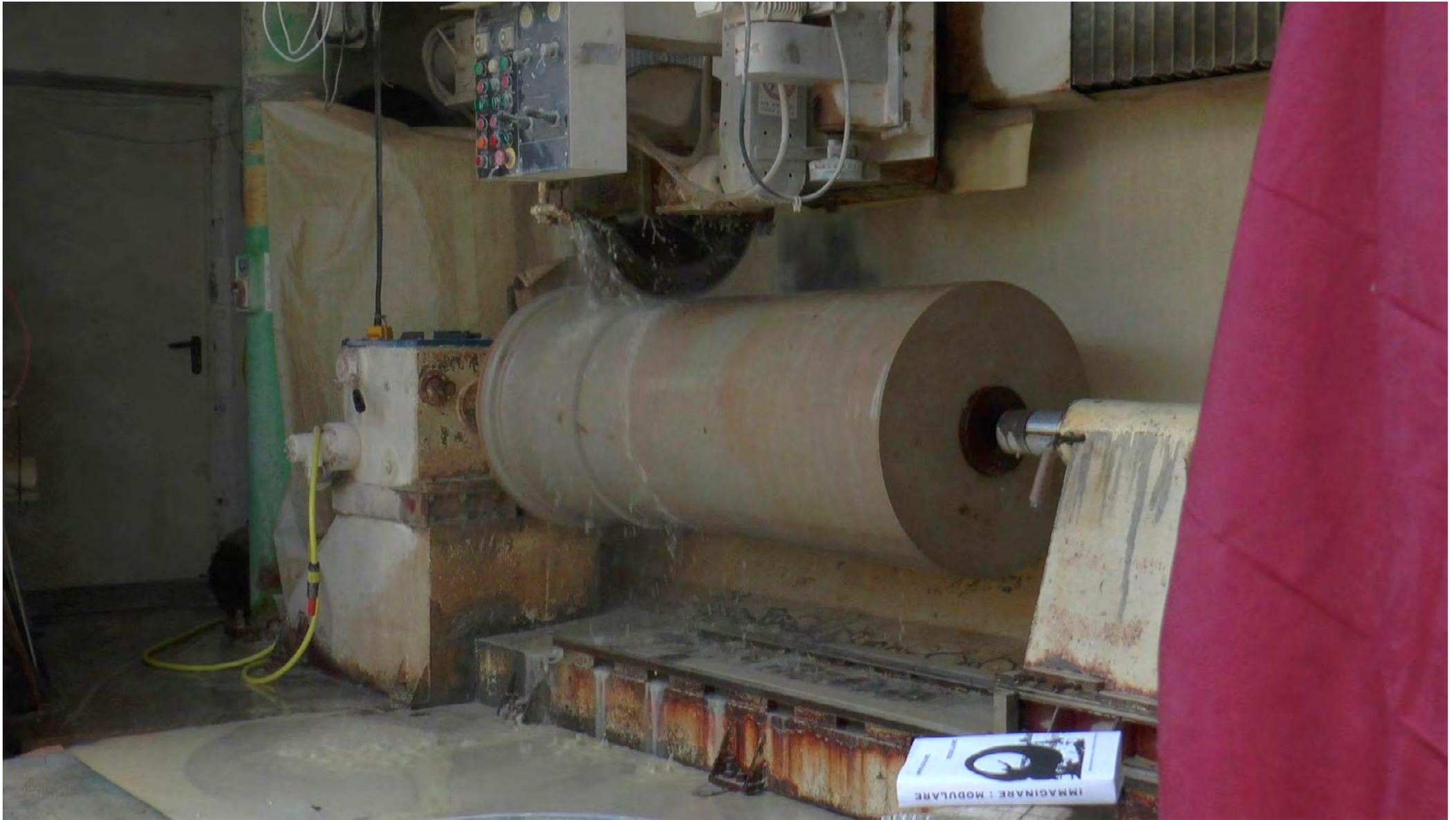
top:

### **Hegel und die Idee des Ganzen - unscharfe Rissfolgen**

Hegel and the idea of entirety – blurred cracking results

One has learned from mistakes: baroque façade decoration cannot be mounted as a thin film to a concrete structure without getting cracks and decaying within a few years.

For this the City Palace is built with a sophisticated construction of doubled walls. The outside walls are self-supporting and correspond exactly to their historic precursors in size and proportions of bricks, stone blocks and ledges. The inside wall behind, is a massive concrete structure supporting the building. A layer of mineral wool fills the gap in between the two walls. The calculated insulation value is excellent. But nobody knows if this multi layered construction will prove itself in real life for the future and resist to the ravages of time for centuries, as baroque mason's art did.



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top: *immaginare : modulare*, column, HDV, 60min  
cover: berlin City Palace construction area 2017