

Anna Jermolaewa's Kremlin series is an eloquent example of how a tale is unraveled – always in the crossroads between reality and fiction – stemming from the dialogue between a monument and its replica, in other words, between a space consecrated by history and a space that has been trivialized by the frivolous consumption of representations. In this series of photographs Jermolaewa combines photographs of the Kremlin and the Red Square (a place that like no other incarnates the state's power and its ceremonial presence, as the author herself mentioned) and photographs of the Kremlin Palace Hotel, in the city of Antalya, in Turkey. The tourist building is classified by the artist as a *doppelgänger*, something like a ghostly double, in which all the original values are inverted. From this stand point the hotel may seem rather like a futile mirage in which it fades, or at least the symbolic potential contained by the Kremlin still today, is contaminated. Anna Jermolaewa was born in Russia and migrated to Vienna for political reasons; there she completed her education as an artist. This series of photographs therefore, may very well be construed as a result of a critical view over the diffuse nationality symbols, from a distance marked by the experience in exile. Nevertheless, beyond the material and architectural referents of such symbols, the work stands out from the subjective, affective or ideological processes, that make such referents something malleable, that can be reproduced, and which is also dramatic and portable. In general, such processes may be discussed from the perspective offered by contemporary culture, which has made a point about the ubiquity, temporality, mobility and changeability of the values and representations in postmodern societies. Although Anna Jermolaewa is mainly known for her prosperous career as a video artist, this photographic work fits very well in her work set (as a matter of fact there is also a documentary video that complements the photo series). However, what is important is that in these photographs a connection with what could be the main trends of the author is maintained: her interest in human behavior, in the contradictory relationships between individuals and groups, as well as in the location of spaces for social interaction.

This work of Anna Jermolaewa helps to understand the monument in the intersection between history and timelessness. But furthermore, it confronts us with the duplicity of the symbolic dimensions of public space. In such sense, the public space, marked by the monument, is literally represented, as a “common place”. What could appear as ironical in this word play matches well with the touch of humor, always subtle, and persistent in the work of this artist. It is a humor that comes from a glance in which for moments an affable irony is revealed, but in which at the same time a distant and somber disenchantment is discovered.

By Juan Antonio Molina for EDS Gallery, Mexico City

(translated by Leticia Consuegra)