

Galerie

Chantal Crousel

Haegue Yang

Selected Press

PARIS

Haegue Yang

GALERIE CHANTAL CROUSEL

The themes that Haegue Yang investigates in her recent work—the sixth sense, grafts between the natural and technological realms—are always seen as in process. In the end she leaves her own thoughts regarding them unresolved, as signaled by her recurrent use of the adverb *quasi* in titles of works and shows over the past decade or so: *Quasi-MB*, 2006–2007, and “Quasi-Pagan Minimal” and “Quasi-Pagan Modern” (both 2016). This prefix indicates the incomplete attainment of a condition, a property, or an identity, suggesting that the status of the work is suspended and calling attention to a lack, a

structural imperfection. Distributed through the gallery space in “Quasi-ESP,” her recent show, works from three series entered into a dialogue, opening up to unexpected associations, for example in variations of the color yellow: faded in the case of straw, amber in the varnish for the wood of the paintings, gilded in the Chromolux paper of the collages.

In “The Intermediates,” 2015–, a series of sculptures produced in Korea out of artificial straw, Yang explores that material’s richness. Fake straw appears identical to real straw, yet it has no odor and does not rot or decay. Used for clothing as well as furnishings, this ersatz substance is at once solid and light, and unites a morphological pliability with a sense of precariousness and the unfinished.

While one might associate straw with rustic craftsmanship, basketry, and furnishings in a country house, it does not carry any specific cultural identity. Here, Yang let her artificial straw assume a range of heteroge-

neous forms. On the one hand, she used it to compose open and serpentine hanging sculptures that nearly touch the ground, as if performing a dance step. Their sinuosity gives the inorganic material a vital breath, at times vaguely threatening, as in the black *The Intermediate—Tinted Serpent Creature* (all works 2017), which, with its tentacles, seems as if it might at any moment free itself from the hooks anchoring it to the ceiling. In *The Intermediate—Psychic Turbine Vents Ball*, on the other hand, one saw the closed form of the sphere, deprived of any possibility of rotation by the excrescences, such as aluminum ventilators, that cover it. Other pieces with turbine vents had previously been exhibited outdoors; now, vainly awaiting a puff of wind, they hung inertly. Sometimes the extraneous elements were more discreet, such as the television antennae that rise up among artificial plant stalks in *The Intermediate—Antenna Basket on Rings*, placed atop a straw vase in the shape of elephant ears.

The elephant ear is a familiar motif in Yang’s work, also seen in stylized form in *Elephant Dancing on Toes* at the entrance to the show. That work is part of the series “Lacquer Paintings,” 1994–, based on scientific charts reproduced in botanical manuals and in herbariums. To create these pieces, Yang collected various plants in Berlin and



Haegue Yang, *The Intermediate—Antenna Basket on Rings*, 2017, artificial straw, powder-coated stainless steel, steel wire, artificial plants, TV antennae, 70 7/8 x 31 1/2 x 31 1/2". From the series “The Intermediates,” 2015–.

ARTFORUM

Mexico City, as well as earth, dust, tobacco leaves, even a fly. She then covered these objets trouvés with thin layers of lacquer and allowed them to air-dry, creating a slight but distinct relief. The effect is similar to amber resin and distances these works from the objectivity of botanical illustrations, with their depictions of specimens isolated against a neutral background and arranged in a way that underscores the plants' structures. The stratigraphy in Yang's work restores a temporality absent from scientific information.

In the series "Hardware Store Collages," 1994–, Yang displays arrangements of cutout images of technological prostheses, such as earphones, drones, cameras, ultra-flat screens, surveillance cameras, Segway scooters, and remote controls, executing this meticulously precise decoupage against a gold or silver background and arranging the elements into molecule-like structures. Taken from catalogues for stores selling digital electronics, the cutouts form colorful and playful do-it-yourself projects that reflect Yang's long-standing passion for the Bauhaus. The reference is not to the homonymous art movement, but to the chain of hardware stores of that name, which the artist discovered when she moved from Seoul to Berlin: "The thick store catalogue became my bible, and where I learned German words." Leafing through these pages, Yang chanced upon an organized visual and conceptual universe, accumulations kept under control, a *Warenwelt*, or world of merchandise, not yet threatened by the indeterminacy of the "quasi."

—Riccardo Venturi

Translated from Italian by Marguerite Shore.

frieze

MY INFLUENCES

Haegue Yang



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Elephants, identity and abstraction:
The winner of the 2018 Wolfgang Hahn Prize reveals the
objects and ideas that have shaped her thinking

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Vast Venetian blinds, exhaust fans on loop and clinking bells recur in Haegue Yang's sculptures, prints and installations: half-living talismans that solder industrial precision with the involvement of craft. Yang admires weaving as much for its tousled inefficiency as for its enjambment of the natural and the human-made. Artificial straw seems folkloric and totemic, but Yang uses it to probe questions of formatting and encoding: the ascription and sharing of values in communities, art historical and cultural traditions, for example; or the fraught fictions of abstraction and identification, east and west, social engagement and hermetic objection.

Always moving between these oppositions, Yang's abstractions are fricative. Yet, they dissemble a third layer, too, which is all the more inscrutable: difficult lives from art history, literature and politics in which the artist is steeped but which are rarely identifiable in the final work. They phrase questions that are all the more relevant today: can we separate the work from the figure? Can they ever be united? Yang's influences are doubly defiant: nearly restrained from legibility, these figures resurface still, like silent ghosts haunting stories untold.

I OFTEN RETURN to the agonizing, yet compelling, lives of artists whose biographies reveal an oscillation between their engagement in art and politics. As I see it, artists relate to their moment as though they are surfing a wave, up and down. Often, their engagement isolates them, though they might only realize this at the crest of the wave. Attention to their political achievements can lead to the simplification and reduction of their art; when their art is understood, their social or political work is obscured or diluted. While my own art does not contain traceable facets of such histories, an unlearning or blurring of these figures and their narratives has emerged over time, crafted and resolved into a dimension of abstraction.

Born in Sancheong, Korea, in 1917, the composer Isang Yun came to West Germany in 1957. Before his relocation, he lived through considerable political and ideological turmoil during the Japanese colonial period (1910–45), which saw the occupation of Korea, and the Korean War (1950–53). During this time, Yun was active in the Korean independence movement of armed resistance. He composed songs in Korean, which was forbidden at the time, leading to his arrest. He also founded and ran an institution for war orphans, contracting tuberculosis in the process.

In Europe, Yun quickly received recognition for his musical accomplishments. Yet here, too, he experienced another period of political turbulence. During the East Berlin Incident of 1967, he was kidnapped by the South Korean secret police and accused of spying for North Korea. His wife was arrested, together with hundreds of other Korean artists and intellectuals. As one of the most prominent among the accused, he was tortured, forced to confess and, following a suicide attempt, ultimately charged with the death penalty. After an international petition called for his release, Yun was freed and obtained German citizenship for his own security. He never returned to his homeland. In fact, Yun was only politically rehabilitated in Korea after his death. Now, public perception of Yun has changed: he is seen as a figure of political suppression and exile, and as a member of the resistance abroad against the country's military dictatorship.

OPPOSITE PAGE
Haegue Yang,
*The Intermediate –
Running Firecracker*, 2016,
artificial straw, steel
stand, powder coating,
casters, plastic twine,
brass-plated bells,
copper-plated bells,
1.6 × 1.2 × 1.2 m.
Courtesy: Galerie
Barbara Wein, Berlin;
photograph: Studio
Haegue Yang

What remained overlooked was Yun's music. The end of the 1950s was a revolutionary period in contemporary music, with composers such as Béla Bartók, Karlheinz Stockhausen and Igor Stravinsky creating what we now refer to as *neue Musik* (new music). Arnold Schönberg's 12-tone technique gave music a completely new mathematical template for organizing Western musical tonality. Composers working after Schönberg had either to accept, question or reject the 12-tone technique. Having studied this approach, Yun returned to traditional Asian tonalities. Many of his instrumental methods were unusual and extremely difficult to play, such as his use of glissando, vibrato, portamento and pizzicato. Unlike in 12-tone composition, there are melodies in Yun's pieces; the way tones are performed is much more elastic – never a 'pure' G or F, but a sound that swells then recedes over a main note.

Most people cannot imagine what it means to be a non-Westerner working in contemporary art. In Korea, art was traditionally never separated from philosophy, scholarship or governance; 'contemporary art' is a modern affixation. Yun's musical trajectory did not recognize the ideologically drawn borders between North and South or East and West. He was geographically liberated via a detour that progressed toward *neue Musik* then returned to his lost tradition. Drawing on his experience as a Korean partially trained in Japan who migrated West, Yun integrated art and philosophy in a way that enabled him to return to the place from which he had been exiled. I find Yun's unfulfilled return incredibly significant, not just for the political implication of his resistance and the yearning for democracy in South Korea, but also for the possible connection with silences and isolations in the lives of other historical figures.

As a result of the postwar partitioning of both Germany and Korea, interesting political parallels can be drawn between these two seemingly different cultures. It was after travelling to North Korea in 1963, to realize his long-standing desire to see the Gangseo royal tomb murals of the Goguryeo Dynasty (37 BCE–668 CE), that Yun was accused of espionage. Composed during his imprisonment, 'Images for flute, oboe, violin and violoncello' (1968) was based on the paintings of four animals on the tomb walls: the white tiger, blue dragon, black tortoise and



THIS PAGE
East and west wall
murals from the main
chamber of the Goguryeo
Tombs, depicting a blue
dragon and white tiger,
5th century CE.
Courtesy: Sakyejul
Publishing Ltd.

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red phoenix. Each animal represents a cardinal direction, but the funny thing is that they closely resemble one another. I admire Yun's vision and spirit to 'feel' these mystical animals, simultaneously distinctive yet similar, not unlike his divided homelands.

Historical narratives overlap with personal ones in the most unlikely of ways. When the oil crisis hit Korea in 1973, many Koreans who had operated as mercenaries alongside US forces in Vietnam looked to the Middle East and North Africa for construction jobs. The Korean government was eager to accumulate foreign reserves to help rebuild the country after the severe destruction caused by Japanese imperialism and the Korean War, as well as to secure energy supplies. Consequently, many of my generation grew up deprived of any contact with our fathers and uncles, who were working abroad.

This process isolated people from their families and caused entire generations to fall into silence. These social forces were dissimulated: played off as 'personal' decisions. In the regions to which they emigrated, these many husbands, brothers, uncles and fathers left few officially documented traces. But the massive infrastructure resulting from their labours endures: vast ports, factories, highways, hospitals and schools built from concrete. In this way, regions are unexpectedly connected yet remain disconnected, since this history is rarely discussed or disputed.

I remember my own father's absence. He worked as a journalist for the *Dong-a Ilbo* newspaper. When reporters occupied the company in 1974 to publish a newspaper free of censorship, it developed into a movement for freedom of speech, with those involved consequently fired and imprisoned. If you were arrested or imprisoned during the military dictatorship in Korea, you received a 'red line' on your ID, which disadvantaged you and your entire family; you couldn't get a job and no one was allowed to help you. To support our family, my father left for the Middle East and Africa and stayed for a long time. It was only after the June Struggle of 1987 that South Korea turned to democracy, finally electing a president in 1992. When the men came back to Seoul after the Middle Eastern boom, their experiences remained unspoken, as they had after the Vietnam War. Subsequent social developments created a lasting silence: even without systematic suppression, some narratives remain untold or unacknowledged.

When I went to Sharjah in 2015, I met other such fathers and uncles – no longer Korean but Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Filipino and Indian. Most of the workers I spoke to hadn't seen their families for years. Labour migration is a known fact but infrequently discussed. Instead of asking my father why he stayed so long, even after Korea's democratization, I studied the period to gain my own understanding of it. This was my personal effort to honour not only my father's silence but that of all the men who migrated for work. I wanted their silence to reach a dimension of opacity: a right to remain unknown. My project for the Sharjah Biennial, *An Opaque Wind* (2015), was an attempt to render this silence as dignified. This silence and isolation is an act of obscuring and resisting liberal ideas of transparency and mere equivalence.

THIS PAGE
Haegue Yang, *Dry Spell*
at *Villeperdue*, 2016, straw
basket, wooden tripod,
iron stove, artificial
plants, mahogany
seedpods, lotus seedpods,
suicide tree seeds, pine
cones, 225 x 103 x 91 cm.
Courtesy: Galerie Barbara
Wien, Berlin

OPPOSITE PAGE
Haegue Yang, *Lingering Nous*,
2016, installation view at
Centre Pompidou, Paris.
Courtesy: Centre Pompidou,
Paris; photograph:
Florian Kleinfenn



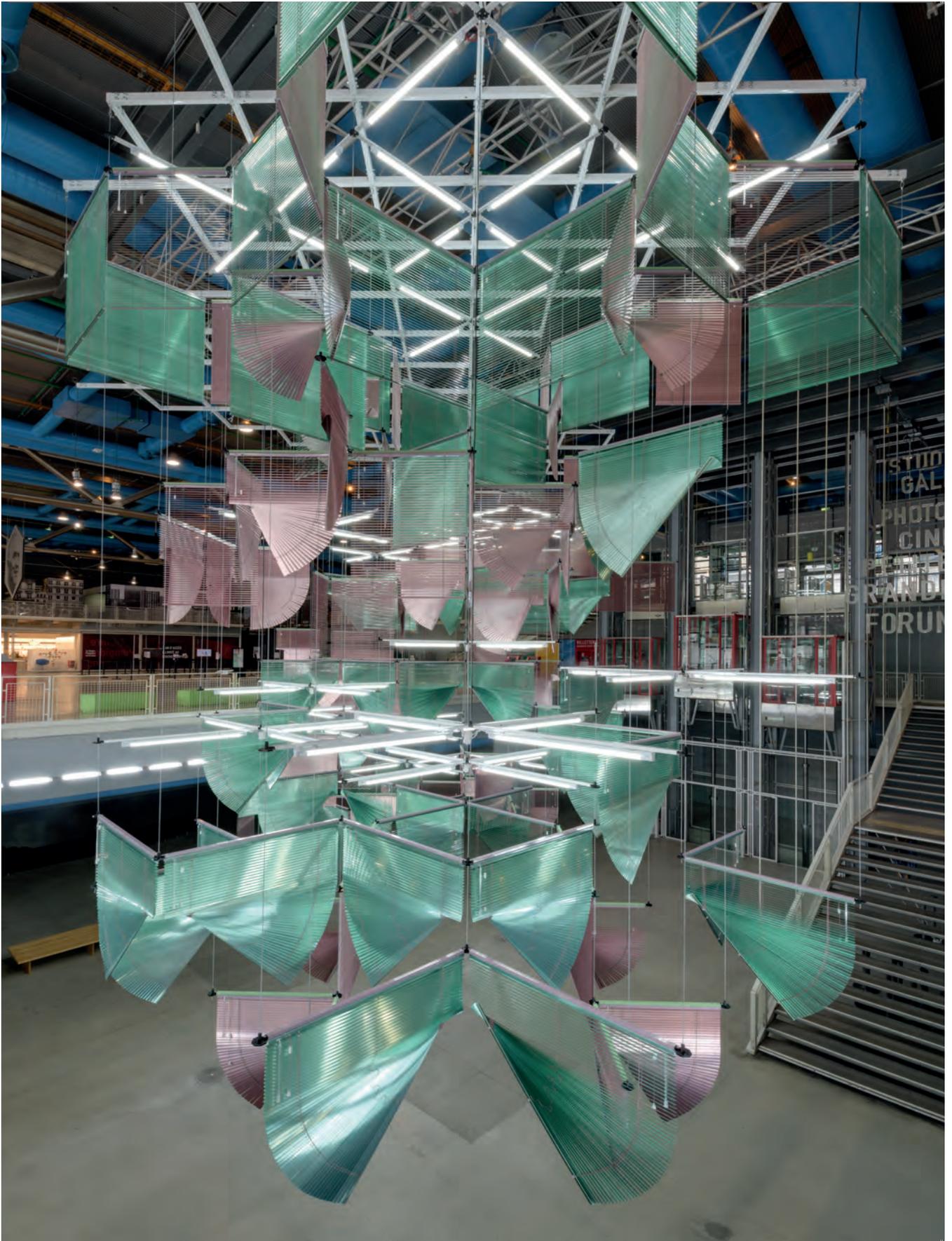
“Most people cannot imagine what it means to be a non-Westerner working in contemporary art.”

Abstraction enables me to work through individual and collective narratives across history in a non-linear or elastic manner. Coming across elephants in various sources over time helped me to establish the animal as a metaphor for that abstraction. For instance, according to one theory, the Chinese character for 'elephant' (象) derives from the shape of the animal's bones. Yet, it is probable that few people had ever even seen an elephant, particularly given that their existence in China has been contested. In modern Chinese, when you combine the symbol for 'person' (人) with that for 'elephant' (象), the resulting character signifies 'image' or 'motif' (像). The symbol seems to describe, then, a human imagining an animal they've never seen. It's come to represent, for me, this discrepancy between seen and unseen.

In his essay 'Shooting an Elephant' (1936), George Orwell describes his days in Burma as a British policeman. It includes a moment of identification in which the narrator, Orwell, feels within him the pain of an elephant he is forced to kill to prove his status in front of a gathered crowd. The hostile power struggle between humans is articulated by the act of killing an animal that has no relationship to the humans concerned. The creature's irrelevance, or independence, represents artistic or individual consciousness. The elephant stands between the colonizer and the colonized: a figure of isolation that must be killed to define the distance between both parties. Yet the Westerner, affected

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“Abstraction is not
a reductionist or simplified way
of thinking: it’s a leap.”

ABOVE
Romain Gary, 1953.
Courtesy:
Magnum Photos;
photograph:
Philippe Halsman

by colonial history, reaches the point where they have to kill their own elephant: the defiant autonomy of abstraction.

Though of Lithuanian descent, Romain Gary, who lived roughly contemporaneously to Yun, is the only French writer to have won the Prix Goncourt twice: once under his own name and once under the pseudonym Émile Ajar, which he adopted in 1975. His dual identity was only discovered through the note he left when he committed suicide in 1980. The letter also stated that his death was unrelated to that of his wife, the American actress Jean Seberg, who had been found dead – most likely having also committed suicide – a year before. Toward the end of his life, the whole world was seeking to discover Ajar’s true identity while Gary himself was regarded as little more than a has-been.

Gary had served as an aviator in the French Air Force, as secretary of the French Delegation to the UN, and as a diplomat in Los Angeles in 1956, representing France as a consul general. He was an extremely glamorous figure but also an intensely mysterious and lonely man, who seemingly never found his true home. In his semi-autobiographical book, *La Promesse de l’aube* (Promise at Dawn, 1960), Gary describes his upbringing and how his identity as a French writer was the realization of his mother’s great ambitions, although her immense love for him was almost suffocating. In addition to appropriating the pseudonym Ajar, he revealed that his childhood surname had not, in fact, been Gary but Kacew, which was his stepfather’s name. (He had never known his biological father.) His continual rebellion against the identity given to him confirms, for me, that we view names as a way to evaluate and classify someone in society. Even literature is limited in its grasp of the existential struggle of identity.

Returning to the topic of the elephant: in Gary’s *Les Racines du ciel* (The Roots of Heaven, 1956), the book’s protagonist, Morel, appears out of the blue in French Equatorial Africa during the civil war: a period of violence in which the indigenous people fought for their independence from the colonizers, yet also fought among themselves. Elephants were killed to raise money for arms. As in Orwell’s story, the elephant was a sacrifice for human hostility.

The most poignant episode in the book describes Morel’s experience in a concentration camp prior to his arrival in Africa. Exposed to inhumane conditions, a fellow internee proposes that they play a game – imagining a woman is incarcerated with them – in order to stay sane. The fictional presence of the woman encourages them to maintain their dignity and, consequently, to survive. A German officer discovers their ruse, however, and orders the prisoners to imagine killing the woman, thereby ending the game. Morel then devises a new survival strategy, imagining not a woman but a herd of stampeding elephants sweeping away the inhumanity. He vows that, if he survives, he will devote his life to these animals. This reference feeds into the first: elephants may save humans, but humans do not save elephants. In this moment of existential crisis, the action of the imagination becomes amplified. For me, this power of amplification is abstraction. Abstraction is not a reductionist or simplified way of thinking: it’s a leap – a leap into a dimension that cannot otherwise be understood ●

HAEGUE YANG is an artist based in Berlin, Germany, and Seoul, South Korea. She is professor of fine arts at the Städelschule, Frankfurt, Germany, and recipient of the 2018 Wolfgang Hahn Prize. Her solo exhibitions include: Kunsthau Graz, Austria (until 2 April); KINDL Centre for Contemporary Art, Berlin (until 13 May); kurimanazutto, Mexico City, Mexico; and Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris, France (both 2017). ‘ETA’, a comprehensive survey of her work, opens at Museum Ludwig, Cologne, Germany, on 18 April. Yang will participate in the Biennale of Sydney, Australia, in March and the Liverpool Biennial, UK, in July.





Haegue Yang, *Thread with Fishhook*, 1995-96, varnish, thread, and fishhook on chipboard, 10 1/4 x 9 1/2".

COLOGNE

“HAEGUE YANG: ETA 1994–2018”

Museum Ludwig

April 18–August 12

Curated by Yilmaz Dziewior with Leonie Radine

The peripatetic Korean-born artist Haegue Yang was awarded this year's Wolfgang Hahn Prize, whose past recipients include James Lee Byars, Isa Genzken, and Rosemarie Trockel. Yang stages metaphorical conversations between various everyday objects in her installations, which range from the uncannily anthropomorphic to the unyieldingly deadpan. Her largest exhibition to date, “ETA 1994–2018,” marks her receipt of the award and features an encyclopedic array of more than a hundred works, including photographs and videos as well as her signature installations. Accompanied by a catalogue raisonné, the show will highlight Yang's recent baroque constellations as well as her relatively lesser-known early projects, including a set of modestly proportioned wooden panels that calls attention to form as an endlessly generative problem.

—Joan Kee

Haegue Yang's "Quasi-ESP"

GALERIE CHANTAL CROUSEL, Paris

October 14–November 25, 2017



Not having a story to tell from the beginning or possibly starting from the middle is how Taoism describes time: continuity without a starting point. Stories abbreviate and expand in "intensiveness," a term Haegue Yang uses, in dialogue with Jimmie Durham, to describe a mode that, similarly to belief, can exist beyond linear narrative form.⁽¹⁾ Yang, who is recognized for her forays into domesticity and response to the assumed neutrality of exhibition spaces, seeks to find a home in the political, constructing spaces of being and belonging in an ever-recurring cycle of unbound histories and narrations.

While in her discourse Yang positions abstraction at the frontier of form, collapsing real and imaginary kinds of value (including that of the human body and technological gimmicks), her studio practice convolutes these tropes. This is the case with the series "Hardware Store Collages" (ongoing since 1994), where indexed images of hardware and quotidian electronic components are released from their functional context and framed as unfamiliar organic assemblages. At Chantal Crousel, Media Markt smartphones and Saturn Bluetooth speakers are the subject of compositions that intensify technological narratives of hybridity. *Swaying Television Ball* (2017) places a two-sided flat-screen monitor atop an exercise ball made with artificial straw and stainless steel. Cutouts from commercial hardware catalogues cover the monitors' surface, and these in turn depict portraits of women and animation stills from such films as *The Lion King* (1997). When fitness training cannot singlehandedly capture one's focus, the intensified lore of the technosphere might get the job done.

Part of sculpture series "The Intermediates" (ongoing since 2015), *Antenna Basket on Rings* (2017) and *Psychic Turbine Vent Ball* (2017) use household industrial components such as TV antennas and wind turbines to adorn crafted rotatory bodies made of artificial straw. The same material reappears in the freestanding and suspended sculptures *Serpent Creature*, *Tinted Serpent Creature*, and *Triple Tentacles Serpent* (all 2017). Drawing on the same narrative that parts technology and craft, progress and folk, the organisms confound formal boundaries by connecting animal mythology, globalized technological expansion, and domesticity. Recalling vernacular shelters, disproportionately large cleaning rags, or even lavish chandeliers, the three works speak to the modern failure to tame processes of hybridization. Contiguous with *Triple Tentacles Serpent*, the two-sided *Faceted Dancing Mask* (2017) articulates and sieves the space. Covered by lenticular foil on one side and unclad on the other, the movable folding screen invites visitors to play with views of the gallery and of the boundary-making processes resignified by the artist to foster new kinds of storytelling.

In the 2017 instantiation of the series "Lacquer Paintings" (ongoing since 1994) Yang uses time as her subject matter. Common botanical specimens, such as tobacco leaves, are organized on small wood panels in the tradition of colonial botanical arrangements. Yet, suspicious of material processes of memorialization and their capacity to give meaning to a disordered chronological force field, Yang lets the slow-drying wood varnish capture the dirt, dust, raindrops, and insects present in the original materials and in the making of the work, as traces of the duration of that particular event.

Yang often experiments with narration in varied visual, tactile, aural, and olfactory cues. The title of the exhibition "Quasi-ESP" speaks to the categories by which perception is mediated. As a heightened capability to engage with one's surroundings, in storytelling extrasensory perception (ESP) confounds linear time with sensory processes. "Quasi"—a reappearing construction in Yang's exhibition titles—figures as a gesture of incompleteness, of bordering one or several narratives in constant flux. In this view, "intensiveness" renders the gallery a space for abstraction in multiple cadences, intensified by a circuitous studio practice with its own unending narratives.

(1) Jimmie Durham, Haegue Yang, and Mark Welzel, "We can get there!" In *Parkett*, no. 89 (2011), 88.



1 View of Haegue Yang's "Quasi-ESP," Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris, 2017.



3 View of Haegue Yang's "Quasi-ESP," Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris, 2017.



2 View of Haegue Yang's "Quasi-ESP," Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris, 2017.



4 Haegue Yang, *The Intermediate - Serpent Creature*, 2017.



5 View of Haegue Yang's "Quasi-ESP," Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris, 2017.



7 Haegue Yang, *The Intermediate – Swaying Television Ball*, 2017.



6 Haegue Yang, *Grafting Gone Aslant*, 2017.



8 View of Haegue Yang's "Quasi-ESP," Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris, 2017.

- 1 View of Haegue Yang's "Quasi-ESP," Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris, 2017. All images courtesy of the artist and Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris. All photos by Florian Kleinfenn.
- 2 View of Haegue Yang's "Quasi-ESP," Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris, 2017.
- 3 View of Haegue Yang's "Quasi-ESP," Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris, 2017.
- 4 Haegue Yang, *The Intermediate – Serpent Creature*, 2017. Artificial straw, stainless steel hanging structure, stainless steel frame, powder coating, steel wire, Neoseul, plastic bells, and pompoms, 154 x 102 x 97 cm.
- 5 View of Haegue Yang's "Quasi-ESP," Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris, 2017.
- 6 Haegue Yang, *Grafting Gone Aslant*, 2017. Wooden panel, wood varnish, found plants, dust, and tobacco leaves, 90 x 63 cm.
- 7 Haegue Yang, *The Intermediate – Swaying Television Ball*, 2017. Artificial straw, stainless steel frame, powder coating, iron forging frame, hardware store catalogs, lenticular sheets, chromolux paper, and acrylic glass, 117 x 73 x 71 cm.
- 8 View of Haegue Yang's "Quasi-ESP," Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris, 2017.
- 9 Haegue Yang, *Faceted Dancing Mask*, 2017. Wood, stainless steel, iridescent vinyl film, and casters, 186 x 118 x 93 cm.
- 10 Haegue Yang, *Hardware Store Collage – Media Markt Smartphone and In-Ear Headphones*, 2017. Hardware store catalogs and chromolux paper, framed, 50 x 50 cm.



9 Haegue Yang, *Faceted Dancing Mask*, 2017.



10 Haegue Yang, *Hardware Store Collage – Media Markt Smartphone and In-Ear Headphones*, 2017.



Haegue Yang "Silo of Silence – Clicked Core", 2017

Haegue Yang und Asta Gröting in Berlin

Bewegung und Stillstand

Im Berliner Kindl-Kunstzentrum lässt Haegue Yang die Jalousien tanzen und Asta Gröting kehrt die Geschichte der Stadt nach außen

Obwohl **Haegue Yang** ihr bevorzugtes Material, die Jalousie, schon lange verwendet, gewinnt die Bildhauerin deren Durchlässigkeit, ihren skulpturalen und zweidimensionalen Qualitäten immer wieder etwas Neues ab. Jüngst wurde sie mit dem renommierten Wolfgang-Hahn-Preis für Skulptur ausgezeichnet, der mit einer Ausstellung im Museum Ludwig einhergeht.

In Berlin zeigt sie zum ersten Mal in einer Institution eine überwältigend schöne Installation: Im Kesselhaus des privat geführten Ausstellungshauses Kindl hat sie ein Mobile aus Leuchtstoffröhren und Jalousien aufgebaut, das trotz monumentaler Größe zu schweben und zu tanzen scheint. "Silo of Silence – Clicked Core" hat Poesie und technoide Coolness zugleich, die typisch postindustriellen Insignien der früheren Nutzung des Raumes geben die perfekt unpassende Kulisse dazu ab.

Genau andersherum ist es bei **Asta Gröting** im zweiten Ausstellungsraum, einem clean sanierten White Cube: Die Künstlerin zeigt großformatige Silikonabgüsse von Berliner Fassaden – abgenommen an den wenigen Stellen, an denen noch Einschusslöcher erhalten sind. Jedes Loch wird zur Skulptur, Schmutz und Graffiti bleiben haften, die Überlagerung der Geschichte einer Stadt wird noch einmal anders sichtbar, aus dem Inneren der Wände.

"Haegue Yang: Silo of Silence – Clicked Core" und "Asta Gröting: Berlin Fassaden", [Kindl - Zentrum für Zeitgenössische Kunst](#), Berlin, bis 13. Mai 2018

TEILEN

Text: Silke Hohmann

Datum: 26.9.2017

Reviews

FRAME

ONE ARTIST, ONE MATERIAL

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Blind *Date*

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HAEGUE YANG makes spatial
statements with Venetian blinds.

Words
ANNA SANSOM

Portraits
DANIEL HOFER

FRAME

78 PORTRAITS

Galerie
Chantal Crousel



Sol LeWitt Upside Down – Structure with Three Towers, Expanded 23 Times (2015) exemplifies Haegue Yang's fascination with the work of Sol LeWitt, whose *Structure with Three Towers* (1986) she expanded and reverted using layers of blinds.

*'I felt liberated
by Sol LeWitt's
approach to
his work'*

DIVIDING HER TIME BETWEEN Seoul and Berlin, Haegue Yang makes conceptual work using everyday materials, which she employs in abstract and subtly narrative ways. The results range from compositions featuring envelope security patterns to sculptures built around products like clothing racks. The 45-year-old artist has made sculptures and installations out of Venetian blinds since 2006.

You first used Venetian blinds in *Series of Vulnerable Arrangements – Version Utrecht*, your multisensory installation from 2006. How did your interest in blinds develop? HAEGUE YANG: That installation was a mute sensorial field, composed of devices such as lights and scent emitters that were juxtaposed with a 'voice' from video essays in the same space, which was demarcated by Venetian blinds. The obliqueness of the blinds achieved an ambivalence of being comfortingly separated yet sufficiently connected. This discovery informed my next piece, *Series of Vulnerable Arrangements – Blind Room*, also from 2006. Guided by the blinds, one wandered into a

field of light/shadow, wind, heat, humidity and smells, the mind strolling in associative memories. Although the contemplation of senses occurred individually, visitors were bound to one another through a shared experience of fragmentation and separation.

How has using Venetian blinds helped you to think about space and architectural volume? My 2008 installation, *Mountains of Encounter*, marked the first shift from narration to abstraction. The spiral layout of vibrant red Venetian blinds sloping at different angles portrayed the mountainous landscape of Yan'an, China, where Korean underground revolutionary Kim San had an unlikely encounter with American journalist Helen Foster Snow in the 1930s, leading to her biography about him. The hypnotizing choreography of four moving lights sharply cut the blinds' surface, while white circles and two strong floodlights in the spiral's centre dimmed and brightened. As lights and blinds intensely confronted each other, heroic and universal qualities of this encounter penetrated across history. »

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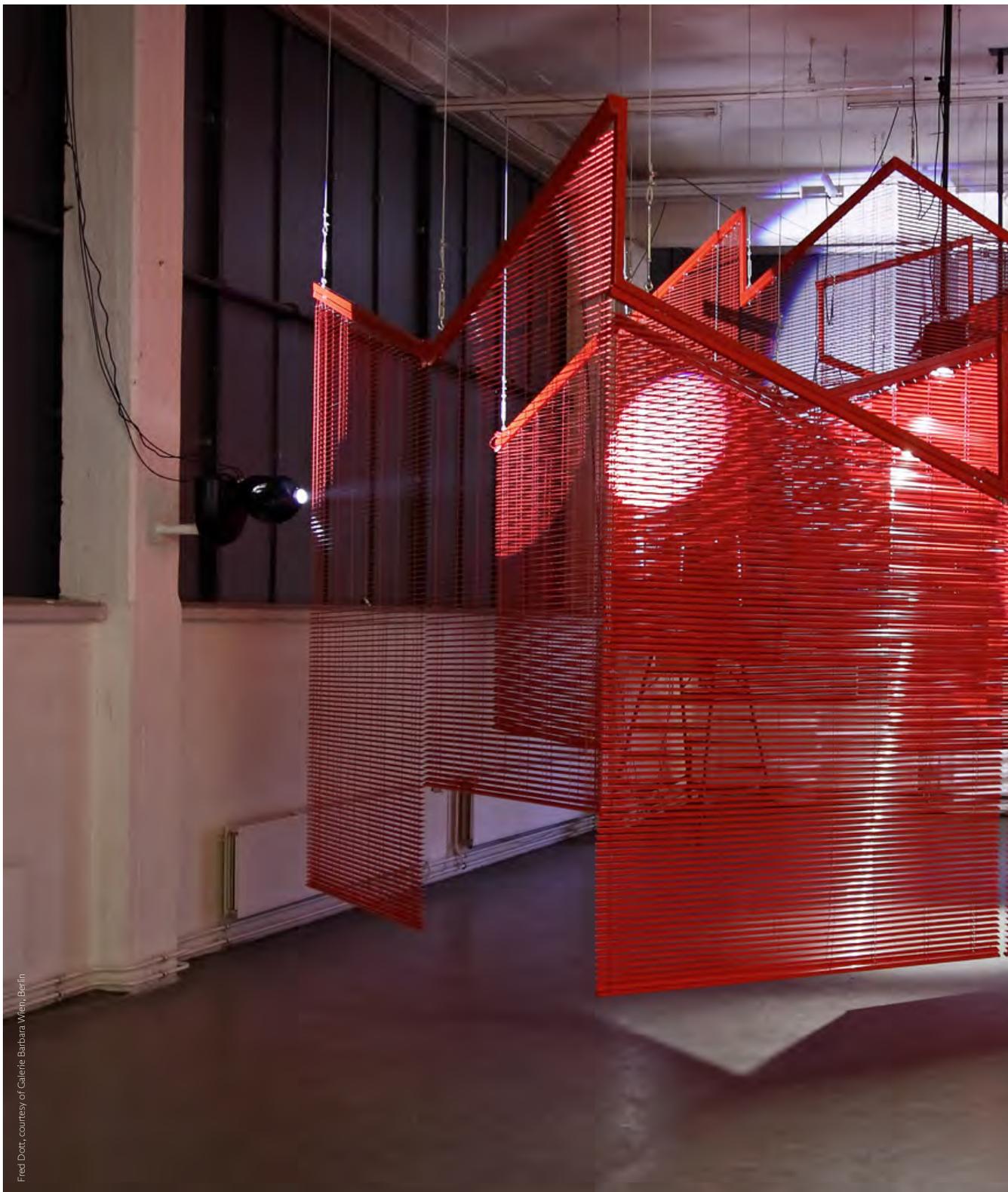
Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art, courtesy of Kujje Gallery, Seoul

FRAME

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Chantal Crousel



Fred Doct, courtesy of Galerie Barbara Wien, Berlin

FRAME

ONE ARTIST, ONE MATERIAL

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'Mountains of Encounter (2008) marked the first shift from narration to abstraction,' says Haegue Yang of her installation – a spiral of vibrant red Venetian blinds – for international group exhibition Wessen Geschichte [Whose (His)Story], held at the Kunstverein in Hamburg, Germany.

*'The obliqueness
of blinds can
achieve an
ambivalence
of being
comfortingly
separated yet
sufficiently
connected'*

FRAME

82 PORTRAITS

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South Korean artist Haegue Yang is known for using mundane objects in her installations, such as the Venetian blinds that have been a recurring motif in her work since 2006.

‘Viewers remain blind to the concrete narrative, which is my goal in achieving abstraction’

Your installations seem to be inspired by figures from literature, their politics and passions. How do Venetian blinds enable you to develop an abstract narrative? One example is *Lethal Love* from 2008, which lingered on the intense companionship and tragic end in the story of Petra Kelly, founding member of the German Green Party, and Gert Bastian, former German general and peace-movement hero. [In 1992, Bastian apparently shot Kelly dead in her sleep before killing himself.] The installation activated an experimental template to explore their narrative, using materials suggestive of what happened, such as gunmetal-coloured Venetian blinds, smells of wildflowers and gunpowder, and an extreme reflection of blinding light. The viewer, however, remained more or less blind to the concrete narrative, which is my goal in achieving abstraction. For me, abstraction gives value to narratives that appear within and around us without constituting its own limits.

How important is it that visitors understand the meaning behind the piece? It's not very important – more of an option than an obligation for the viewer. Although I don't want to give up learning about histori-

cal figures, the work and the audience should be free from my eagerness to dive into those stories. I'd rather invite the audience to enter a visual and spatial field that has a somewhat abstruse articulation than one that produces an obvious meaning.

Other pieces reference 20th-century art, such as Sol LeWitt's geometric white structures. What triggered this aspect of your work? I felt liberated by Sol LeWitt's approach to works such as his modular structures and by his statement: 'Conceptual artists are mystics rather than rationalists. They leap to conclusions that logic cannot reach.' The primary translation mechanism of my piece from 2015, *Sol LeWitt Upside Down – Structure with Three Towers, Expanded 23 Times*, is an expansion and inversion of LeWitt's 1986 *Structure with Three Towers*. The work becomes progressively opaque as the layers of blinds accumulate, while the shallow areas maintain their transparency.

How does playing with transparency and opacity relate to Korea's modern history? Experiencing modern Korean history, with its long and brutal military dictatorship – a dominance of state-led

economic development and the sacrifice of freedom of speech and democratic values – made me conscious of the authoritarian abuse of power. I wish not only to remember but to render official history in a subjective way, so that it doesn't become knowledge to be learned.

You often choose what have been called 'indescribable, uncategorizable colours', such as the iridescent green and pink in *Lingering Nous*, exhibited at the Centre Pompidou in 2016. What are your criteria for choosing colours? Each colour in *Lingering Nous* (*Frame* 113, p. 148) relates to a specific angle defined by my own octagonal connector system and echoes the primary colour scheme of the Centre Pompidou's building services, such as ventilation and electricity.

What are you working on now? A solo exhibition at the Geffen Contemporary in Los Angeles, part of the city's Museum of Contemporary Art. Scheduled to open in June 2019, the show will encompass works from 1994 to the present, including major installations featuring Venetian blinds. ●

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Words by Nadine Khalil

ALL THAT NOISE

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Korean-born artist Haegue Yang is known for her multi-faceted sensorial installations and sculptures occupying the in-between spaces where public and private meet. *A Mag* discovers her weird and wonderful world

Above: "Uninhibited island in New Year Saekdong" (2016) from Yang's *The Intermediate series* at Art People restaurant, Aishti Foundation. Opposite: Haegue Yang with her installation at Aishti by the Sea



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When Igor Stravinsky's 20th century masterpiece, *The Rite of Spring*, was first performed in Paris in 1913, it was a disaster. Erratic and jarring, the music rising and falling in layers of drama and dissonance with abrupt twists, the audience jeered and booed it, even throwing vegetables at the stage.

This disjunction is precisely why Berlin and Seoul-based artist Haegue Yang – who gained international attention after her installation in the Korean pavilion at the 2009 Venice Biennale, a structure of coloured, hanging Venetian blinds fluttering to wind-propellers – chose it to accompany the latest display of her artworks entitled *Quasi-pagan Seasonal Shift*, currently on show until mid-February at Aishti by the Sea in Beirut.

"The history of Russian avant-garde art has helped me gain an understanding of what I am doing, developing my consciousness as an artist. And *The Rite of Spring* was part of the Ballets Russes, and wasn't received well at all at first – it's eclectic and not harmonious. These days, we may all know it as legendary but it took over a hundred years for the work to become celebrated," Yang says, as we listen to its staccato rhythms while walking through the ten anthropomorphic sculptures made of artificial straw that make up the installation.

First shown at Galeries Lafayette in Paris



Courtesy of Studio Haegue Yang, Galerie Barbara Wren and Wolfgang Gänzel



Right: *Arrivals* (2011) at the Kunsthaus Bregenz, Austria. Below: The 2009 exhibition "Assume Nothing: New Social Practice" at the Art Gallery of Victoria, Canada



for private space, and also a paradoxical yet desperate statement on both art and lifestyle by a young artist.

"It's not that I didn't have the desire to make things during that period," Yang says, "I just didn't see how working with the discovery of objects, such as in a shopping mall, on the one hand, and making labour-intensive works on the other, were contradictory. They exist as parallel desires in me, in a hybrid approach of found and made. In a similar way, many other seemingly opposing parts, such as anthropomorphic and geometric, organic and artificial, indeed build a contrast, yet aren't conflicting."

Perhaps the best examples of this inclination are her recent mobile sonic sculptures (2012-2013), metallic, spherical forms made out of bells. "I began these

around the same time as my so-called light sculptures began to fade away. And the series of *The Intermediates*, the straw sculptures, which began in 2014-2015, followed... their materiality is so different." The former may look cold but they vibrate with sound as they move.

While her straw sculptures communicate by evoking some kind of esoteric dance ritual, her sonic pieces communicate through movement and resonance. Both are bizarre and move through sound; both are profoundly uncanny and perhaps a little tatty and uncool. Both work with oppositions that re-imagine the ordinary as extraordinary, the primitive as contemporary, and the organic as artificial.



A



Left: *Hardware Store Collage - Bauhaus Door Handles #3* (2013) from a private collection in Stuttgart. Below: *Hornbachbild #1* (1994)

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codes. I had never been to Europe before, I decided to leave home because I didn't know what to do next – after I failed to get into grad school in Korea,” she recounts unabashedly. “I had studied sculpture in university and I had lost the sense of what art means.”

So the art student, disillusioned with the academic system in her country, which she describes as a “Japanese import mixed with American influences,” found refuge in the most unlikely of places: the Bauhaus, or your typical German hardware store. “I was fascinated, we don't have these kinds of stores back home... The thick store catalogue became my Bible, and where I learned German words.”

Yang made her first paper collages out of these catalogues, in her *Hornbachbild* or *Hardware Store Collages* series, featuring various tools such as faucets, door handles and tubes – which may not be the coolest thing for artistry today but at the time with little money, Yang used the materials she had at hand. “This is *Warenwelt*, German for the ‘world of things/commodities.’ I didn't see it then but I had begun to develop my vocabulary out of lacquer and varnish, casts and plaster.

“The decision to include this early work as the beginning of my career in this monograph,” she says, as she shows me the latest published catalogue of her artworks by Kunsthau Bregenz, “was a crucial yet difficult one. For a long time, I didn't understand these formative works on my own. I considered them mere studies, and was embarrassed by them. I even often threw everything away, since I had no means to store them. So there are only some 35 mm



slides remaining of the actual works.”

She moved further in her fascination with the everyday with *Social Conditions of the Sitting Table* in 2001, a pseudo-social study of the ubiquitous low-lying tables in Korea: “The ownership of this nameless table, with the height of a chair and the surface area of a table, isn't questioned; it's used in spaces that blur the private with the public. I'm interested in these urban objects that are on the verge of disappearing,” Yang says, referencing Marcel DuChamp's ready-mades, or mundane objects that are found and repositioned to become art (such as his notorious 1917 porcelain urinal, *Fountain*). In the same year, Yang created *What I'd Love to Have at Home*, by placing a vintage sofa near empty metal shelves in a minimalist expression of modular living, a desire



in 2016, albeit in slightly different guises and under the title *Quasi-Pagan Modern*, the works came to Aishti by the Sea after a joint effort between Yang's gallerist Chantal Crousel and Aishti CEO Tony Salamé, who both felt the sculptures could be staged in the David Adjaye-designed building.

"Haegue is very interested in crafts from all parts of the world," Crousel said, "and bringing her sculptures, and the music related to shamanic ritual dances that accompanies them to Beirut, in dialogue with contemporary dresses and mannequins, is a continuation of her exploration about how East can meet West."

Some of her sculptures have horn-like heads, others are more cylindrical and bulbous in form and many of them have fake plants emerging from them. With playful titles such as: *Long Neck Woman Upside Down* or *Narrating Solid Cloud*, Yang's works look organic, yet are largely artificial; they have a traditional, decorative aesthetic but are also anti-classicist and modernist in their geometries. The choice to use *The Rite of Spring* she says, points to her continued obsession with this kind of hybridity, in the juxtaposition of diverging motifs: "It's a cultural detour of sorts, in atonal music about a Native American pagan sacrifice spring ritual. I wanted to integrate it in my work."

It isn't hard to see why since the sculptures have a tribal, surrealist feel to them. The music adds a hint of motion where there actually is none. On the ground floor of the mall stands the three-legged *Tilted Bushy-head Junior*, positioned between two mannequins. It looks like a furry animal on rollers about to break into a dance. Nearby is another furry blob, *Running Squeezed Two-tone Fan Dance* (without rollers), its form punctuated by a swirly ethnic weave, in a nod to traditional Korean folk craftsmanship. Part of *The Intermediate* series, these works are matched with half a dozen more pieces on a central rotating platform, also in artificial straw.

"*The Intermediate* refers to medium, in shamanic terms, or the mediation between

different dimensions. In my sculptures, it's about taking something ancient and bringing it to the present," Yang says.

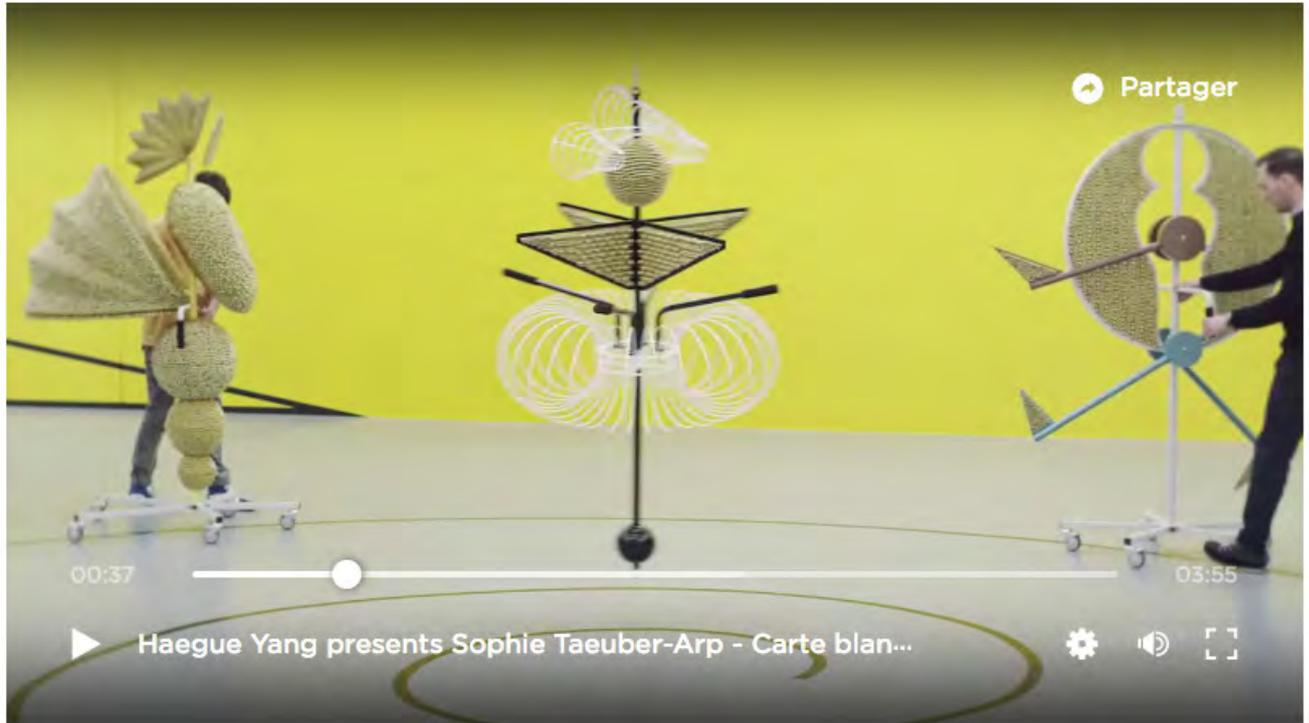
Before she began experimenting with straw, Yang was making light sculptures out of IV stands and clothing racks. Her *Warrior*, *Believer*, *Lover* series in 2011 featured 33 such works draped with cables, bulbs, Venetian blinds, netting, artificial plants, dried herb bundles, mushrooms, charcoal, metal strainers, baskets, bells, fly swatters, whistles, knitting yarn, plastic funnels and other miscellaneous items. These sculptures in turn grew out of a *Series of Vulnerable Arrangements* (2007-9). "I imagined a group dance of pagan figures, such as Native women and medicine men in duets and trios and I was envisioning a choreography with *Rite of Spring* as my reference. At the time, I thought it was exploitative to use another author's music but it became a necessity to lend movement to the piece."

Yang began using frames like IV stands on wheels, or drying racks wrapped in fabric and elements like bulbs and cables, in what seemed like ad hoc sculptures, after she visited her late grandmother's house. "I went there and the drying rack, IV drip, fans, strobes and origami - they were all there - and it all just came together in my work." So she created an installation on-site, *Sadong 30*. "As I moved from IV stands - which were too frail to carry more objects - to clothing racks, it started to become an autonomous sculptural language: the bodies or frames got chunkier, which enabled me to tailor the sculptures in a richer way," Yang adds.

But building art pieces out of unusual materials such as bicycle bells and Venetian blinds, which she calls "banal discoveries," can be traced to the very beginnings of her art practice. Leaving Seoul, where she trained as an artist, for Germany in 1994, she found herself in a place that was completely foreign.

"I don't know if you can imagine the confusion I went through... I couldn't interpret the social





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My favourite artwork - Haegue Yang

ARTE Creative | KUNST | 5 Mars 2017

L'artiste de *Readymade* Haegue Yang présente son œuvre préférée *Une coupe Dada* de Sophie Taeuber-Arp et la fait s'envoler à Berlin.

La Coréenne Haegue Yang crée des installations à partir d'objets du quotidien, qu'elle place dans un nouveau contexte. Dans le cadre de *My favourite artwork*, la plasticienne présente son œuvre préférée : une coupe Dada de Sophie Taeuber-Arp. Et la fait voler dans les airs pour tester sa résistance à son exposition dans l'espace public. .

Dans *My favourite artwork*, des artistes présentent une œuvre qui les a influencées et inspirées.

« Haegue Yang X Aishti by the sea », *Aishti Blog*, December 7, 2016.
<http://aishtiblog.com/haegue-yang-x-aishti-by-the-sea-installation/>

AÏSHTI BLOG

HAEGUE YANG X AÏSHTI BY THE SEA

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« Haegue Yang X Aishti by the sea », *Aishti Blog*, December 7, 2016.
<http://aishtiblog.com/haegue-yang-x-aishti-by-the-sea-installation/>

AÏSHTI BLOG

DECEMBER 7, 2016

We bring good news for all art lovers: Aïshti is delighted to announce that Korean contemporary artist Haegue Yang will be installing her artworks on Aïshti by the Sea's windows, in collaboration with Galerie Chantal Crousel, titled "Quasi – Pagan Seasonal Shift".



Yang's work is all about hybrid combinations that challenge different notions such as crafts vs. modernity, real vs. supernatural, geometric vs. organic. For example, she uses typical household objects and everyday materials such as Venetian blinds and straw and transforms them in interesting ways, drawing her inspiration from cultural references linked to political and social phenomena. The « Pagan » relates to the pagan dances in composer Igor Stravinsky's *Sacre du Printemps*.



After her most recent installation at Galeries Lafayette in Paris, she's bringing 10 of those works especially to be installed at Aïshti by the Sea.

The display will run until the end of January 2017.

AÏSHTI BLOG

Galerie
Chantal Crousel



Hague Yang

The Intermediate – Long Neck Woman Upside Down, 2016

Artificial straw, steel stand, powder coating, plastic fans, rattles, artificial plants, Saekdong fabric, Indian bells, casters

182 x 115 x 100 cm

Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris

Aishti by the Sea, Antelias

Tel. 04 711 940

HYPERALLERGIC

MUSEUMS

At the Montreal Biennial, Lessons in How to Look

Across the city, many works by the 55 artists participating in the 2016 Biennale de Montréal deal with the possibilities, limitations, and consequences of spectacle and spectatorship.



Claire Voon 5 hours ago



Haegue Yang, “The Intermediate – Dragon Conglomerate” (2016) and “Rooted Stones on Parallel Dimension” (2016) at the Musée d’art contemporain de Montréal for the Biennale de Montréal (all photos by the author for Hyperallergic unless otherwise noted)

On August 25, 2006, Egypt’s antiquities council performed an impressive feat: officials moved a 36-foot-tall, 3,200-year-old seated statue of Ramses II through Cairo’s streets, from Ramses Square to the Giza Plateau, in one piece. Tens of thousands of civilians lined the streets and photographed Ramses’s eight-mile journey on flatbed trucks; also documenting the chaotic scene was artist David Gheron Tretiakoff, who edited his handheld footage to create “A God Passing” (2007).

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David Gheron Tretiakoff, still from "A God Passing" (2008) (image courtesy of the artist)

Currently on view in this year's Biennale de Montréal, the video is one of the most striking works in an exhibition that explores our experiences of viewing. As I noted in my photo essay, beauty and violence are at the heart of *Le Grand Balcon* (The Grand Balcony), a title that curator Philippe Pirotte drew from Jean Genet's play *Le Balcon*,

which is set in a house of pleasure during a time of revolution. But across the city, many works by the 55 participating international artists also deal with the possibilities, limitations, and consequences of spectacle and spectatorship.

"A God Passing," screening at the Musée d'art contemporain (MAC) — which is home to the majority of the show — pulls together all these threads. Tretiakoff's vantage point, though unassuming, highlights the surreality of Ramses's public parade. Confined in a steel cage and protected by plastic, the statue glides silently past a crowd that whistles, cheers, and waves flags. His migration from the pollution-heavy square to his new, sterile home — the future site of the Grand Egyptian Museum — was a huge event, broadcasted live. It took four years to plan; officials even created an exact replica and rehearsed the journey.



David Gheron Tretiakoff, still from "A God Passing" (2008) (image courtesy of the artist)

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Tension fills this massive, expensive production. We watch, wondering if this irreplaceable ancient artifact will survive the trip. For Egyptians, the move was further charged by the opportunity to vocalize ideas while authorities stood by. Politics clashed in the open: Tretiakoff trains his lens on people chanting, “long live Egypt!” and on others calling for the release of political dissident Ayman Nour. One protestor criticizes the government’s embrace of Islam at the expense of rejecting its Pharaonic history; some people debate him, while others remain silent but unnerved. More than parading a massive statue, the 10-hour procession made the city pause. Civilians witnessed and participated in open conversations, under the gaze of Ancient Egypt’s most powerful monarch. In the wall text, Tretiakoff even asks: “Can the removal of Ramses be seen as the starting shot of the revolution in the Middle East?”



Luis Jacob, “Sphinx” (2015)

Le Grand Balcon urges such awareness of our own agencies while looking. Outside the room with “A God Passing” is Luis Jacob’s “Sphinx,” installed in MAC’s rotunda. The sculpture is actually a take on the classical nude, but it channels the enigma of its titular beast. A tongue-in-cheek, modern-day corruption of the established vision of ideal beauty, Jacob’s man stands headless and frames his surroundings with his hands. As the first biennial work to greet visitors to the museum, “Sphinx” is a conspicuous prompt to think

about our position as viewers and how we form meaning within certain frameworks.

Projects that engage with historical imagery abound in *Le Grand Balcon*, which drew inspiration from the oldest artwork on view: a circa 1540 portrait of a woman acquitted of witchcraft by Lucas Cranach the Elder. The story of “Portrait of a Lady” — which is a refreshing addition to a contemporary art exhibition — frames the conflicts of looking that the biennial explores: Cranach’s sitter wears heavy, gleaming chains with an ornate brocade dress, but she was supposedly originally painted as one of history’s famed, plucky

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Installation view of the Montréal Biennale, with *Snake* series by Elaine Cameron-Weir, photographs by Hüseyin Bahri Alptekin, paintings by Njideka Akunyili Crosby, and c. 1540 portrait by Lucas Cranach the Elder

Pirotte has deliberately hung the German Renaissance painting in a room where pleasure and perversion fight for your attention. The most immediate entrapments are long, snakeskin-like sculptures formed from interlocking enamel plates. Created by Elaine Cameron-Weir, they hang from the ceiling like ceremonial banners, held up by a pulley system that's anchored by sandbags. Their sheen is seductive, but, caught in this moment of suspension, they are also ominous, threatening to collapse from their palpable weight. Steel clips and mesh screens hold the sculptures together, lending them an unexpected delicateness and lightness.



Detail of "Snake 4" by Elaine Cameron-Weir and paintings by Luc Tuymans

The most ethereal works in this gallery are by Luc Tuymans and the late Hüseyin Bahri Alptekin. Tuymans's series of new paintings, *Doha*, is rendered in shimmering, watery blues, but portrays empty walls at Qatar Museums Gallery Al Riway — lonely, melancholic scenes. Directly across the expansive room, Alptekin's photographs are

more joyous. Capturing, in film-like progression, blowing curtains and flouncy dresses bathed in breathtaking light, the images record fleeting moments of quotidian beauty. Pirotte has balanced

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these with Alptekin's graphic captures of wet cupping therapy, pictures that steadily scrutinize a practice some might find unsettling.

There's a lovely and subtle visual rhythm, though, that exists between those photographs and a painting by Njideka Akunyili Crosby, hanging near the Cranach. "Thread" (2012) depicts a woman kissing her lover's naked back, her mouth delivering a healing touch of another kind. The pairing of these similar gestures draws out the intimacy underlying the seeming violence of Alptekin's photographs. It's one instance in the exhibition that reveals the mutability of perception.



Left: Hüseyin Bahri Alptekin, photos from "Kan Çekme İyileştirme/Blood Sucking Healing" (2000); right: Njideka Akunyili Crosby, "Thread" (2012)



Hüseyin Bahri Alptekin, "Arkadya'da Melankoli/Melancholia in Arcadia" (2006)

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Just as Alptekin prolonged moments to retrain our eyes, so too does Luke Willis Thompson, with a video that stirs tension and even discomfort. The most understated work in *Le Grand Balcon*, his “Cemetery of Uniforms and Liveries” (2016) is arresting and deeply moving in its visual simplicity. The four-minute-long video — which takes its title from a series by Marcel Duchamp — replicates the style and technical specifications of Andy Warhol’s Screen Tests, showing two black men who stare silently at us. They remain still, their blinks and discernible breathing the only signs that this is a moving-image work. People of color are largely absent from Warhol’s famous videos; here, the individuals’ steadfast gazes demand acknowledgement.

But there’s more to it. As wall text explains, these men are descendants of women killed by police in their homes in Britain in 1985 and 1993. Today, incidents of police brutality against black individuals flash across our screens; the unwavering stares of Thompson’s sitters remind us that these acts are not new. “Cemetery of Uniforms and Liveries” asserts that exclusion from representation is a form of violence, inviting us to become spectators with agency and awareness. These men who represent victims of racism are present on the screen, but countless others have not been seen or had their voices heard.



Installation view, Luke Willis Thompson, “Cemetery of Uniforms and Liveries” (photo by Daniel Roussel, courtesy la Biennale de Montréal)

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Kerry James Marshall, panel from *Rythm Mastr* (2016) at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts

Thompson's black-and-white imagery came to mind when I saw Kerry James Marshall's new series of light-box comics at the Musée des Beaux Arts, one of the biennial's satellite venues. A continuation of his *Rythm Mastr* series, the ink drawings include some frames as insistent as Thompson's, with closely cropped characters staring at you, posing questions that resonate far beyond their panels. Glowing on one wall in an expansive room, they freeze vignettes of black urban life in a format that's direct and easy to consume, although the messages might not be. Marshall is known for using intense black to color his African American subjects as an assertion of their presence in the historically white canon of art history. Here, rendered through light boxes, those contrasts are pushed to the extreme and the assertion amplified.



Nicole Eisenman, "Shooter 1" and "Shooter 2" (2016)

These works are particularly powerful for their quietness; where dynamism also succeeds in conveying the violence of seeing is in Nicole Eisenman's recent paintings at MAC. Hanging side by side, her large images of gunmen, rigidly rendered, are petrifying: the barrels of their weapons align with their eyes and aim directly at the

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viewer with fierce intention. The message is immediate; you can almost hear the trigger cock and sense the fatal shot.

Tanya Lukin Linklater similarly explores the ethics of the gaze. Her installation “He was a poet and he taught us how to react and to become this poetry Part 1” centers on Maria Tallchief, the first Native American prima ballerina. Linklater projects, on a low stage, a video of Tallchief discussing her role in George Balanchine’s *Firebird*; the space comes alive further when dancers perform “Part 2” of the piece on top of the projection.



Tanya Lukin Linklater, “He was a poet and taught us how to react and to become this poetry Part 2” (2016)

While Thompson and Marshall make bodies and histories painfully present, Linklater works with their absence: she presents a space that anticipates performance. With dancers appearing only periodically, the installation prods us to contemplate how an institution might structure our gaze and, consequently, how looking might objectify indigenous women’s bodies in particular. Even on its own, the video is difficult to view clearly: screening essentially on the floor, it appears stretched, making our vision continuously skewed.

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Haegue Yang, "The Intermediate - Naturalized Klangkörper" (2016)

The interplay between the absence and presence of bodies arises again in two stimulating sculptural installations by Haegue Yang and Valérie Blass, respectively. Occupying central spaces in separate galleries, both compel you to slow down and discover pleasure in the sensory experiences that are offered.

Yang uses simple materials such as artificial straw, twine, and plastic plants to construct anthropomorphic, highly textured sculptures. They reward close examination, revealing

enticing details as you circle each one. Balanced on casters and often integrating small bells, they also suggest performance, an effect reinforced by their setup between two wooden constructions that resemble stage backdrops. Thriving on artifice, Yang's installation celebrates the fanciful within its self-contained world. It also makes you reconsider the source of pleasure in performance: how much arises from the props versus the actions or even the spectator?



Installation view of works by Haegue Yang

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Blass presents a new series of sculptures: voluminous pieces that are cast from humans and objects and suggest invisible bodies — from a pair of pants worn by a phantom dancer to green sacks that recall a drug smuggler’s pockets. Bulges allude to sensual and illicit pleasures, but Blass relies on optical delight, too; she relishes bright and busy patterns and teases our eye. As with Yang’s figures, seeing these semi-abstract forms from multiple angles delivers pleasurable surprises. The experience feels indulgent, stoking our senses even as we grapple with understanding the objects’ meanings.



Sculptures by Valérie Blass



Sculptures by Valérie Blass

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Hedonism was at the core of what was perhaps the biennial's most buzzed-about work: Anne Imhof's "Angst III," the final chapter of the German artist's three-part performance that previously unfolded during this year's Art Basel and Berlin Art Week — both largely to rave reviews. A four-hour-long undertaking, "Angst III" involved six performers moving around a runway in a fog-filled room, five live falcons that sat still on perches, many cans of shaving cream, numerous tubs of Vaseline, and cigarettes. Structured as an opera (with emphasis on the word's Latin roots that mean "work"), the epic piece involved hypnotic, droning compositions to which the performers moved their limbs very slowly — when they were not marching through the room, smoking, rubbing Vaseline on their skin, or shaving each others' bodies with utter apathy.



Anne Imhof, "Angst III" (2016), October 18 performance at the Musée d'art contemporain de Montréal

When I saw the falcons engulfed in smoke, I was set to detest the piece for exploiting the exotic. (I was later told that the birds are a-okay, although many people will undoubtedly have their gripes.) But "Angst III," which allows visitors to drift in and out of the room as they wish, kept me affixed. Its performers' mystifying actions were utterly

banal and self-absorbed, but the hazy yet sterile setting felt cinematic, otherworldly, and somehow unplaceable along any spectrum of time. Tension hung heavily in the air; the minutes slowed to allow every sight to sink in. I felt placed under a spell that confounded yet satisfied with the utmost perversion.

The question of whether such hedonism is possible today, in a world fraught with pressing anxieties, was one of Pirotte's central concerns in organizing *Le Grand Balcon*. Or, posed more bluntly in the recent words of the *Wall Street Journal*'s Sohrab Ahmari, "Remember when art was supposed to be beautiful?" Ahmari yearns for a time when art was free of identity politics and pure spectacle; at the biennial, these aspects are, unsurprisingly, still at play, but rarely at the expense of visual appeal. Beauty (which is, of course, subjective) is not incompatible with the questioning of privilege and power, as exemplified in pieces by Thompson and Linklater. *Le Grand*

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Balcon suggests that the prettiest visuals may be those that shake our perceptions with brute force.

We were left, at the end of “Angst III,” with piles of shaving cream, cast-off cigarettes, and crushed soda cans. Imhof’s enchantment ended in material debris. The stage was an unsightly mess — and a perfect symbol of what 21st-century capitalism consumes and spits out. It was a lingering vision of waste and excess that stung with unflinching realness.



Anne Imhof, “Angst III” (2016), October 18 performance at the Musée d’art contemporain de Montréal



Anne Imhof, “Angst III” (2016), October 18 performance at the Musée d’art contemporain de Montréal

HYPERALLERGIC



Installation view of the Montréal Biennale, with works by Haegue Yang and Ben Schumacher

Le Grand Balcon, the 2016 Biennale de Montréal, continues at various locations around the city through January 15, 2017.



BIENNALE OF MONTREAL COMMUNICATING VESSELS

From October 19, 2016 to January 15, 2017,
Canada welcomes the **BIENNALE OF MONTREAL**,
an unparalleled event in the country's landscape.

Galerie
Chantal Crousel

In 2014, seeking to attain a wider audience and to open up the international art scene, the Montreal Biennale changed its formula. Philippe Pirotte, director of the Staatliche Hochschule für Bildende Künste in Frankfurt was appointed as director of this year's edition together with four other members: Kitty Scott, Corey McCorkle, Aseman Sabet and Sylvie Fortin.

THE GREAT BALCONY, a poetic, symbolic and metaphorical title for the Montreal Biennale, aims not at conveying specific data or of informing its public, but rather at creating an impression on its audience. An impression that

The Biennale intends to explore our new condition as displaced people and to highlight the alarming number of people who are "displaced" against their will.

will shake and provoke a friction stimulating the viewers' curiosity. Accepting every medium's incapacity to exhaustively transmit "reality" or "messages", the Montreal Biennale prefers to create experiences and to present works of art that stimulate

the spectator's mind and provoke multiple emotions. In order for this to happen, friction is at the centre of the Biennale dialectic, opposite

concepts meet and dialogue between one another: empowerment and weakness, fiction and reality, politics and indifference... friction is there to give shape to a particular environment; a microcosm run by inner and very specific laws is created at the Biennale. Friction, the spark that constantly ignites, is the condition to keep things circulating and to spare us from boredom, which according to Pirotte is the most dangerous of all illnesses.

Two anachronic objects embody this "friction" principle: the first, a portrait by Lucas Cranach that is believed to represent the biblical myth of Judith and Holoferne; the second, a gas station designed by the German architect Mies Van der Rohe. The first explores the human condition and desire's role in our relationships with others, whereas the second relocates materiality and usefulness - a philosophical "programmation" on its own - at the core of artistic concerns. Two major forces in art history reunite in the same space creating connections and bridges between various temporalities: the portrait temporality, the gas station temporality and ours. Thus a cacophony of outspoken cries and whispers from all over the

Moyra Davey, Hemlock Forest (production still), 2016



Galerie
Chantal Crousel



Haegue Yang Sonic Sphere – Horizontally striped Brass and Nickel, 2015 Steel stand, metal grid, powder coating, casters, nickel plated bells, brass plated bells, metal rings 99 x 83 x 83 cm. Courtesy of the artist and Greene Naftali, New York
Photograph: Elisabeth Bernstein

Luis Jacob, SPHINX, 2015 résine epoxy et poussière de marbre, epoxy resin and marble dust installation au Allan Gardens Conservatory, Toronto - installation at the Allan Gardens Conservatory, Toronto. (Courtesy of Birch Contemporary, Toronto and Max Mayer Gallery, Düsseldorf, Germany)

world are displayed, not representing geographical art scenes but bearing witness instead to individual ways of expression across the globe.

At the very beginning of the project, the concept of hedonism was to be explored by artists. As the Biennale evolved, hedonism and its by-products were soon replaced by less optimistic narratives that denounced all the misfortunes and injustices that take place daily in our society. It seems that pleasure and the delights of life haven't become a fundamental value, as Mr. Pirotte accurately noted hedonism is perhaps too big of a question to be approached and pondered upon at a Biennale. The aesthetics of pain and suffering are examined by a number of artists at the exhibition, seemingly revealing the state of mind of our world. A number of contemporary philosophers agree that our society is constructed under false pretenses, that we live in a constant illusion where the material, capitalist world governs all of our relationships with the



outer world and the so called "information economy" distracts and misleads our attention. Moreover, media misinforms and prioritizes certain information. This creates a void between information and what is actually transmitted, for instance, some news relegated to oblivion and others given too much importance. Who determines that a life is worth grieving for and that others are not? Whoever controls media and our perception, controls the world. The Biennale intends to explore our new condition as displaced people and to highlight the alarming number of people who are "displaced" against their will.

In addition to politics and the aesthetics of resistance, the objects "regime" in the art ecosystem is part of the dialectic of the Biennale. During the 20th century, objects took an important part in the multiple avant-garde movements. Artists such as Marcel Duchamp, Pablo Picasso, Robert Rauschenberg, amongst others, introduced objects into their works. By doing so they regressed the usage of the capitalist value and transferred them to a work of art feature. The friction between art and capitalism was enhanced and triggered by these "simple" actions. These bygone objects, conceived in the 20th century, have proven to be more difficult to deflect than before. Mr. Pirotte tried to encourage the artists to rethink the relationship we have with objects: the Canadian artist Celia Perrin Sidarous proposes a new photographic installation where she meditates about the connections between sculptural and architectural forms.

THE GREAT BALCONY is a Biennale revealing the intricate human psyche that incites spectators and artists alike to revisit history in order to create communicating vessels allowing us to fortunately learn something from the past and to unsettle us. M.E.

EDITOR'S PICK
KARINE MONIÉ
28 | 10 | 2016

Bienal de arte de Montreal

Un escaparate efervescente que muestra lo más vibrante en la escena artística actual.



Skyline de la ciudad de Montreal.

FOTO: iStock

Del 19 de octubre de 2016 al 15 de enero de 2017, tendrá lugar la novena edición de la **Bienal de arte de Montreal** bajo el título "Le Grand Balcon", en referencia a la obra de teatro de **Jean Genet** "Le Balcon", sobre la oposición entre realidad e ilusión. Curada por **Philippe Pirotte**, la bienal invita a reexaminar nuestra búsqueda del placer sensual. Las obras seleccionadas destacan por ser imágenes de gran resonancia histórica que nos anclan materialmente y sensorialmente en el momento presente.

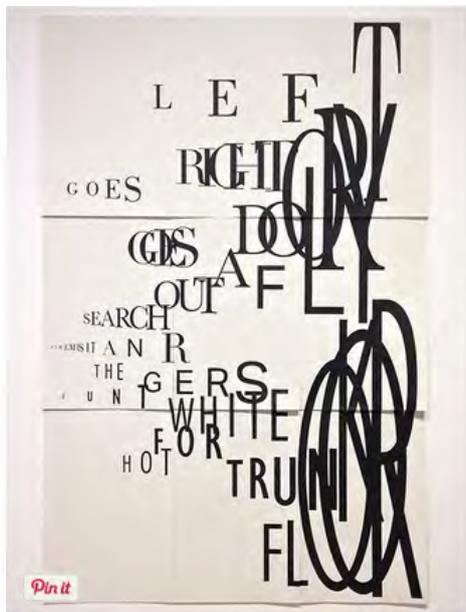
Desde sus inicios en 1998, la misión de la Bienal de Montreal ha sido estimular, producir, interpretar y difundir las prácticas de las artes visuales más actuales. En la edición 2016, más de 50 artistas y colectivos de 23 países podrán descubrirse durante 75 días. Te presentamos nuestras 5 obras de arte favoritas.



3 HAEGUE YANG, "SONIC SPHERE – HORIZONTALLY-STRIPED BRASS AND NICKEL", 2015.

Nacida en 1971 en Seúl, Corea del Sur, Haegue Yang vive y trabaja entre su ciudad de origen y Berlín. Suele usar objetos y materiales de la vida cotidiana, dándoles un nuevo significado poético o político a través de esculturas e instalaciones donde trata los efectos del capitalismo. Su trabajo ofrece experiencias sensoriales a través de narrativas abstractas.

Foto: Elisabeth Bernstein / Cortesía del artista y Greene Naftali, Nueva York.



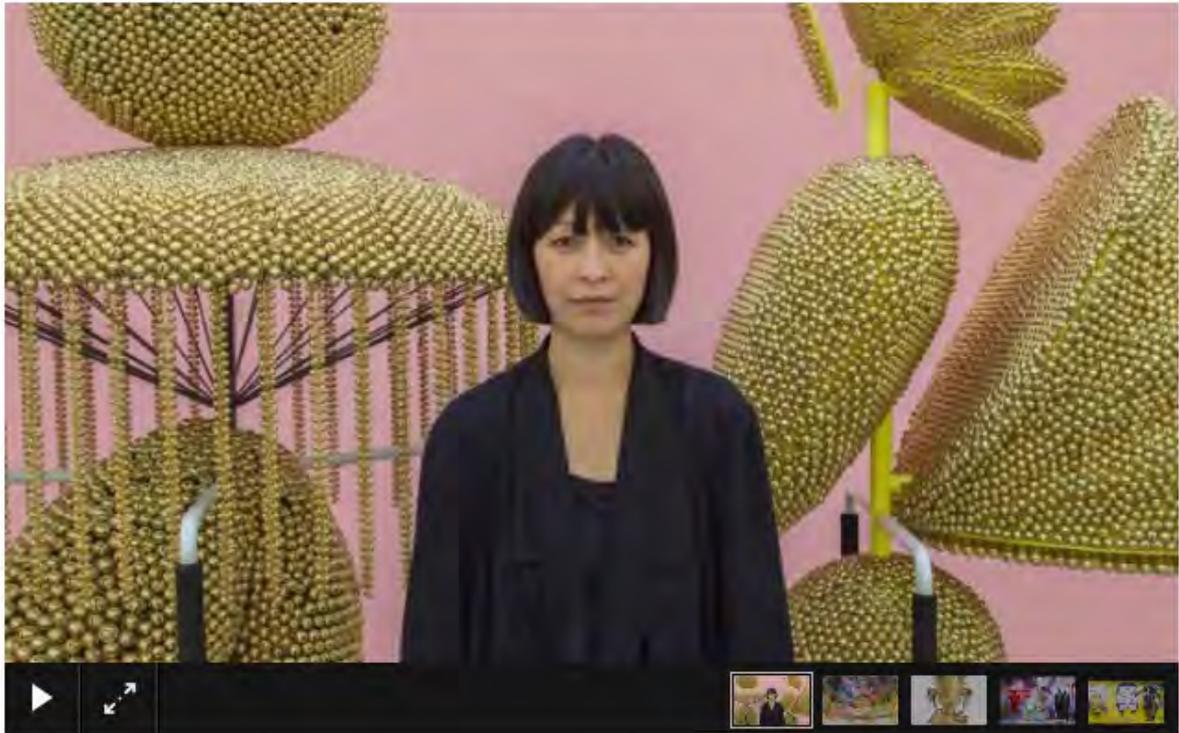
4 JANICE KERBEL, "SCORE", 2015.

Originaria de Toronto, Canadá, Janice Kerbel –nacida en 1969– trabaja en Londres donde explora la noción de visibilidad a través de formas que se caracterizan por su potencial de transformación futura. Se interesa en diversas disciplinas y sus obras tienden a borrar los límites entre realidad, imaginación e ilusión. Janice Kerbel suele usar todo tipo de medios en su trabajo que incluye instalaciones, libros, estampados y material audiovisual, ofreciendo al público experiencias visuales y sonoras únicas.

Foto: Karine Monié.

LA SEIZE

Haegue Yang investit Aishti by the Sea



Galerie
Chantal Crousel

LA MODE

Demain, l'artiste sud-coréenne Haegue Yang, en collaboration avec la galerie Chantal Crousel, prendra possession des vitrines du complexe Aishti by the Sea pour y créer des installations déclinant son thème « Quasi-pagan » lancé en août dernier aux Galeries Lafayette, à Paris.

Fifi ABOU DIB | OLJ

14/12/2016



Les objets inanimés ont-ils une âme ? Cette question galvaudée, posée par Lamartine au XIXe siècle, n'attend évidemment pas de réponse. D'ailleurs, quelle importance qu'ils en aient ou pas, tant qu'ils ont le talent de dégager de l'émotion et de piéger du sens. C'est la réflexion que s'est faite l'artiste Haegue Yang qui compte parmi les plus influentes de sa génération. Née en 1971 à Séoul, d'un père journaliste et d'une mère écrivaine, elle vit aujourd'hui entre Berlin et sa ville natale. Après avoir fait ses études à l'Université nationale de Séoul, elle passe son master à la Städelschule de Francfort et poursuit sa formation en fréquentant des ateliers, notamment l'atelier Calder. Ses installations interpellent les émotions humaines entre poésie et politique. La réflexion profonde qui les sous-tend n'en fait pas pour autant des œuvres intellectuelles. Les objets du quotidien mis en scène par ses soins se révèlent sous un jour inédit, dénoncent le culte parfois inconscient qu'on leur voue et, statiques ou mouvants, occupent l'espace physique autant que l'espace mental du spectateur. À la croisée de la culture coréenne et du matérialisme contemporain, l'œuvre de Haegue Yang impose son universalité.

« Lingerin Nous » au Centre Pompidou, Paris

L'été dernier, de juillet à septembre, le Centre Pompidou présentait une production monumentale inédite de Haegue Yang. Dans le Forum du musée, dont l'espace vertical se déploie sur trois niveaux du bâtiment, l'artiste interrogeait à travers plusieurs médiums, du collage à la performance, les qualités plastiques et émotionnelles des objets du quotidien. Dissociés de leur contexte et assemblés dans ses compositions abstraites, ces objets, libérés de leurs fonctions premières, imposaient leurs qualités plastiques et oniriques. Essentiellement composée de stores vénitiens comme autant de lustres de même origine, et autant d'éventails et panneaux asiatiques d'ailleurs, cette installation monumentale, constituée de près de 166 éléments verts et roses iridescents, était accompagnée, au sous-sol de la salle, de quatre essais vidéo qui lui donnaient voix et dimension humaine. « Les matériaux sont dotés d'un pouvoir magique, soulignait l'artiste. Je les conçois dans toute leur potentialité, et celle-ci ne se révèle qu'au bout d'un combat. Durant toutes ces années, j'ai travaillé avec acharnement sur les stores, et ce n'est que maintenant que je réalise que ce travail n'a pas été vain : il leur a permis de se libérer de la trivialité de l'usage quotidien qui en est fait. »



Haegue Yang / Quasi-Pagan Modern from Studio Haegue Yang 양혜규 on Vimeo.

« Quasi-pagan modern » aux Galeries Lafayette

Presque simultanément avec le Centre Pompidou, les Galeries Lafayette, boulevard Haussmann et dans tous leurs magasins en France, lançaient au mois d'août les collections automne-hiver 2016-2017 avec la contribution de Haegue Yang. Jusqu'au 9 octobre, l'artiste proposait dans les vitrines du temple français du bon goût, sous le titre Quasi-pagan modern (modernité quasi païenne), des motifs hybrides qui osaient l'affrontement entre des notions différentes telles que artisanat/modernité, réel/surnaturel, géométrique/organique. Ses œuvres ont été dévoilées dans les vitrines et sous la célèbre coupole du magasin du boulevard Haussmann, ornant même le shopping bag en édition limitée de la rentrée. Entre rationnel et étrange, ces installations faisaient écho aux nouvelles collections de la saison. Dynamisées par cette collaboration, les Galeries Lafayette révélaient en échange l'énergie de la création et se posaient en « médiateurs entre artistes emblématiques, jeunes créateurs et grand public, provoquant la rencontre unique de la création et du commerce pour tous ».

« Quasi-pagan Seasonal Shift » à Aishti by the Sea

Pionnier de cette rencontre improbable entre l'art et le commerce de luxe, le complexe Aishti by the Sea, en collaboration avec la galerie Chantal Crousel, invite à son tour Haegue Yang à investir ses vitrines. L'œuvre qui sera mise en place demain, jeudi, à 18h, marquera une étape dans le développement du projet « Quasi-pagan » de l'artiste coréenne. On n'en dira pas plus, sinon que les créations de cette saison y seront traitées comme des objets d'art, non pas en raison de leur beauté intrinsèque mais en tant que porteuses de sens et d'interrogations sur leur statut autant que sur nous-mêmes.

Sansom, Anna. «Haegue Yang's symphony of blinds rises through the vast foyer of Paris's Centre Pompidou»,
FRAME, November 13.

<http://www.frameweb.com/news/haegue-yang--s-symphony-of-blinds-rises-through-the-vast-foyer-of-paris--s-centre-pompidou>

FRAME



Galerie
Chantal Crousel

— FRAME MAGAZINE —

Haegue Yang's symphony of blinds rises through the vast foyer of Paris's Centre Pompidou

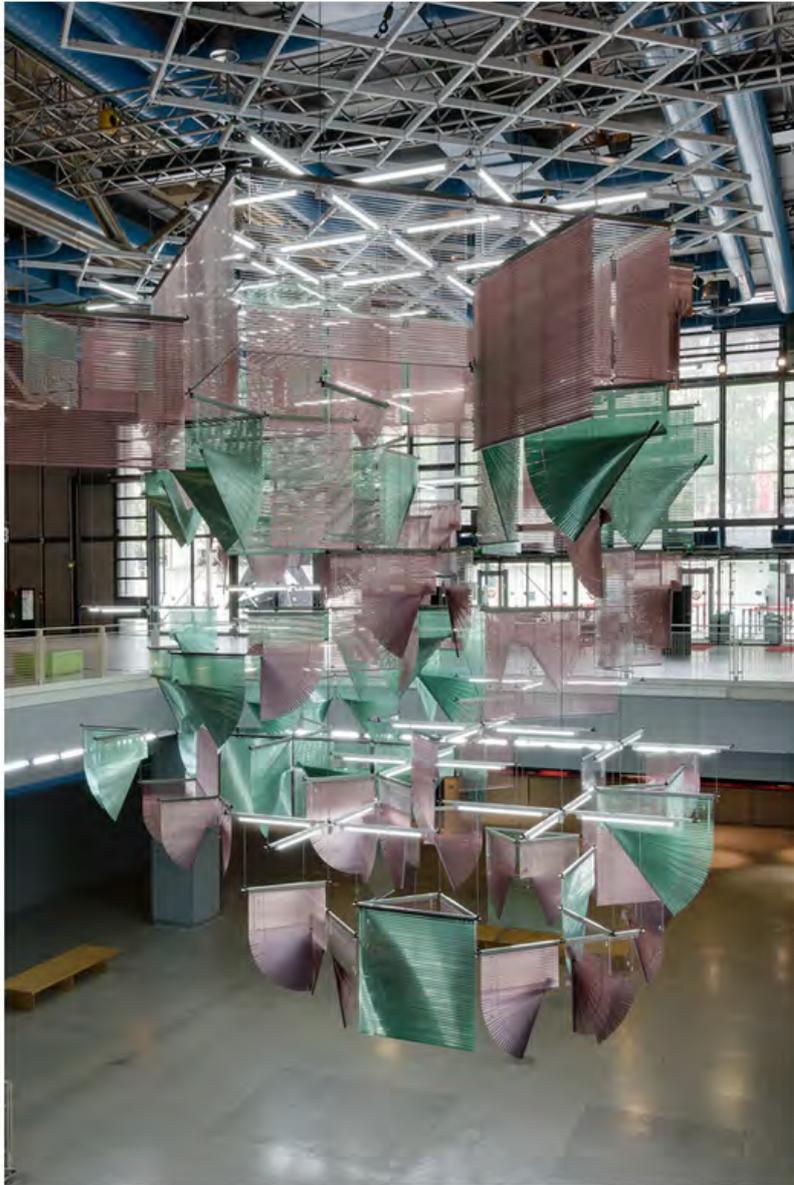
PARIS – To celebrate France-Korea Year 2015-2016, the Centre Pompidou in Paris invited South Korean artist Haegue Yang to make a site-specific installation to be shown in the Forum, which doubles as foyer and exhibition area. Her piece, *Lingering Nous*, extended over three floors, occupying the central part of the space.

Born in Seoul in 1971, Haegue Yang employed ordinary Venetian blinds, a staple in her work since 2006, for the monumental abstract composition. Liberating the blinds from their original function, she elevated the ready-mades to reveal their aesthetic quality. While some of the blinds hung all the way down, others opened midway, spanning out like fans. The resulting rhythmic sensation evoked an orchestral melody inaudibly filling the space.

Sansom, Anna. «Haegue Yang's symphony of blinds rises through the vast foyer of Paris's Centre Pompidou»,
FRAME, November 13.

<http://www.frameweb.com/news/haegue-yang--s-symphony-of-blinds-rises-through-the-vast-foyer-of-paris--s-centre-pompidou>

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Galerie
Chantal Crousel

Yang's work cleverly reflected on the architecture of the Centre Pompidou. The flattened cones that she created contrasted with the building's strict linearity. Similarly, Yang chose delicate pastels – pearlescent pinks and greens – that complemented the Centre Pompidou's primary colours. The two LED chandeliers that illuminated her installation resonated with cabling visible on the ceiling.

Commenting on Yang's contribution prior to its installation, curator Nicolas Liucci-Goutnikov said, 'The artist has proposed a piece that doesn't seek to enter into competition with the space but to dialogue with it.' Experienced within the context of France-Korea Year, *Lingering Nous* expressed a wish for cultural harmony.

Sansom, Anna. «Haegue Yang's symphony of blinds rises through the vast foyer of Paris's Centre Pompidou»,
FRAME, November 13.
<http://www.frameweb.com/news/haegue-yang--s-symphony-of-blinds-rises-through-the-vast-foyer-of-paris--s-centre-pompidou>

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Galerie
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Photos Florian Kleinfenn, courtesy of Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris

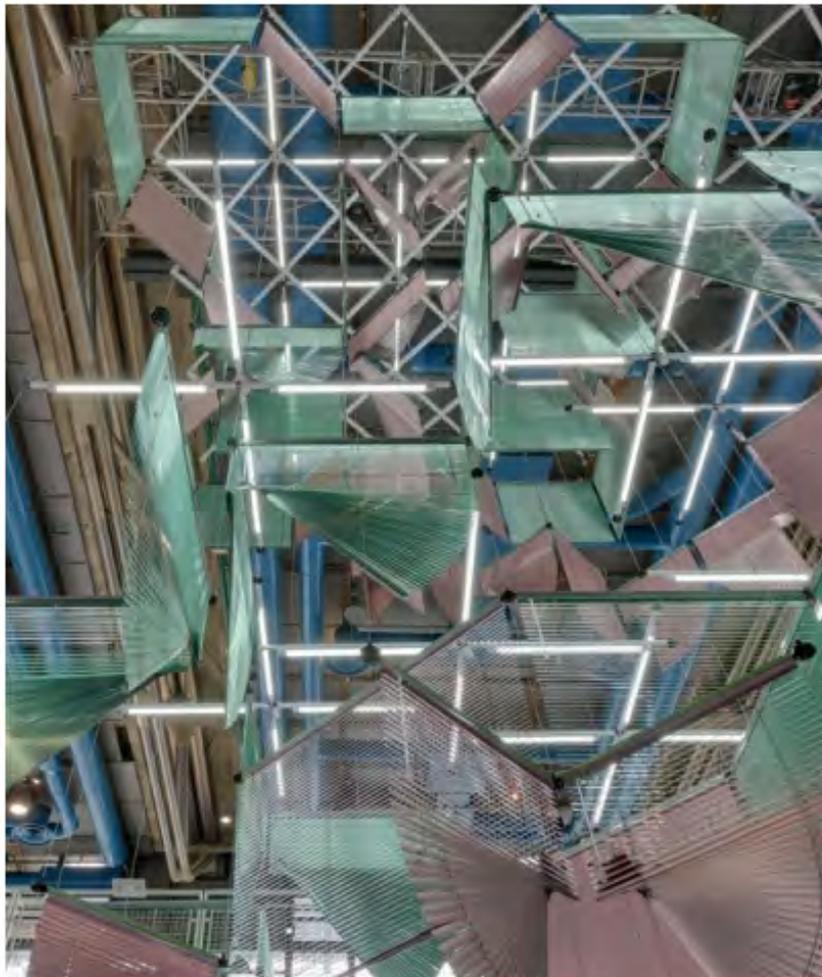
heikejung.de

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Sansom, Anna. «Haegue Yang's symphony of blinds rises through the vast foyer of Paris's Centre Pompidou»,
FRAME, November 13.
<http://www.frameweb.com/news/haegue-yang--s-symphony-of-blinds-rises-through-the-vast-foyer-of-paris--s-centre-pompidou>

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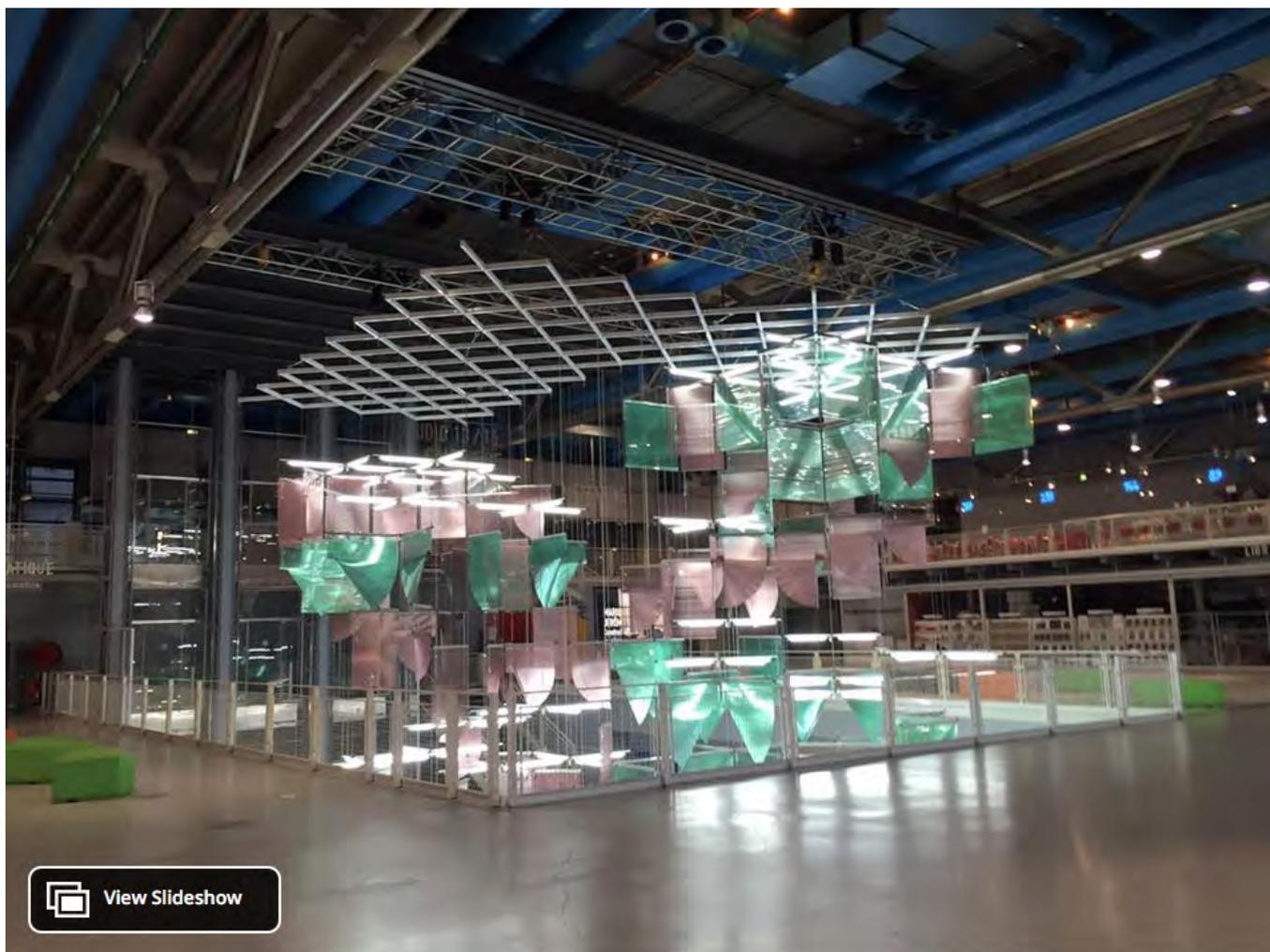
Wee, Darryl. "Haegue Yang Opens New Installation at Centre Pompidou". *Blouin Art Info*, July 7, 2016.
<http://enfr.blouinartinfo.com/news/story/1448590/haegue-yang-opens-new-installation-at-centre-pompidou>

BLOUINARTINFO

Haegue Yang Opens New Installation at Centre Pompidou

BY Darryl Wee | July 07, 2016

Galerie
Chantal Crousel



View of Haegue Yang's installation at the Forum of the Centre Pompidou
(Courtesy Bo Young Song)

2016 has been a productive year for Haegue Yang. Following her solo exhibition "Quasi-Pagan Minimal" that opened at the Hamburger Kunsthalle in April, a much-feted showcase at Art Basel Unlimited in June, and another exhibition at the Serralves Museum in Porto, Yang has just unveiled an ambitious site-specific installation in the Forum of the Centre Pompidou in Paris.

Entitled "Lingering Nous," Yang's new work is an installation that could easily have been overwhelmed by the cavernous scale of the space, which extends over three levels. By turns ethereal in its semi-translucency and varied in the degree of extension and color exhibited by each set of Venetian blinds, the work nonetheless adheres to a strict formal logic.

"At first glance, the installation looks quite expressive, freed of any constraint," curator Nicolas Liucci-Goutnikov tells ARTINFO. "But if you look more carefully, you realize that Haegue has set up a series of

BLOUINARTINFO

strict rules, to which she always submits herself delightfully."

"A grid determines the system by which the blinds are hung, which in turn determines the colors of the blinds, which she has chosen beforehand from an industrial catalog," he adds. "The whole is then rawly illuminated by lights placed within the structure itself, as well as around it. The result, for me, is a radiant beauty."

"Lingering Nous" is the latest addition to Yang's "Sol LeWitt" series, which she has been working on ever since her exhibition "Shooting the Elephant □ Thinking the Elephant" at the Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art in Seoul last year.

"The 12 or so installations in the Sol LeWitt series are characterized by their modular systems, which led Haegue to propose very dense and compact installations that prevent our gaze from seeing through them," notes Liucci-Goutnikov.

"With 'Lingering Nous,' I feel that Haegue has reached a breakthrough in the context of this series, thanks to its green and pink hues, its sparse and articulated installation, and 'butterfly' shapes."

For Liucci-Goutnikov, Yang's mastery of such an innocuous and seemingly mundane material as Venetian blinds points toward a more general flair for "working with utilitarian objects, by organizing a transfigured 'rendez-vous' — as Marcel Duchamp said about ready-mades — between them and the viewer."

"Incorporated into abstract compositions, those objects find themselves emancipated from their function, and acquire a new existence," he adds. "Their aesthetic qualities are fully revealed, thanks to Haegue's unique mastery of the material — a mastery that is acquired piece after piece, recalling in many ways the field of crafts."

"In this regard, I think the way in which Haegue deals with Venetian blinds, one of her signature materials, is exemplary," says Liucci-Goutnikov. "Instead of relying on what she has already learned about them, Haegue keeps researching and experimenting with new ways to uncover the aesthetic possibilities embedded in their functionality."

Haegue Yang's "Lingering Nous" runs through September 5 at Centre Pompidou.

Affreixo, Rodrigo. "Serralves em obras para acolher Haegue Yang". *Cultura GPS*, June 25, 2016.
http://www.sabado.pt/cultura_gps/detalhe/serralves_em_obras_para_acolher_haegue_yang.html

CULTURA GPS



Galerie
Chantal Crousel

25 Junho 2016 • Rodrigo Affreixo

Um encontro adiado. Suzanne Cotter, a actual directora do Museu de Serralves, conheceu a artista sul-coreana Haegue Yang em Nova Iorque, em 2010. No ano seguinte, quando estava a co-comissariar a bienal de Sharjah, nos Emirados Árabes Unidos, convidou-a a participar. «Não participei, porque nunca tinha estado antes em Sharjah. Não tinha qualquer conhecimento do mundo árabe, mas através do seu convite comecei a investigar sobre o Médio Oriente. E em 2015 acabei por participar na bienal», recorda a artista.

Haegue Yang (Seul, 1971) tem uma carreira imparável e invejável, com apresentações em tudo quanto é sítio de referência, como o MoMA, o Guggenheim, a Tate Modern, a Bienal de Veneza ou o Documenta de Kassel. Ou o Centre Georges Pompidou, já em Julho.

Quando chegou a Serralves, Suzanne Cotter apressou-se a dirigir-lhe um convite. E também teve uma reunião com os parceiros da Sonae neste projecto, «no sentido de mudar o formato em função das coisas diferentes que temos aqui», conta ao GPS. «Se estão interessados em algo distintivo, a coisa mais distintiva que temos aqui é o facto de termos o museu em relação com os jardins e o parque. E isso é algo que a Tate Modern não tem, o MoMA não tem, o Centro Pompidou não tem».

A obra intitula-se An Opaque Wind Park in Six Folds (Parque de Vento Opaco em Seis Dobras). Primeiro, chegaram os esboços em 3D da artista. Depois, foram trabalhados num gabinete de arquitectos. Mais tarde, na Clareira dos Teixos, iniciou-se a construção da peça, que durou mais de duas semanas, envolvendo um engenheiro, um pedreiro, vários construtores e jardineiros e três estudantes de artes.

Culture Box / AFP. «La Coréenne Haegue Yang expose une oeuvre faite de stores au Centre Pompidou», *Francetvinfo*, July 6.

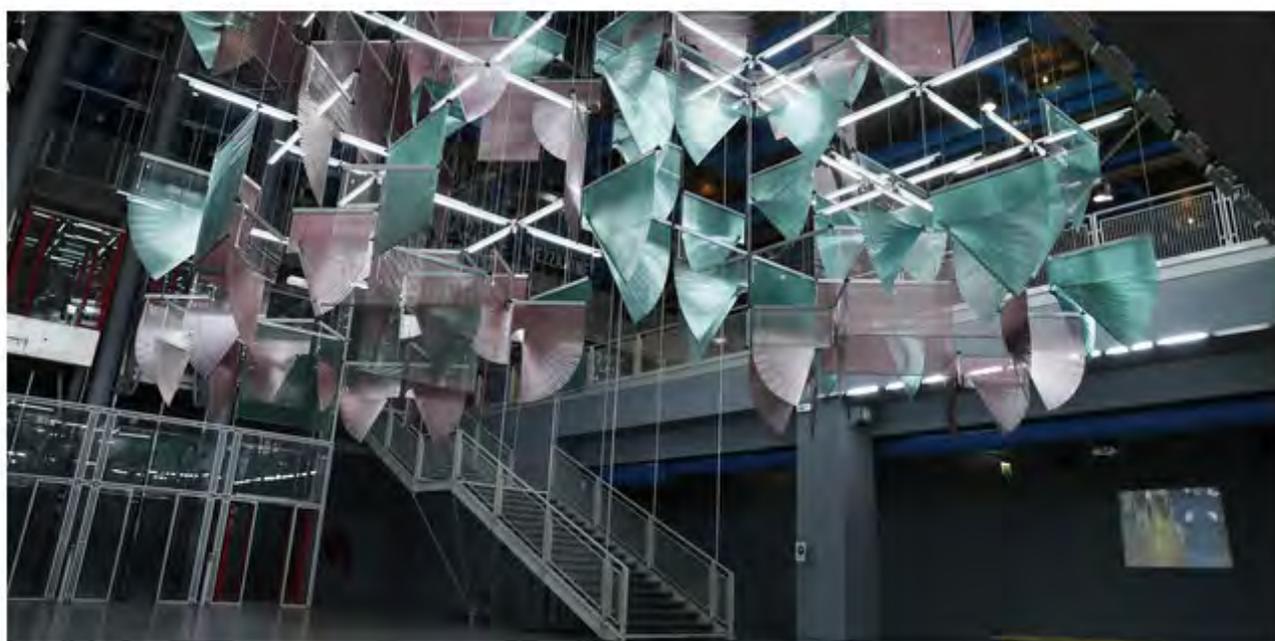
<http://culturebox.francetvinfo.fr/expositions/sculpture/la-coreenne-haegue-yang-expose-une-oeuvre-faite-de-stores-au-centre-pompidou-242573>

francetvinfo

La Coréenne Haegue Yang expose une oeuvre faite de stores au Centre Pompidou

Par **Culturebox (avec AFP)** 

Mis à jour le 06/07/2016 à 09H24, publié le 06/07/2016 à 09H08



"Lingering Nous", une oeuvre de Haegue Yang composée de stores vénitiens, installée dans le forum du Centre Pompidou (5 juillet 2016)

Galerie
Chantal Crousel

Une installation monumentale de l'artiste sud-coréenne Haegue Yang, composée de stores vénitiens suspendus éclairés par des néons dans le forum, accueillera tout l'été les visiteurs du Centre Georges Pompidou, à Paris (jusqu'au 5 septembre).

«J'ai d'abord eu des doutes lorsque le Centre Pompidou m'a proposé de réaliser une oeuvre pour son forum. Je me suis demandé 'pourquoi moi ?' et le lieu ne me semblait pas adapté à mon travail», a déclaré à l'AFP Haegue Yang, 45 ans. «J'ai finalement été séduite par leur volonté de créer dans cet espace quelque chose qui ait du sens», a ajouté l'artiste qui se partage entre Séoul, Berlin où elle a son atelier, et Malmö où elle enseigne l'art.

Composée de 166 stores vénitiens roses ou verts, tantôt baissés, tantôt relevés et parfois montés en diagonales, l'installation «Lingering Nous» se déploie sur toute la hauteur du forum, soit environ douze mètres.

Un ready-made sous éclairage blafard de supermarché

Obéissant au principe du ready-made, inventé par Marcel Duchamp, Haegue Yang détourne les stores de leur fonction première en les recomposant de manière abstraite pour leur donner un sens nouveau.

Culture Box / AFP. «La Coréenne Haegue Yang expose une oeuvre faite de stores au Centre Pompidou», *Francetvinfo*, July 6.

<http://culturebox.francetvinfo.fr/expositions/sculpture/la-coreenne-haegue-yang-expose-une-oeuvre-faite-de-stores-au-centre-pompidou-242573>



L'artiste travaille depuis dix ans sur ces objets du quotidien qui sont devenus son matériau de prédilection.

«Symboliquement, les stores sont des objets qui servent à séparer espace public et privé», explique Nicolas Liucci-Goutnikov, commissaire de cette installation proposée au public jusqu'au 6 septembre dans le cadre de l'année France-Corée. «Ils possèdent des qualités plastiques importantes, permettent une transparence variable et possèdent un pouvoir de réflexion optique particulier», précise-t-il.

Haegue Yang joue sur ses propriétés en intégrant à sa structure mobile un éclairage aux néons «à la manière d'un supermarché», selon ses termes. «Par sa violence, l'éclairage blafard et cru donne une présence à l'oeuvre», précise Nicolas Liucci-Goutnikov.

Quatre vidéos pour comprendre l'oeuvre

Après une période minimaliste où elle s'affranchissait de toute créativité pour soumettre son travail à des lois géométriques, Haegue Yang propose au Centre Pompidou une oeuvre «plus expressive, déstructurée et colorée», souligne Nicolas Liucci-Goutnikov.

«Lingering Nous» est accompagnée de quatre vidéos au niveau -1 du forum, «Video Trilogy» (2004-2006) et «Doubles and Halves-Events with Nameless Neighbors» (2009). Essentielles pour comprendre son oeuvre, on y voit Haegue Yang dans différents endroits du monde où elle parle de ses impressions et de ses sentiments dans un travail introspectif.

La plasticienne a représenté la Corée du Sud à la Biennale de Venise. Elle a aussi exposé à la Documenta (l'exposition d'art moderne et contemporain de Kassel), au Walker Art Center de Minneapolis, à l'Institut d'art contemporain de Boston.



O vento invisível de Haegue Yang já sopra em Serralves

Luís Miguel Queirós
21/06/2016 - 19:38

A artista sul-coreana, que esta terça-feira inaugurou Parque de Vento Opaco em Seis Dobras, acredita que o Porto pode voltar a inspirá-la.

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Chantal Crousel



A escultura de Haegue Yang evoca uma história de migrações cruzadas
ADRIANO MIRANDA

São cinco torres de formato e dimensão variáveis, construídas com tijolo de barro cozido de diferentes colorações e unidas por um percurso geométrico de lajes quadradas. No topo destas torres, rodam lentamente ventiladores eólicos de alumínio, usados em edifícios industriais para renovar o ar sem recurso a motores. E embutidos nas paredes de tijolo, vêm-se cactos, heras e outras plantas. Ligeiramente deslocadas deste complexo central, como se já não fizessem bem parte dele, duas pequenas esculturas, também em tijolo, uma delas com uma muito portuguesa andorinha em cerâmica.



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A artista sul-coreana nos jardins de Serralves
ADRIANO MIRANDA

Parque de Vento Opaco em Seis Dobras foi o nome que a artista coreana Haegue Yang deu ao conjunto, inaugurado esta terça-feira nos jardins de Serralves, em diálogo com o museu de Siza Vieira. É a segunda encomenda feita a uma artista internacional, no âmbito do Projecto Sonae/Serralves, para criar uma peça propositadamente para o parque da fundação. A primeira tinha sido à iraniana Nairy Baghramian (radicada em Berlim, tal como Haegue Yang), que em 2014 criou no Porto o conjunto de esculturas Cold Shoulder.

Neste Parque de Vento Opaco em Seis Dobras, a artista coreana utiliza os mesmos materiais a que recorreu em An Opaque Wind, a intervenção escultural ao ar livre que criou no ano passado para a bienal de Sharjah, nos Emirados Árabes Unidos. E a única ideia que trazia na cabeça quando chegou a Serralves, disse ao PÚBLICO, era justamente a de retomar esses tijolos e ventiladores, com os quais quisera sugerir a reconstituição das sucessivas camadas históricas que foram compondo a civilização humana, incluindo as infraestruturas industriais das nações modernas, mas também essa “comunicação invisível” entre as comunidades de trabalhadores migrantes de várias nações que raramente chegam a conviver umas com as outras nos países onde vão procurar melhores condições de vida.



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Parque de Vento Opaco em Seis Dobras é a segunda intervenção no Parque de Serralves ao abrigo de uma parceria com a Sonae
ADRIANO MIRANDA

Não tinha previsto, por exemplo, usar plantas. “Não conhecia o Porto nem o Parque de Serralves e, para ser franca, vinha com a intenção de fazer uma coisa muito provocadora, crítica, subversiva, mas depois cheguei e vi isto, e pensei que talvez não fosse o sítio certo para fazer algo desse género”, conta. “É um lugar tão pacífico, onde as famílias vêm com as crianças, de modo que comecei a pensar na vegetação, e também na arquitectura do Siza.» O arquitecto português é conhecidíssimo na Coreia, garante Haegue Yang. “Quando disse que vinha ao Porto, toda a gente me perguntava se me ia encontrar com o Siza.»

A artista vive há mais de 20 anos na Alemanha, primeiro em Frankfurt e agora em Berlim, e dá também aulas de arte em Malmö, na Suécia, mas continua a passar bastante tempo na Coreia, e a inspiração para An Opaque Wind veio-lhe do seu conhecimento, até por razões familiares, das grandes migrações de coreanos que foram trabalhar nos anos 70 para países árabes.

“O meu pai, os meus tios, foram trabalhar para o Médio Oriente, todas as famílias tinham alguém emigrado nessa zona, e também no Norte de África: nos anos 70, tínhamos pouco dinheiro e os árabes, que não gostavam de trabalhar com os ocidentais, iam buscar trabalhadores baratos aos países asiáticos”, diz. Uma realidade que “se repete agora com outras gerações e outros países”. Nos Emirados Árabes Unidos, observa, “os trabalhadores coreanos não comunicavam, por exemplo, com os do Bangladesh, mas o encontro físico dessas comunidades criou entre elas uma relação que é um facto histórico, e a pergunta que



me fiz foi: como mostrar essa comunicação invisível, muda, sem provas materiais?”. O vento invisível que faz girar as leves folhas de alumínio dos ventiladores é uma metáfora dessa (in)comunicação.

Galerie
Chantal Crousel



Os pequenos ventiladores eólicos sugere a comunicação invisível entre migrantes de várias nacionalidades

ADRIANO MIRANDA

Mas se a obra de Serralves, nos materiais e até no nome, sugere a continuação deste projecto iniciado no Médio Oriente, não é certo que assim seja. “Entusiasma-me não saber o que vou fazer, e isto é tão novo que ainda não sei o que é”, confessa a artista. “Alguns amigos meus, que vieram de propósito ao Porto, estavam ontem a falar da peça, e eu fiquei a ouvi-los...”, ri-se. E acrescenta: “Não sei o que fiz, mas acho que estou no caminho certo. Um caminho que passa por não se deixar enredar nos meandros mais institucionais do mundo da arte internacional, no qual é hoje um nome consagrado, com exposições em grandes museus de vários continentes e uma presença regular, em representação da Coreia do Sul, nas principais bienais de arte, da de Veneza à Documenta de Kassell.

Wee, Darryl. "Lee Hyun-Sook on Haegue Yang at Art Basel Unlimited 2016". *Blouin Art Info*, June 7, 2016.
http://enkr.blouinartinfo.com/news/story/1421483/lee-hyun-sook-on-haegue-yang-at-art-basel-unlimited-2016?utm_source=Blouin+Artinfo+Newsletters&utm_campaign=0a798be876-Europe+Edition+Newsletter+June+8%2C+2016&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_df23dbd3c6-0a798be876-82962465

BLOUINARTINFO

Lee Hyun-Sook on Haegue Yang at Art Basel Unlimited 2016

BY Darryl Wee | June 07, 2016

Galerie
Chantal Crousel



Haegue Yang, «Sol LeWitt Upside Down – Structure with Three Towers, Expanded 23 Times, Split in Three,» 2015, aluminum Venetian blinds, aluminum hanging structure, powder coating, steel wire, 3 towers, 350 x 352.5 x 352.5 cm each. Installation view of La vie modern, La Biennale de Lyon, La Sucrière, Lyon, France, 2015

(Courtesy Kukje Gallery. Photo © Blaise ADILON)

For all collectors attending Art Basel this month, the Unlimited Section of the fair is an absolute must-see. The sheer size of some of the works presented can often be breathtaking, while the roll-call of participating artists reads like a «who's who» of the art world. This year, visitors can expect to see 88 projects – a record number – including some by heavyweights like Ai Weiwei, El Anatsui, Elmgreen & Dragset, Tracey Emin, Sol LeWitt, Frank Stella, and James Turrell.

Proudly displayed amongst them will be leading Korean artist Haegue Yang's "Sol LeWitt Upside Down – Structure with Three Towers, Expanded 23 Times, Split in Three," an ethereal modular construction of

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BLOUINARTINFO

white blinds that is an extension of a series first shown at Yang's solo exhibition "Shooting the Elephant □ Thinking the Elephant," at Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art (Seoul) in 2015.

We talked to Lee Hyun-Sook of Seoul's Kukje Gallery, which is collaborating with New York's Tina Kim Gallery to present Haegue Yang at Art Basel Unlimited 2016, to find out more about the installation.

Could you describe the significance of Haegue Yang's practice in the context of both her hometown of Seoul and her adopted base of Berlin? Would you say that there is anything at all «Korean» or even «Asian» about her work, or is it globally aware and internationally oriented?

Haegue Yang is inspired by the everyday, as well as deeply engaged with the context of the exhibition space. She is not locked into a framework of being "Korean" or "Asian"; however, her chosen subject matter and mediums do engage cultural perspectives depending on the historical and traditional milieu of the exhibition venue.

That being said, instead of viewing her work as nomadic and unmoored to any geographical site, the artist and her practice can be viewed as engaging with recurring themes, especially her desire to explore the sensuous and intuitive in the everyday.

This can be seen in her major series "The Intermediates," which is part of her current solo exhibition at the Hamburger Kunsthalle. These works are made primarily of straw, a material which can be found in various cultures, and explore how materials can act as a middleman between the borders of the past and present, the ancient and modern age.

Who would you say are some of Haegue Yang's main artistic influences and predecessors?

Haegue Yang's practice often revolves around series of related works based on deep research of historical figures and their social history. For instance, Yang approached the subject of diaspora by exploring the work of Korean-Japanese writer Suh Kyungsik, who wrote the book "My Journey to Primo Levi." This powerful work reflects on political asylum and Yang uses it as a framework to explore her own complex experience living and working in Germany. She organized a lecture with this important author as part of her solo exhibition at Haus der Kunst.

How would you describe Yang's installation for Unlimited in your own words?

"Sol LeWitt Upside Down – Structure with Three Towers, Expanded 23 Times, Split in Three," which will be presented at Art Basel Unlimited, is an extension of her blind series that was first shown at her solo exhibition "Shooting the Elephant □ Thinking the Elephant" at Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art, Seoul, in 2015, entitled "Sol LeWitt Upside Down – Structure with Three Towers, Expanded 23 Times."

In its first iteration, the work was suspended in the air as a single cube. At the Lyon Biennial in September 2015, the work evolved and was divided into three towers with fluorescent lamps installed inside. In this year's Art Basel Unlimited exhibition, the artist has altered the work once again, allowing it to hang nearly touching the floor and directly engaging the Unlimited sector's exhibition space designed by Herzog & de Meuron.

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What are some recent and upcoming projects by Haegue Yang that viewers ought to be aware of, or look forward to?

Her solo exhibition "Quasi-Pagan Minimal" at the Hamburger Kunsthalle opened last month and is on view through April 30, 2017. Also, her upcoming solo exhibition at the Centre Pompidou, Paris will open on July 5, and run through September 5, 2016. A large-scale blind work will be installed in the main Forum of the Centre Pompidou, and this will be a key exhibition showcasing this signature series. The blind series has allowed the artist to explore both compositional aspects and dynamic variables such as the architectural site.

Yang also has an exhibition in Porto, Portugal in June, a group exhibition at the Kunsthalle Bremen in Germany in August, and in October, she will be included in La Biennale de Montréal in Canada.

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ANNÉE
FRANCE CORÉE

HAEGUE YANG

PROPOS RECUEILLIS
PAR NICOLAS
LIUCCI-GOUTNIKOV
CONSERVATEUR AU MUSÉE
NATIONAL D'ART MODERNE

Pour marquer l'Année de la Corée en France, qui vient célébrer les cent trente ans de l'établissement des relations diplomatiques entre les deux pays, le Centre Pompidou présente une œuvre inédite

tants. Muette et pourtant riche en effets, *Blind Room* contient également la voix enregistrée dans les trois « essais » vidéo-graphiques de *Trilogy*. Cette voix habite le même espace. *Yearning Melancholy Red* (2008) m'a permis de mettre à l'épreuve mes découvertes quant à l'« obliquité du store », explorée dans *Blind Room*. Les stores s'y déploient en une expression spatiale plus évidente. Ils racontent aussi une histoire à travers leur forme, leur couleur et le dialogue contrasté avec une lumière rouge en mouvement. Autour des structures de stores, trois paires de radiateurs et de ventilateurs opposées sont juxtaposées. Elles intensifient l'expérience des sens.

LES MATÉRIAUX SONT DOUÉS D'UNE
PUISSANCE MAGIQUE. JE LES ENVISAGE
DANS TOUTE LEUR POTENTIALITÉ.

DU 6 JUILLET
AU 5 SEPTEMBRE 2016

FORUM

de l'artiste coréenne Haegue Yang. À travers plusieurs disciplines et médiums, du collage à la performance en passant par l'installation, Haegue Yang met à l'épreuve nos perceptions communes et interroge les qualités plastiques des objets du quotidien. Elle imagine une nouvelle installation pour le Forum du Centre Pompidou. Entretien.

NICOLAS LIUCCI-GOUTNIKOV - Depuis ces dix dernières années, tu proposes des installations faites de stores, où la lumière artificielle, le mouvement et parfois les odeurs entrent en jeu. Cette pratique te conduit-elle à produire des « expériences » plutôt que des « objets » ?

HAEGUE YANG - Oui et non, puisque les stores n'occupent pas l'espace comme des objets ordinaires. Ce sont des objets qui articulent l'espace en vertu de leur puissance obscure. Dans mes premiers travaux, comme *Series of Vulnerable Arrangements* - *Blind Room* (2006), les stores constituent simplement des zones d'expérience sensibles, du courant d'air froid provenant du climatiseur suspendu à la chaleur émise par les radiateurs infrarouges autopor-

NLG - La plupart de tes installations sont faites d'objets ménagers, privés de leur fonction. Quelle est ta relation à ces objets ?

HY - Les matériaux sont doués d'une puissance magique. Je les envisage dans toute leur potentialité, une potentialité qui ne s'actualise qu'à travers la lutte. Toutes ces années passées à travailler avec acharnement les stores ont, d'une certaine manière, prouvé que cette lutte n'était pas vaine : elle leur aura permis de se libérer de leur ancrage trivial au quotidien.

NLG - À quelle problématique as-tu été confrontée pour cette installation au Centre Pompidou ?

HY - Je me la suis imposée à moi-même, envisageant de revenir à une forme antérieure de la série de mes œuvres intitulées *Sol LeWitt Upside Down*, débutée en 2014. Je souhaitais me libérer du fort désir que





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j'éprouvais alors : une installation de stores qui citerait explicitement les structures modulaires de Sol LeWitt. Mais j'ai fini par retourner à ce dont j'avais essayé de me défaire, achevant un cycle de construction conceptuelle : de l'« apprendre » au « désapprendre ».

NLG - Tu as conçu l'installation pour le Forum du Centre Pompidou en la rendant adaptable aux galeries d'exposition. Comment y es-tu parvenue ?

HY - L'installation repose sur une grille dotée de sa propre géométrie, offrant une moindre résistance aux transformations. En tant que telle, elle peut être adaptée à des espaces de différents formats, donnant à cette œuvre la possibilité d'une existence aventureuse! ✕

HAEGUE YANG, PHOTO © STYLE H

Katie Fallen. «A conversation with Haegue Yang», *Ocula*, January 15, 2016.

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OCULA

A conversation with Haegue Yang

Katie Fallen

15 Jan 2016



Haegue Yang.

Photo: © Studio Haegue Yang

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For Haegue Yang, 2015 was a rather hectic year. Along with participating in major art events, such as the Biennale de Lyon, the Sharjah Biennial and the 8th Asia Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, Yang has also put together four solo shows around the world; including two extensive institutional exhibitions in Asia at the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing, and the Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art, Seoul. Working across a broad range of mediums, from ethereal Venetian blind installations and sculptures made of clothing racks, straw and bells, to video and works on paper, Yang's hybrid practice creates a multitude of sensorial experiences that serve to reconfigure and explore the quotidian. This strong visual language and conceptual drive, combined with Yang's increasing international presence, has meant that her practice has become clearly identifiable.

Yet alongside the widely recognised aspects of her oeuvre, the South Korean born artist has been working on a lesser-known creative trajectory. Driven by a quest for a deeper level of understanding, Yang has staged a series of readings of the French writer Marguerite Duras' 1982 novella *The Malady of Death*, while also initiating translations of the text, first into Korean in 2008 and now in Chinese.

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Beginning in 2010 during her residency at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis in the United States, each performance has been in a different or local language, with a different performer and with various visual outcomes. Echoing Duras' original text, Yang's staging of *The Malady of Death* is characterised by an inconclusive uncertainty and the unknown. Motivated by a passionate, or even obsessive, yearning to comprehend and explore the true meaning of Duras' text, the performative outcome is autonomous from the refined aesthetic of Yang's other work, all the while sharing the same desire to pursue the notion of 'unknown other'.

In December 2015, as part of *Mobile M+: Live Art*, Yang presented *The Malady of Death: Écrire et Lire*, which was comprised of a staging of *The Malady of Death* at Hong Kong's Sunbeam Theatre and the publication of the first Chinese translation. Held over two nights, the opening performance saw Hon Lai-chu recite Duras' text, dressed in a long white dress upon an all but black stage. Broken up by tension-filled pauses, a burning mosquito coil, moving lights and an intermittent bold background image of French actress Jeanne Balibar, the staging was powerfully effective. It opened up a multitude of considerations for a text that continues to intrigue.

Expanding on a previous *Ocula Conversation with Yang*, which explored her sculpture and installation work, Katie Fallen sat down with the artist to discuss *The Malady of Death*; what inspires this unusual practice, how it has developed over the years, and the complex meanings behind Yang's decisive commitment to the project.

The Malady of Death: Écrire et Lire focuses on Marguerite Duras' novella from 1982. Please can we discuss what drew you to Duras' work as a source of inspiration and this text in particular?

While I was in search of a notion of community, I encountered an essay by Maurice Blanchot, called *The Unavowable Community*. There was one chapter, called 'The Community of Lovers', which was impossible to digest since the whole chapter was about a book, unknown to me till then, by Marguerite Duras called *The Malady of Death*. So I had to read this book, but I couldn't understand it. Then I read it again, twice in a row, but I still didn't understand what was going on, even though there is nothing theoretical about it. So the whole trajectory about Duras started from this point of not understanding her work.

Initially, I started to study all her novels as well as her biography, and there were many other things that I discovered along the way, such as her films and theatre productions as well as the intertextuality of her works.

Anyway, after two years I returned to *The Malady of Death*, and initiated the Korean translation of the book. When I was in residency at the Walker from 2009 to 2010, Doryun Chong proposed to stage this book and obviously, I wanted to hear the text translated into the voice ... so it is born out of curiosity to hear Duras' writing.

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O C U L A

The conceptual premise of staging this text over and over again was immediately there; it is a kind of blind commitment to make a circle around somewhere that is unknown and even supposed to remain unknown. I'm not sharing what I know; I rather attempt to share what I don't know.

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Image: Haegue Yang, *The Malady of Death – Monodrama* with Jane Gordon. Dress rehearsal in English, February 2, 2010, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis. Adapted from Marguerite Duras' novella *La Maladie de la mort*, 1982, ca. 80 min.

Photo © Cameron Wittig for Walker Art Center, Minneapolis

The performance in Hong Kong is the fourth of this work. It was initially staged in 2010 at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis, then the Namsan Arts Center in Seoul and more recently at dOCUMENTA (13) in 2012. Would you talk us through how you have changed the performance each time, building up to the version in Hong Kong?

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OCULA

So the first stage, which took place at the Walker as a dress rehearsal with invited guests, I have already introduced. The second performance of *The Malady of Death* at the Namsan Arts Center was the first public staging, and was born out of my solo show *Voice Over Three*, which was in fact my first institutional show in Seoul at Artsonje Center in 2010. Prior to the performance at Namsan, I published a Korean translation of *The Malady of Death* as an artist book with Insa Art Space in Seoul in 2008. The team had to be built for it: a Korean philosopher who is known as a specialist in Blanchot was asked to write the preface and a Dutch design collective, Metahaven (Daniel van der Velden) was asked to design the book. Daniel liked the conceptual premise behind the design commission, which illuminated his illiteracy in Korean letters, inducing an element of unknown-ness and impossibility in his job.

The staging at Namsan was an interesting experience because it was the first time I had gone through the proper casting process. I ended up asking a woman to perform who is known in Korea as a news anchor. The main trigger for choosing her was her willingness and her physical presence on the stage, as well as her great ability to perform the text through her trained speech.

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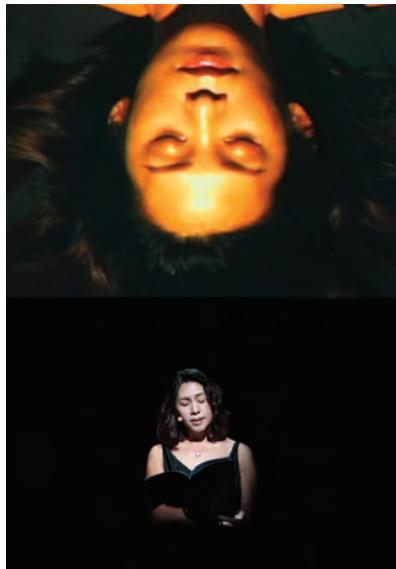


Image: Haegue Yang, *The Malady of Death* – Monodrama with Yoo Jung-Ah. Staging project in Korean. September 11-12, 2010, Namsan Arts Center, Seoul. Adapted from Marguerite Duras' novella *La Maladie de la mort*, 1982, ca. 80 min.

Photo: © SAMUSO: Space for Contemporary Art, Seoul

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After Namsan, you then staged the work at dOCUMENTA (13). How did this build upon what you had done in Korea?

Then the staging at dOCUMENTA (13) in 2012 was a big turning point. So far I had written a script based on the novella for each staging, meaning it was not a complete reading of the book. When I met with the actress for dOCUMENTA (13), Jeanne Balibar, to share my desire and approach to the text, I realised she also had a tremendous relationship with it. As someone who had grown up in Paris in an intellectual environment she was fairly acquainted with Duras and her writings, but also had a particular approach. (Each performer is the source of the inspiration as well as a strong collaborator, encouraging me to make each version unique.) Jeanne was the one who proposed to read the entire text. So the decision to abandon the script was initiated by her. While I was aware of that possibility the whole time, due to my enormous respect for Duras' text staging it by reading the whole text has been terrifying. However, I followed Jeanne's idea because that was daring and truly challenging. And it was certainly a big turning point.

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Image: Haegue Yang, *The Malady of Death* – Monodrama with Jeanne Balibar. Staging project in English, June 7, 2012. Staatstheater Kassel. Adapted from Marguerite Duras' novella *La Maladie de la mort*, 1982, ca. 80 min. Commissioned by dOCUMENTA (13).
Photo: Krzysztof Zieliński

Katie Fallen. «A conversation with Haegue Yang», *Ocula*, January 15, 2016.

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OCULA

And turning then to the performance in Hong Kong?

Again we had two intellectual and strong women: the writer and novelist, Hon Lai-chu; and Yau Ching, the cinema scholar and filmmaker. They're not performers who usually appear on stage, so I had to find a way to preserve them as a reader. So for the Hong Kong version I intentionally recycled a lot of imagery of *Jeanne*, which had been produced for *DOCUMENTA* (13). Hon and Yau performed in Cantonese, and as I cannot speak Cantonese, I was absolutely reliant on their ability and integrity. In fact, it was a huge dependency, which is important and interesting. I'm borrowing each performer's entire intellectual and personal property, and overlapping it onto the book.

Where will you take the performance next?

Each time I stage *The Malady of Death*, it is formed differently, because it's an accumulation of circumstances, such as encounters of people with different desires.

At the beginning of this year I will produce another *The Malady of Death* in Spanish in Mexico. It will be in a cenote, a sinkhole, so it will become an outdoor piece in a nature-dominating wild environment. While in Hong Kong, there was juxtaposition between an almost elitist piece, presented in a genuinely local place like the Sunbeam Theatre, where usually senior citizens go to enjoy Cantonese opera; in Mexico, in Yucatán, we will become an invader in nature, in a cenote, so the piece will feel extremely vulnerable again. There will be neither projection nor theatrical lighting. Even an opening to the night sky would not provide any light; as it will be night you cannot really see anything, all the beauty is actually hidden in the darkness. There we will have the actress, Irene Azuela, on a raft, with the audience sat around the water's edge. Quite different from the extreme classical theatre event with over 900 people in the audience at *DOCUMENTA* (13), the staging with Irene in Yucatán is going to be kept informal and intimate.



Image: Haegue Yang, *The Malady of Death* – Monodrama with Hon Lai-chu. Staged reading in Cantonese, December 4, 2015, Sunbeam Theatre, Hong Kong. Complete reading of Marguerite Duras' novella *La Maladie de la mort*, 1982, ca. 75 min. Commissioned by M+ for Mobile M+: Live Art.
Photo: CPAK Studio

Katie Fallen. «A conversation with Haegue Yang», *Ocula*, January 15, 2016.

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OCULA

How has your understanding of the work and Duras' text developed over time with each new performance?

Each staging is undoubtedly a rich learning process. I have a feeling I get closer to the text each time. But in fact, the text remains remote after the staging. So the closest I could get to the text is when it is presented on the stage, and I can 'see' and 'hear' it. It's the actual moment that you become the witness of the event in its entirety; a witness to the voice embodying the text.

It was really interesting to hear the text at the Walker for the first time. I heard the text so differently that I had to read it again. It was so crystal-clear during the performance, yet the text immediately escaped from me afterwards. The text is not meant to be understood, I think it is meant to be heard and experienced like love. You get puzzled by the actuality of the story, which is only present when you are in it. The performer causes a conflict to build up, because we are so reliant on her presence. The fact that she makes the moment possible through her presence and voice also means that she throws us out of the text, outside of reading when the performance is over. In other words, there is resistance against a possible comprehension, so the text requires us to be constantly engaged; *The Malady of Death* is not a story one can digest and be done with. I think that is the motivation for me to keep doing it. Duras' text is very sensual; an element you appeared to explore in the Hong Kong performance through the use of lighting, sound effects, a burning mosquito coil and the image of a woman as the background. Would you talk about your staging choices, including the visual effects and imagery you chose to employ?

So on one hand I am overlapping elements from my other works, but also tracing the ideas of Duras. When I studied Duras' films I discovered this very anti-cinematic idea of a cinema without actors. Even if there are actors they're almost like mannequins, they barely move or speak; in fact they are like projections of an idea. So I chose to echo this with the background image of an almost paralysed female, juxtaposed with the real presence of a performer. So there is a doubling of the figure, with the reader in the foreground and the huge upside-down head or body of a woman as the background. There is a simultaneous resemblance and contrast between the real-scape and the representation of head or body. In Hong Kong in particular, I used this doubling to protect Hon and Yau as non-performers by intentionally recycling the image of Jeanne from *DOCUMENTA* (13), because otherwise I would have made them the performers when they were meant to be just readers. And by deleting all sense of acting, a powerful image of an enigmatic presence is created.

The burning mosquito coil in the staging is the only element that freely moves, even if it's so minor. In chapters two and three of the staging, the absence of the performer is replaced by this mosquito coil, with smoke as mirroring. In the darkness, you smell the mosquito coil before you see it; this time delay is important to make presence and absence exist in parallel.

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Image: Haegue Yang, *The Malady of Death – Monodrama* with Hon Lai-chu. Staged reading in Cantonese, December 4, 2015, Sunbeam Theatre, Hong Kong. Complete reading of Marguerite Duras' novella *La Maladie de la mort*, 1982, ca. 75 min. Commissioned by M+ for Mobile M+: Live Art. Photo: CPAK Studio

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Duras' notion of *écrire* places emphasis on the silence between words as much as the words themselves. In the performance, you have left large lapses when nothing happens, and similarly in the accompanying printed text there are areas of blank space.

The narrowest way to explain the pauses is as a representation of the days in the story. The man (referred to as 'you' in the text) and woman (referred to as 'she' in the text) are in the hotel room nearby the sea, spending some nights together, but we don't even know how many nights. It's uncertain. You witness a lot of repetitive or gradual things, yet they are very subtle during these nights. There's a constant absence of 'her' through sleep. At the beginning, the man seems like the one who's dominating and knows, while she just follows up. But he gets weaker and gets more lost in his desire to learn how to love. He even says in the end that he wouldn't even recognise the woman under the daylight. Time gets lost as he lost in his failed desire.

What's the role of lighting and movement in this piece?

In general, the strategy is a simple reduction so that every small change of light or little movement of the performer feels enormous. Most of the time the performer is so strictly frontal and still that we focus only on her voice and her presence. In Hong Kong I again tried to not let them perform. It's about how to place a human body as a text in the space on stage. The moving light was used in a passive-aggressive way, most of the time still and minimal. Every once in a while, it takes over the role of time or the performer's movement.

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OCULA

In the author's note at the end of the book, Duras writes about the possibility of filming or staging the story as a reading rather than a performance. Please could you explain how this influenced you to produce your performance?

Duras expressed that her book can be staged as a theatre [piece] or film, so I'm leaning onto the possibility she offered. However, it's ironic to do it because in her lifetime she refused to allow it. That seems to me a typical 'double talk' of Duras: on the one hand she offers a possibility to stage it, but she also practised the impossibility of it, which is inherent in the story. So my approach was to trace that manner of 'double talk' over and over again with my commitment to do it repeatedly without succeeding or gaining any accomplishment (maybe that's what she required), so this possibility and impossibility stays back to back. We are left with a possibility of experiencing the impossibility. Or we only experience the very impossibility by practising a possibility.

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Image: Haegue Yang, *The Malady of Death* – Monodrama with Hon Lai-chu. Staged reading in Cantonese, December 4, 2015, Sunbeam Theatre, Hong Kong. Complete reading of Marguerite Duras' novella *La Maladie de la mort*, 1982, ca. 75 min. Commissioned by M+ for Mobile M+: Live Art. Photo: CPAK Studio

At the end of the performance in Hong Kong, Duras' notes on the book are read out. Why?

Usually theatre or film is a theatricalisation of a story through acting and narrative. But my ambition is not to create theatre. I only want to make it possible to hear the writing without achieving a theatre piece. Including the author's note in the staging is a clear gesture, addressing the presence of the book, instead of dismissing it through the theatricalisation of its narrative.

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OCULA

Do you feel you are continuing Duras' creative process, or should your work be approached as an act of appropriation?

I don't have this hierarchy of her idea/my idea, the opposite actually. The notion of the original is supposed to be obsolete. A more immanent thing to focus on is the clarity of impossibility.

However, it's clear that with this project I'm more selfless, meaning I just wish to express my consent to the idea, meaning, it is too simple and modest to be understood as an act of appropriating 'her piece' for 'mine'. This approach might reflect the very nature of this project; Duras' notion of 'identity absence' exists as a form of identity that is almost like a ghost. This identity is as present as it is absent. As we all know well, in today's contemporary enterprise artists have become so much about branded identities in competition. The Malady of Death is maybe part of my struggle to get myself free from this web. Situated outside of the art enterprise, The Malady of Death is a kind of 'difficult' project, since it does blur who does what for the sake of what. For me, here, the desire to share with the public comes first.

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Image: Haegue Yang, *The Malady of Death* – Monodrama with Yau Ching. Staged reading in Cantonese, December 5, 2015, Sunbeam Theatre, Hong Kong. Complete reading of Marguerite Duras' novella *La Maladie de la mort*, 1982, ca. 75 min. Commissioned by M+ for Mobile M+: Live Art. Photo: CPAK Studio.

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OCULA

Duras' text features two figures, but your staging is a monodrama. In your performance women appear to have greater control, with a female reader speaking for both the man and the woman. What is the significance of always choosing a female reader and placing women in the dominant position?

What you are pointing out is actually the biggest and most significant interpretation I've made in this project; otherwise, I'm pretty much following what Duras has intended. Duras never suggested a monodrama. I chose to stage the text with one single person for a similar reason to why I put the author's instruction in the piece: I didn't want it to become a role play or a representation of the story based on the two characters. For me, there are more roles than just 'you' and 'she'. There is Duras, there is me, and there are also listeners: these are the roles I had to put into the piece. So in fact the reader equals the voice of what we hear, and they have to be the one who breaks the role play. It's important to describe the work as a monodrama with a performer/reader. Without the reader/performer/voice I can't do it, and it is also significant to express this dependency on that person.

Until now, I know it has been all female performances, but maybe it'll change one day, I don't know. I honestly don't have an explanation for 'why women?' because I think it is clear to me. Yet clarity doesn't mean an unchangeable truth. The novella might be an erotic gender-based affair so that it can be also read as an affair between a homosexual and a heterosexual. While the 'you' is obviously a homosexual man (he's foreign to the female body) there's something that is played out via a tension between his homosexuality and her heterosexuality, which runs in parallel. One of my greatest wishes is to work one day on a staging with an intellectual who is invested in gender theory.

Another thing that is also inherent in the text is that this 'you' has the wrong premise, he wants to know how to love, but you can't learn how to love, you can only love someone. His mistake, or his 'malady', is based on this wrong premise.



Image: Haegue Yang, *The Malady of Death* - Monodrama with Hon Lai-chu.
Staged readings in Cantonese, December 4, 2015, Sunbeam Theatre, Hong Kong.
Complete reading of Marguerite Duras' novella *La Maladie de la mort*, 1982, ca.
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O C U L A

Duras seems to have really explored the depths of gender roles, sexuality and ideas of dominance.

Well sexuality is positioned as something glamorous in consumerism. Yet, in Duras' book sexuality is violent and destructive, but it's also a penetration, we need to reach the other; it is a painful act. The eroticism she uses is also similar to that evoked by Georges Bataille; it's about excess. It's not glamorous at all, it's rather sad, violent and severe. Duras seems to have a particular approach to sexuality, because it is rendered with radical destruction. For Duras, revolutions require total-destruction, and this notion is directly connected with sexuality as well as radicality.

Along with your next staging of *The Malady of Death*, do you have any other plans for future work?

Foremost, I think as long as I practise as an artist, I'll continue to produce *The Malady of Death*.

Over the previous couple of years, I've put a great deal of energy into all of my last three projects in Asia; my solo show at Leeum, Samsung in Seoul, another solo show at UCCA, Beijing and *The Malady of Death* in Hong Kong. When I finish a series of projects 'well', there is a great deal of optimism from where anything can happen; all the doors are open now for me, since I stand at zero, totally exhausted. For instance, I started dreaming about an adventure both in Seoul and China, similar to *The Malady of Death*, which is rather immaterial, less exhibition-related and more guerrilla-like.

Plus, I have a film project in collaboration with a French artist/film-maker that is supposed to come out sometime around April 2017, based on two historical figures. Their political biographies took place in a Korean peninsula, yet resonate with the broader premise of the Cold War as a maintained power structure, which artistic talent inevitably and severely agonises with. — [O]



Curated by Eungie Joo, Sharjah Biennial 12, “The Past, the Present, the Possible,” featured a compact lineup of 50-plus artists and groups from 25 countries, with many newly commissioned projects and the use of several new sites around the Gulf emirate. Eschewing the grab-bag presentation and heavy polemical themes commonly deployed in biennials, Joo instead showcased artists’ practices in depth or created opportunities for ambitious, site-specific solo projects. The result was more of an exhibition than a festival, as Joo nudged the biennial format away from wide-angled superficiality that make them akin to displays at today’s art fairs. Here’s a look at a handful of the memorable projects from “The Past, the Present, the Possible,” before a full review is published in the May/June issue of *ArtAsiaPacific*

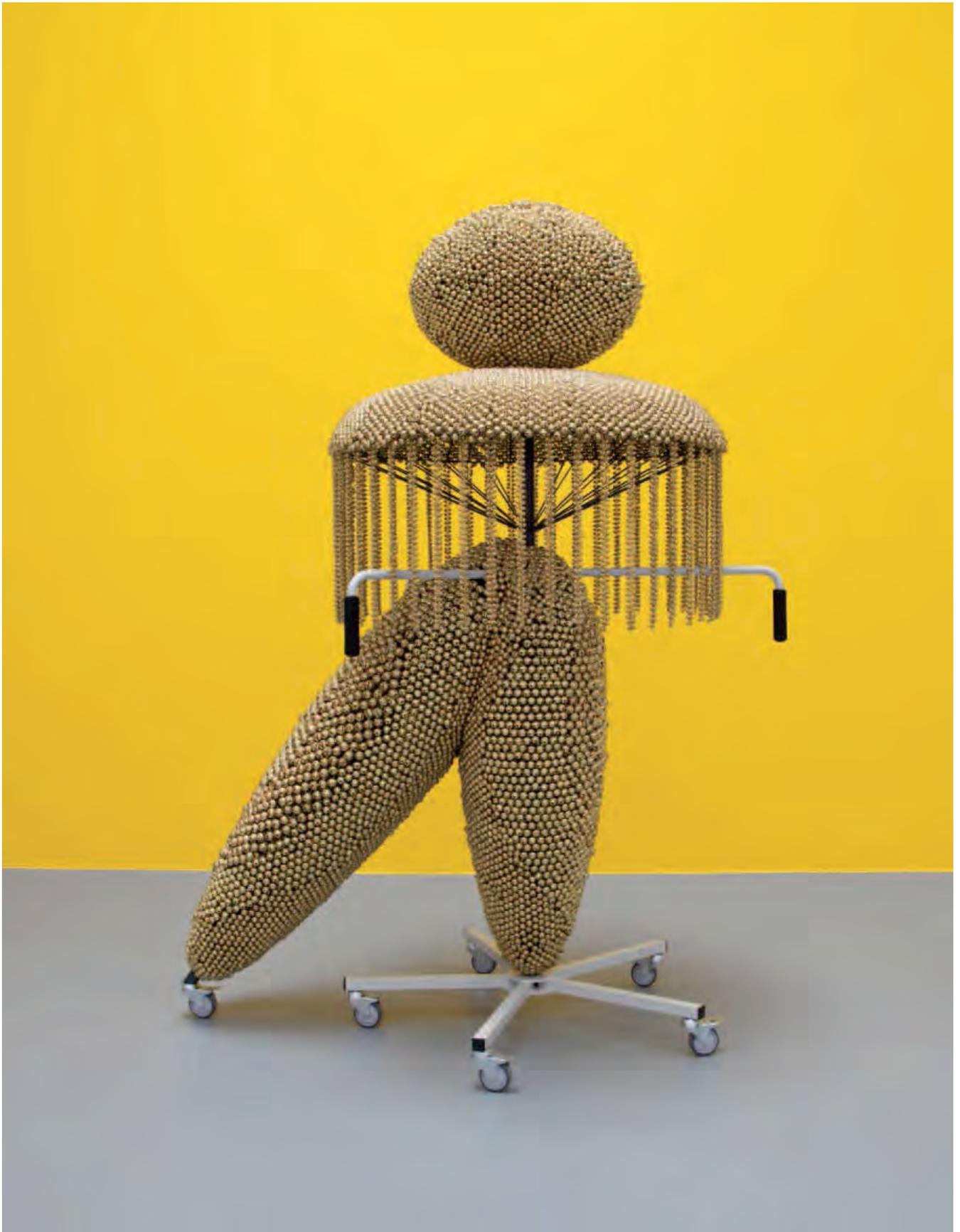
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HAEGUE YANG’s *An Opaque Wind* (2015) drew on the history of Korean expatriates who, largely in the 1970s, were recruited to the Gulf in order to develop its oil industry. Her courtyard installation combined attributes of Sharjah’s traditional architecture, such as wind towers, with modern vents, shipping containers, and bricks and concrete blocks, and featured a small room with woven mats and Korean news program playing on a television. Photo by HG Masters for ArtAsiaPacific.

Sharjah Biennial 12: “The Past, the Present, the Possible” can be seen from now until June 5, 2015, at various venues in Sharjah.

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Wie **Haegue Yang** in ihrem Werk die Referenzen
ins Rollen bringt

The multiple registers and references
in the work of Haegue Yang

Kito Nedo

**Mehrfach
verschoben**

**The
Shape Shifter**

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Photography: © Kito Nedo

1
Sonic Figure – Vigorous Stretcher, 2013
Steel stand, metal grid,
powder coating, casters,
brass plated bells and metal rings
2,2 x 1,3 x 1,6 m
Installation view
Bonner Kunstverein, 2014

Woran genau liegt es eigentlich, dass der Elefant ein derart stark mit Symbolen beladenes Tier ist? Warum stapft er seit Urzeiten durch Mythen und Weisheiten? Ist es seine Größe? Sein Sozialverhalten? Sein sagenhaftes Gedächtnis? Auch Haegue Yang ruft das Tier für ihre aktuelle Ausstellung im Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art in Seoul auf, und zwar gleich im Titel. Aber trotz des schamierartigen Titels *Shooting the Elephant* / *Thinking the Elephant* (das chinesische Zeichen bedeutet Elefant) bezieht sich die Künstlerin genau genommen nur indirekt auf den Dickhäuter. Als eigentliche Hauptreferenzen dienen ihr zwei literarische Texte, die um den Elefanten kreisen und dabei Geschichten erzählen, die von Politik, Gesellschaft, Kolonialismus und dem Verhältnis zwischen Mensch und Natur handeln.

Zum einen ist da *Shooting an Elephant* (dt. *Eine Elefante erschießen*). So der Titel einer ursprünglich 1936 veröffentlichten, kurzen autobiografischen und anticolonialistischen Skizze, in welcher George Orwell seine Erlebnisse als britischer Kolonialpolizist in Burma Mitte der 1920er Jahre verarbeitet. Der Ich-Erzähler, ein junger Polizeioffizier, wird gerufen, um einen wildgewordenen Arbeitselefanten zu erschießen. Entgegen seines ursprünglichen Entschlusses, es nicht zu tun, feuert er die tödlichen Schüsse dann doch ab. Der Toteskampf des Tieres wird qualvoll langsam beschrieben. Über die Schilderung der Zerrissenheit des Polizisten wird auch die Politisierung des Autors erkennbar, der den Imperialismus

als eine „schmutzige Sache“ beschreibt und trotz seiner Aufgabe mit den Unterdrückten sympathisiert: „Meinen Dienst habe ich mehr, als ich zu sagen vermag.“

Die zweite Referenz bezieht sich auf den 1956 erschienenen, seinerzeit mit dem Prix Goncourt ausgezeichneten, heute jedoch weitgehend vergessenen Roman *Les racines du ciel* (dt. *Die Wurzeln des Himmels*) des französisch-jüdischen Autors Romain Gary, der 1958 unter dem Titel *The Roots of Heaven* in Hollywood verfilmt wurde: Morel, ein kompromissloser Tierschützer, sorgt in der Kolonie Französisch-Äquatorialafrika für Aufruhr, weil er sich inmitten der Wirren des Unabhängigkeitskonflikts zwischen der französischen Verwaltung und der anticolonialen Befreiungsbewegung mit allen Mitteln für den Elefantenschutz und gegen Großwildjagden einsetzt. Für die Zeitgenossen scheint seine Vehemenz nicht nachvollziehbar. Doch sie ist biografisch begründet: Morel ist ein ehemaliger französischer Widerstandskämpfer und Überlebender eines deutschen Konzentrationslagers. Es war der Gedanke an Elefanten, diese freien und wilden Tiere, der ihm während der Haft die Kraft zum Überleben gab.

Wer freilich versucht, solche literarischen Verweise konkreter an bestimmte Werke in Yangs Ausstellungen rückzubinden, wird mitunter auf Schwierigkeiten stoßen: Das Verhältnis zwischen Ausgesprochenem und Gezeigtem scheint zumeist nicht einer Linearität zu folgen. Vielmehr öffnet sich zwischen den Skulpturen und den Referenzen

2
Jang Woo Chul
Staged photograph included in
the exhibition catalogue for Haegue Yang's
Shooting The Elephant /
Thinking the Elephant, 2015

3
Blind Curtain - Flesh behind Tricolore, 2018
Aluminium Venetian blinds,
aluminium hanging structure, powder
coating and steel wire
4,6 x 7 x 1,5m
Installation view
Aubette 19 28 and Museum of Modern
and Contemporary Art, Strasbourg

Why do elephants exert such a strong symbolic charge? Why are they the stuff of legend and lore? Is it their size? Their social behaviour? Their fabled memory? The animal is invoked by Haegue Yang in her current show at Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art in Seoul. Despite the hinge-like title *Shooting the Elephant* / *Thinking the Elephant* (the Chinese character also means elephant) she refers to the pachyderms only indirectly. Her main reference is to two literary texts that feature elephants as their subject to comment on politics, society, colonialism and the relationship between man and nature.

Shooting an Elephant is the title of a short autobiographical, anti-colonial sketch by George Orwell published in 1936, in which the author recounts an episode from his experience as a British colonial policeman in Burma in the mid-1920s. Orwell, a young police officer, is called upon to shoot a rampaging elephant. Despite his initial reluctance, to save face in front of the locals he ends up firing the deadly shot. The animal's death throes are described in excruciating detail. The policeman's inert turmoil points to the politics of the author, who describes imperialism as 'dirty work' and who sympathizes with the oppressed Burmese, despite his position: 'the job I was doing, I hated it more bitterly than I can perhaps make clear'.

The second half of the title refers to Romain Gary's novel *Les racines du ciel*, which won the Prix Goncourt in 1956 but is now largely forgotten and which was made into the Hollywood film *The Roots of Heaven* (1958). In the midst of the battle for independence between the French administration and the anti-colonial liberation movement, the uncompromising animal activist Morel causes a stir in the colony of French Equatorial Africa by campaigning for the protection of elephants against big-game hunting. Morel's contemporaries find his vehemence hard to understand, but it is rooted in his experience as a former member of the French Resistance who survived a German concentration camp. Thinking about elephants, those free, wild animals, was what gave him the strength to live through his incarceration.

Linking such literary references back to specific works in Yang's exhibitions is not always easy, however. In most cases, the relationship between what is shown and what is said is not linear; instead, a space opens up



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3

Yang's approach is based on an element of surprise, on accepting a certain openness and creating a space where connections, ideas and objects are set in motion.

© courtesy, Chantal Crousel, Photograph by Kito Nedo. © Mathieu Buisson, Strasbourg

between sculpture and reference, upsetting a one-to-one correspondence. Similarly, the two stories cited in the Leeum show themselves are about dislocation and rupture, shifting and displacement: transplanting the horrors of Nazi Germany and World War II to colonial Africa and Asia; the border between man and beast broken down by empathy. Political themes then, are articulated via a detour.

There are no elephants in the actual exhibition at Leeum, as the artist emphasizes during a conversation at her Berlin studio. But in the installation views of the otherwise deserted museum provided by her studio, an elegant, dandyish Elephant Man sashays through the exhibition spaces. His face is hidden by a scarf wound round his head, one end hanging down like a trunk. He looks like some hybrid being from another world, half visitor, half exhibit. The status of this figure, who appears only in the exhibition documentation in the catalogue remains

a mystery. Perhaps this ghostly figure is a transcendental wanderer capable of linking the various points of reference within Yang's universe?

Buried clues of this kind occur throughout her work, as Yang's approach is based on the element of surprise, on contradictions and abrupt twists, on accepting a certain openness and creating a space where connections, ideas and objects (and the relationships between them) are set in motion. When dealing with Yang's work, even such a usually uncontroversial term as Conceptual art raises more questions than answers. 'I find it hard to use the term concept,' she says during our conversation: 'If someone thought my work was conceptual I would agree, but I'm at a loss when asked to actually explain how it is conceptual. Perhaps we live in a time when the notion of Conceptual art is at a turning point. We know what Conceptual art was in the 1960s, but I think what the term means now is something that needs redefining.'



*Bewegung wird über die Referenz zum Tanz dahingehend
verstanden, dass das Verhältnis von Betrachter, Objekt und Raum flexibel wird.*

ein Zwischenraum, in dem die Dinge anders miteinander in Relation gesetzt werden. So wie die beiden Erzählungen selbst schon von Entortung und Bruch, von Verschiebung und Übersprung handeln: die Verpflanzung des Horrors des Dritten Reiches und des Zweiten Weltkrieges in das postkoloniale Afrika; das Überspringen einer Mensch-Tier-Grenze in der Empathiefür den Elefanten – politische Themen, artikuliert über einen Umweg.

In der Ausstellung selbst – so betont die Künstlerin beim Gespräch in ihrem Berliner Atelier – ist natürlich kein Elefant zu sehen. Aber dann ist er doch irgendwie da: Zumindest auf den fotografierten Ausstellungsansichten aus dem menschenleeren Museum in Seoul, die ihr Studio schickt, tänzelt ein elegant dandyesker Elefantemann durch die Ausstellungsräume. Sein Gesicht verbirgt er hinter einem um seinen Kopf gewundenen Schattuch, dessen Ende wie ein Rüssel umherbaumelt. Er wirkt wie ein jenseitiges Zwitterwesen, halb Besucher, halb Ausstellungsstück. Der Status dieser Gestalt, die nur im Kontext der Ausstellungsdokumentation, im Abbildungsteil des Katalogs – und somit eher indirekt im Kontext des eigentlichen Werks – auftaucht, bleibt rätselhaft. Braucht es womöglich genau solch eine Geisterfigur, die als transzendente Umherstreifende die verschiedenen Referenzpunkte innerhalb des Yang-Universums zu verorten/prüfen vermag?

4
Follies,
Manifold:
Gabriel Lester –
Haegue Yang
Installation view
Bonner
Kunstverein
2014

5
Rocket Panpipe
– Trustworthy
#235, 2014
Envelope,
security
patterns
and sandpaper
102 x 72 cm

For her installations, Yang often works with everyday objects and materials, but she never contents herself with their ready-made character. Instead she subjects them to further artistic treatment but without stripping them of their original connotations. She has taken ordinary laundry drying racks and enveloped them in weaves of different coloured wool (*Non-Indéfinissables*, 2006/09–10), transforming the mass-produced commodity into unique pieces of folk art; she has manipulated Filofax calendar inserts (*Week on Two Pages Diary*, 1999) by making almost imperceptible changes to company logos, holidays and typography; and she has stacked 16 empty drinks crates into two towers on a small wooden ramp set at an angle that almost, but only almost, caused them to topple (*Tilted on a Plane*, 2002).

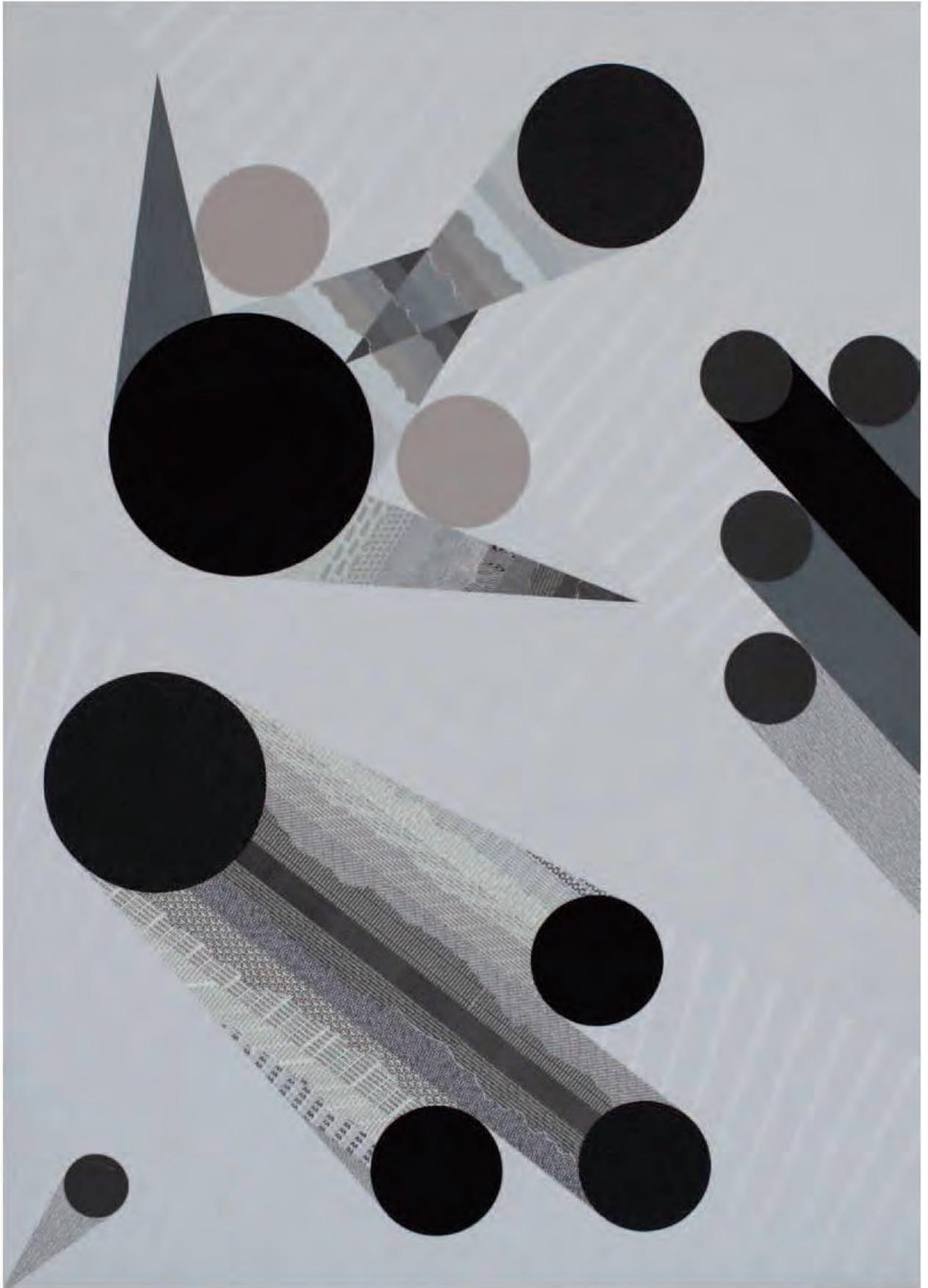
In her *détournement* of a A3 block of graph paper that plays havoc with standardization (*Grid Bloc A3*, 2013, in collaboration with Jeong Hwa Min) or her hanging interlocking aluminium blinds (at *DOCUMENTA (13)* in 2012, for instance) that produce beautiful *moiré* effects, there is a geometrical rigour characterized less by norm-based inflexibility than by the breaking of such strictures. She populates exhibitions with anthropomorphic sculptures (*Warrior Believer Lover*, 2011), at times accompanied by Igor Stravinsky's ballet music *Le sacre du printemps*: the vision of a pagan sacrifice that caused riots when first

performed in Paris in 1913. Another classic 20th century avant-garde work for the stage, Oskar Schlemmer's *Triadic Ballet* that premiered in 1922 in Stuttgart, provided a point of reference for the bell-covered sound sculptures that visitors were invited to touch and move at Bonner Kunstverein last autumn (*Sonic Figures*, 2013/15). Through reference to dance, movement is understood here as including a more flexible relationship between viewer, object and space. Although these sculptures refer to specific moments in art history, they come across as contemporary. This may be because Yang's sculptures have an aesthetic that oscillates between the object's original practical nature and its character as a work of art. This was true of the bell-covered Schlemmer sound sculptures: they stood there majestic and golden, but as soon as one took hold of their black foam-rubber handles, there was a certain feeling akin to being in physiotherapy.

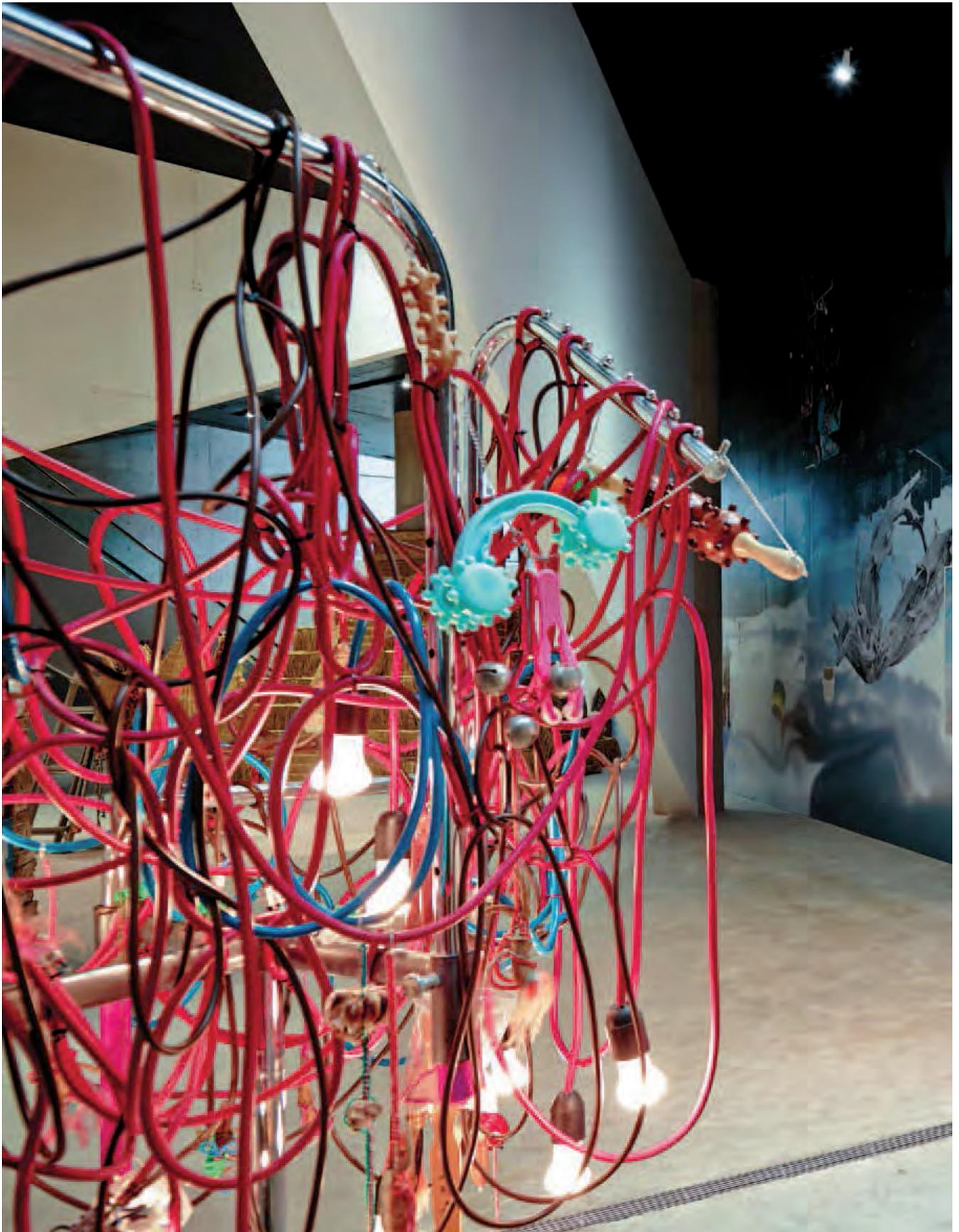
Yang's installations are thronged with avatars that appear to have been beamed into the exhibition space from very different worlds. She takes the space between objects as seriously as the objects themselves. This is reflected, for example, in her deliberate use of sounds, music or smells and by the mobile hospital stands she often uses as the basis for her avatar sculptures. The resulting field of associations allows the mind to wander, but also the art itself. It is in these interspatial

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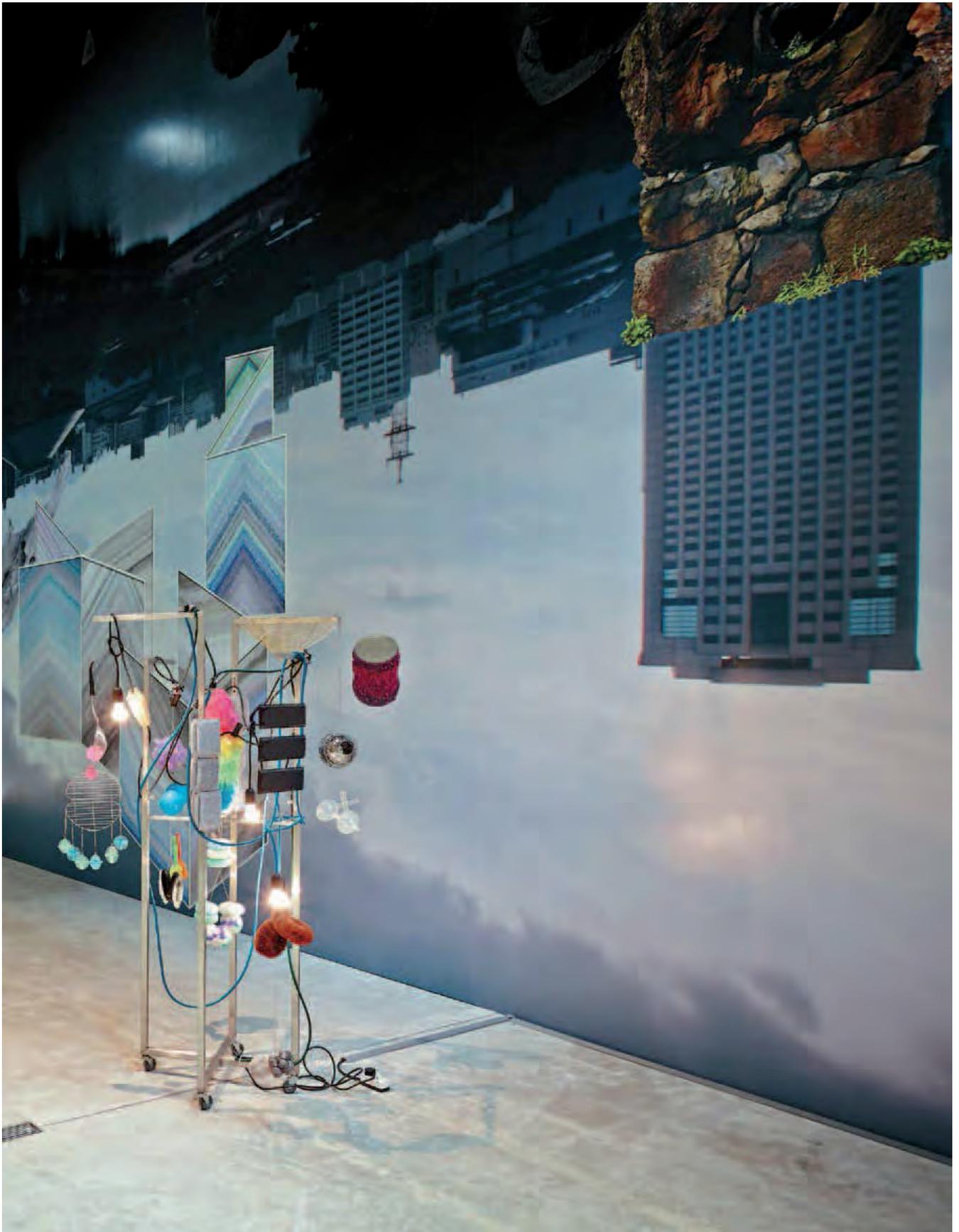
È courtesy Galerie Wiro, Lubasz, Parigi, photograph. © Studio Haegue Yang, Berlin



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HAEGUE YANG

In ihrem Werk sind einige solche Spuren vergraben, denn statt Eindeutigkeit setzt die Künstlerin auf den Überraschungsmoment, auf Widersprüche und abrupte Wendungen, darauf, eine bestimmte Offenheit zuzulassen und einen Raum zu schaffen, in dem Bezüge, Ideen und Objekte – sowie das Verhältnis zwischen ihnen – in Bewegung geraten. Selbst so ein im Grunde wenig umstrittener Begriff wie Konzeptkunst wirft in der Auseinandersetzung mit Yangs Werk mehr Fragen auf, als er Antworten gibt. „Die Anwendung des Begriffs Konzept fällt mir sehr schwer“, sagt sie im Gespräch. „Ich würde zustimmen, wenn jemand meine Arbeit als konzeptuell betrachtet, aber gleichzeitig bin ich sprachlos, wenn ich selbst begründen soll, inwiefern sie wirklich konzeptuell ist. Vielleicht leben wir in einer Zeit, in der der Begriff Konzeptkunst auf der Kippe steht. Was die Konzeptkunst der 1960er Jahre war, wissen wir, aber was der Begriff aktuell heißt, muss, glaube ich, noch neu definiert werden.“

und Herumschieben (*Some Figures*, 2013/15), die im letzten Herbst im Bonner Kunstverein ausgestellt waren. Bewegung wird hier, über die Referenz auf den Tanz, dahingehend verstanden, dass auch das Verhältnis von Betrachter, Objekt und Raum flexibel wird. Auch wenn sich diese Skulpturen auf Kunstgeschichte beziehen, wirken sie so gar nicht historisch, sondern im Gegenteil sehr gegenwärtig. Was vielleicht daran liegt, dass Yangs Skulpturen eine Ästhetik innewohnt, die sich in einer Art Pendelbewegung mal zum ursprünglichen Gebrauchscharakter neigt, dann wieder zum Kunstcharakter. So auch bei den schellenbesetzten Schlemmer-Klangskulpturen: Majestätisch und goldig glänzend standen sie im Bonner Kunstverein. Doch faste man sie an den mit schwarzem Schaumstoff umwickelten Griffen an, stieg sofort ein Gefühl von Rehabilitate auf.

In Yangs Installationen wimmelt es nur so von Avataren, die aus ganz unterschiedlichen Kontexten in den Ausstellungs-

In einer Art Pendelbewegung neigen Yangs Skulpturen mal zum ursprünglichen Gebrauchscharakter, mal zum Kunstcharakter.

Für ihre Installationen arbeitet Yang oft mit alltäglichen Dingen und Materialien, gibt sich jedoch nicht mit ihrem Ready-made-Charakter zufrieden, sondern unterzieht sie einer weitergehenden künstlerischen Bearbeitung – ohne sie ihrer ursprünglichen Gebrauchskonnotation zu berauben: Handelt es sich um eine Wäschetrockner umhüllte sie mit verschiedenfarbiger Wolle (*Now-Indispensables*, 2006/09–10), was diese Massenwaren in Folk-art-hafte Unikate verwandelte; sie manipulierte Filofax-Kalender-Einlagen (*Week on Two Pages Diary*, 1999), indem sie Firmenlogos, Feiertage und Typografie fast unmerklich veränderte, oder stapelte 16 leere Getränkeldosen in zwei Türmen auf eine kleine Holzrampe, deren Neigung die Türme fast – aber nur fast – zum Kippen brachte (*Tilted on a Plane*, 2002).

Bei der grafischen Verformung von Millimeterpapier, mit der die Norm zum Tanzen gebracht wird (*Graphic Logic A3*, 2013, gemeinsam mit Jeong Hwa Min), oder ihren frei hängenden Lichtmetalljalousien (etwa auf der *DOCUMENTA* (13), 2012), die ineinander verschachtelt schöne Moiré-Effekte produzieren, herrscht geometrische Strenge vor, die sich weniger durch ihre genormte Strenge, sondern mehr durch die Brechung ebendieser auszeichnet. Dann wieder bevölkert Yang ihre Ausstellungen mit anthropomorphen Skulpturen (*Warrior Believer Lover*, 2011), zeitweise untermalt mit Igor Strawinskis Ballettmusik *Les noces de printemps*; die Vision eines großen heidnischen Opferrituals, die bei ihrer Uraufführung in Paris 1913 für Tumulte und Empörung sorgte. Auf ein anderes klassisches Avantgarde-Bühnenwerk des 20. Jahrhunderts, das 1922 in Stuttgart uraufgeführt wurde, *Fräulein Ballet* von Oskar Schlemmer, beziehen sich wiederum die großflächig mit Schellen besetzten Klangskulpturen zum Anfassen

raum hineingebeamt erscheinen. Den Raum zwischen den Dingen nimmt die Künstlerin dabei genauso ernst wie die ausgestellten Dinge selbst. Das lässt sich etwa am gezielten Einsatz von Geräuschen, Musik oder Gerüchen ablesen. Oder auch an ihrer Verwendung von beweglichen Krankenhaus-Infusionsständern, die oft die Basis für ihre Avatar-Skulpturen bilden. In dem Assoziationsraum, der sich öffnet, sollen nicht nur die Gedanken des Betrachters wandern, sondern die Kunst gleich mit. Und genau in diesen zwischenräumlichen Gefilden geistert in Seoul dann auch der Elefantenmann umher. Und sind nicht auch die von Yang so oft verwendeten Jalousien – in der seltsamen Fort-Da-Logik, der sie gehorchen, wenn sie von einem Moment zum anderen zwischen Abschluss und Durchlässigkeit umschalten – perfekte Sinnbilder für Zwischenräume?

Nichts läge Yang ferner, als mit dem Holzhammer auf ihren Inhalten herumzuklopfen. Das würde die konstitutive Offenheit dieser Arrangements in einem Akt der Sinnzuschreibung sofort wieder abschließen. Statt dessen provoziert sie Ahnungen und unterschwellig platzierte Assoziationen – wie in Seoul, wo sie erst mal Objekte zeigte, die aufgrund ihrer Form und handwerklichen Gemachtheit wie ethnologische Artefakte wirkten. Formal beziehen sich die drei Strohkulpturen aus der Werkreihe *The Intermediates* (2015) auf kulturell-religiös konnotierte Orte oder Denkmäler: eine antike Maya-Pyramide, die buddhistische Tempelanlage Borobudur in Indonesien sowie Ljalja-Tulpan – eine der größten modernen Moscheen in Russland, eröffnet Ende der 1990er Jahre in Ufa, der Hauptstadt von Baschkortostan, rund 26 Bahnstunden östlich von Moskau. Zwischen diesen architekturbezogenen Konstruktionen platzierte die Künstlerin weitere Strohkulpturen,



fields that the Elephant Man finds himself in Seoul. Aren't the blinds so often used by Yang (with their strange now-you-see-it-now-you-don't logic of a sudden switch between closure and transparency) the perfect symbols for this interspace?

Yang is not one to hammer away at her subject matter and attribute specificity to her meanings, however, as that would immediately dose the constitutive openness of her arrangements. Instead, she provokes intimations and subliminal associations – as in Seoul, where many of the works' forms and crafted quality made them look like ethnological artefacts. Formally, three large straw-looking totems from the series *The Intermediates* (2015) refer to places or monuments of religious significance: an ancient Maya pyramid; the Buddhist temple complex of Borobudur in Indonesia and Ljalja Tulpan, one of the largest modern mosques in Russia, opened in the late 1990s in Ufa, the capital of the Russian republic of Bashkortostan, around 26 hours east of Moscow by train. Between



die in ihrer anthropomorphen Anmutung an kultische Kostüme erinnern (ähnlich denen, wie sie etwa im alten Schweizer Silvesterklausen-Brauchtum auftauchen). Doch das Flair des Traditionellen, Handgemachten und ethnografisch Inspirierten wird durch einen Touch Industrie gebrochen: Das vermeintliche Strohmateriale ist aus Plastik. Deshalb handelt *The Intermediates* nicht so sehr von der Vermittlung zwischen Unterschiedlichem, sondern von der Unvermittelbarkeit und Unvermitteltheit selbst. Die künstlerische Anspielung auf das Verhältnis von Natur, Mensch und Kultur ist gut imprägniert gegen jede naturromantische Verklärung.

Kito Nedo ist als freier Journalist für verschiedene Zeitungen und Magazine tätig. Er lebt in Berlin.

Haegue Yang's Einzelausstellung Temporary Permanent ist vom 1. Mai bis 31. Juli in der Galerie Wien Lukatsch, Berlin, zu sehen.

these architecture-invoking constructions, the artist placed other straw figures whose anthropomorphism recalled unusual cult costumes (like those of traditional Swiss New Year Mummers). But the aura of the traditional, handmade and the ethnographically inspired was broken by a technical note: the 'straw' of these figures was actually plastic. Consequently, *The Intermediates* is not so much about mediating between different spheres as about things that are not and cannot be communicated and reified. Through this Yang's artistic allusions to the relationship among nature, man and culture are immunized against any rose-tinted romanticization. Translated by Nicholas Grindell

Kito Nedo lives in Berlin where he works as a freelance journalist for several magazines and newspapers.

Haegue Yang's solo exhibition Temporary Permanent at Galerie Wien Lukatsch, Berlin is on view 1 May – 31 July.

8+7
*Shooting the Elephant &
Thinking the Elephant*
Installation views
Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art
Seoul, 2015

«When Heman met Haegue», *ArtReview Asia Hong Kong Special Edition*, 2015.

ArtReview Asia

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Take me, I'm free

Eko Nugroho

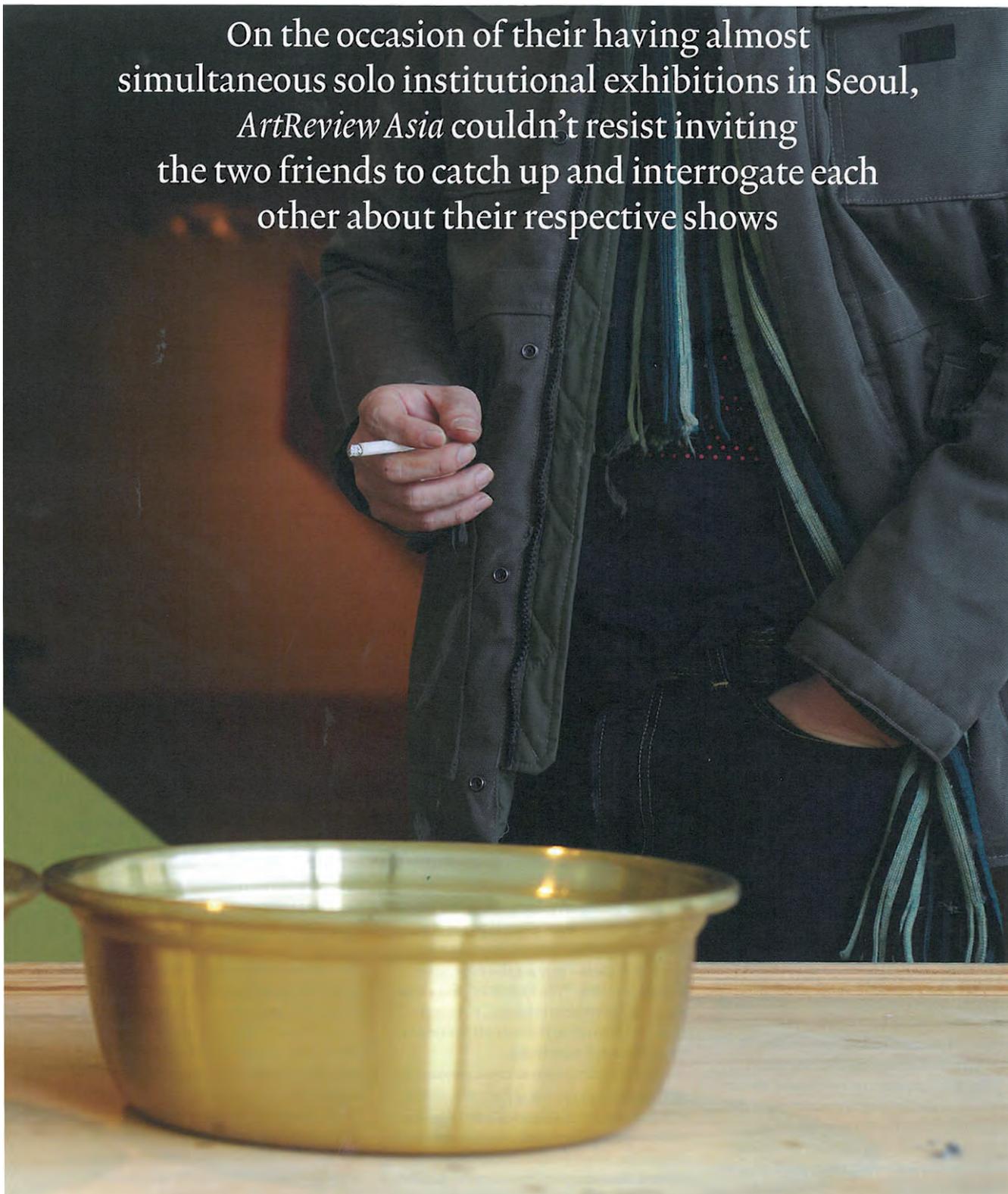
Ho Tzu Nyen Heman Chong Haegue Yang

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On the occasion of their having almost simultaneous solo institutional exhibitions in Seoul, *ArtReview Asia* couldn't resist inviting the two friends to catch up and interrogate each other about their respective shows

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Part One

Haegue Yang discusses her current solo exhibition at the Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art in Seoul

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HEMAN CHONG *Your exhibition has a curious title...*

HAEGUE YANG *Shooting the Elephant* 象 *Thinking the Elephant* contains a Chinese character, 象, which is a hieroglyph in itself. I found it fascinating to imagine the origin of this character, since the elephant doesn't inhabit any region in which Chinese was or is used. The same goes for another metaphor of the exhibition, which is a Lion Dance, a folk dance that's widespread across the whole of Asia, a region that's not inhabited by lions. You won't find an elephant or a lion in the show either. They served as a metaphor of living – a living that was only imagined, yet which was territorialised as a part of folk culture so that it could be even claimed as 'ours' and understood as something 'familiar'.

Another reference in the title comes from literature, George Orwell's short story 'Shooting an Elephant' [1936, about a British police officer in Burma who feels forced to shoot an elephant] and Romain Gary's novel *The Roots of Heaven* [1956, about an environmentalist in French Equatorial Africa who sets out to preserve elephants from extinction]. In the first, the elephant appears as an unpredictable, yet innocent animal (or cipher for nature), killed by the irrelevant human-centric power system of colonialism. Orwell (who is recounting his experience as a police officer in colonial Burma) was pressured by that system and eventually had to shoot the elephant when he was surrounded by thousands of Burmese expecting to witness the violence of their coloniser. In the other work, the elephant shows its power as well as weakness: on the one hand it provides a most unlikely source of hope to Morel (the main protagonist of Gary's novel), who subsequently wishes to preserve the African elephant from extinction; on the other hand, the elephant is nothing but a helpless and vulnerable species, which can't be saved despite Morel's complete devotion and eventual sacrifice.

Besides that, there are two general aspects of the show that are worth mentioning at the beginning: one is the lighting, the other is the wall treatment. The lights on the ceiling of the Ground Gallery at Leeum are all pointed in one direction, not so as to illuminate the

work, but so as to act autonomously. This is done to liberate the lights from their functional existence in this completely open space.

Three right-angle-triangle-shaped built-in walls, hung upside down from the ceiling, have been treated so that each side is distinctly different from the other: the outer surface has an ordinary finish while the inner side is rough and grainy like sandpaper. Also I've allowed the grid of the panels on this inner side to be revealed. Over the course of the exhibition, there will be some stains from people touching this side of the walls: this contact and the sensation of texture, as well as the collective trace of visitors, will be significant.

HC *Let's talk about Storage Piece [2004]. It is a work that has been discussed greatly within the context of your practice. Why did you choose to exhibit it now, among the other works in the show?*

HY *Storage Piece* is located in the middle of the exhibition, it's a work originally made for a show while I was on a Delfina Foundation residency in London. It is often said that *Storage Piece* marks an important turning point in my practice. The background to it was that there was an offer of a commercial gallery space for an exhibition but I had no ability to make the show, either financially or physically. And parallel to this offer, there were numerous requests that I should pick up works, returning from other exhibitions for which I couldn't afford any storage space. So I proposed to use the exhibition budget to bring all those works – which remained packed on palettes – together in an exhibition. There were about 13 pieces in all, some are complete, some of the works only survived in parts. There are also early pieces included in *Storage Piece*, for instance from 1994, which had never been exhibited, but which I was asked to remove from my flat in Frankfurt, where I was no longer living.

This type of personal circumstance hadn't been a part of my practice at that time; indeed it had seemed inevitable not to assert this kind of circumstance, but it came to a point, through *Storage Piece*, where I did, and this helped me to break this conceptual boundary. Within the tendency to cling to both the physicality and

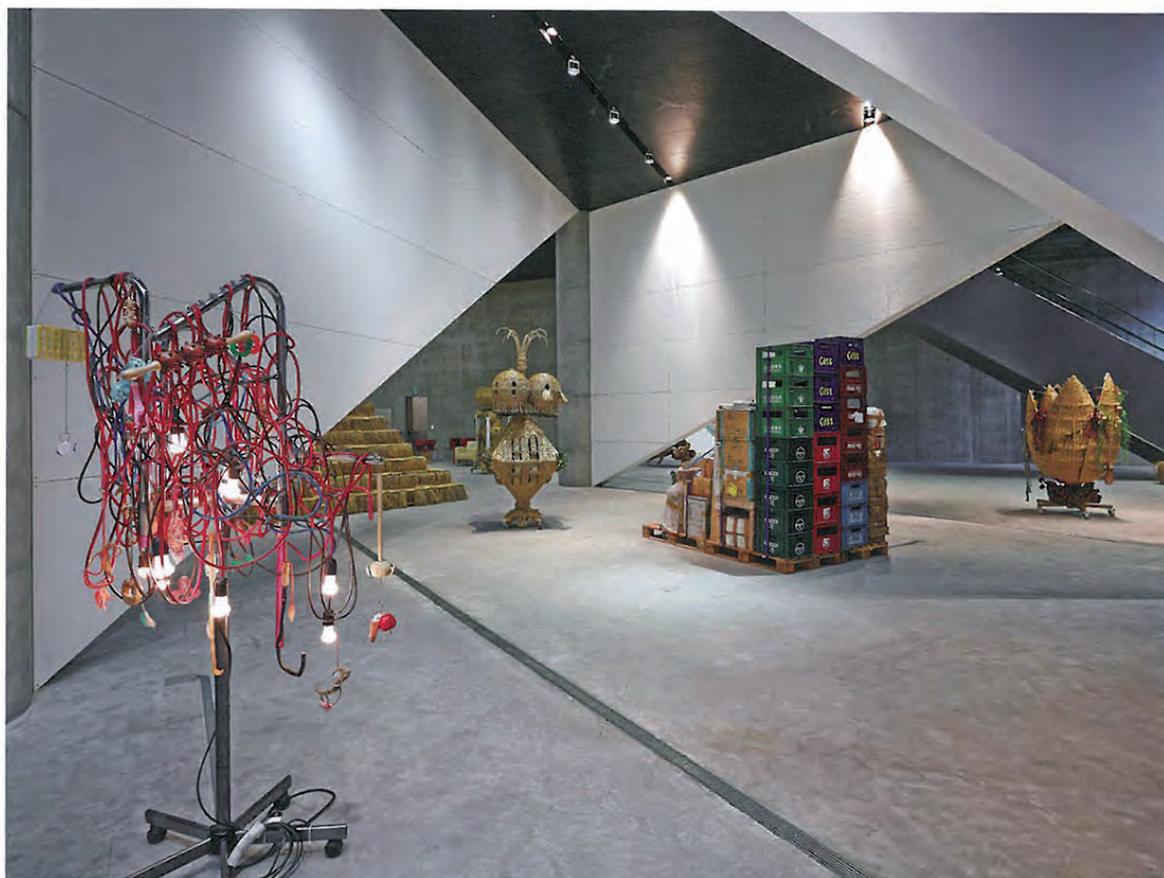
the fetish of conceptualism inherent in *Storage Piece*, there is a kind of concern and doubt that remains and that is contained within it. Personally, I'm very pleased to have *Storage Piece* on view here, a work that a lot of people have heard about many times, yet not so many people have encountered; it is important that people face the work in person.

Storage Piece is always accompanied by a speech that will be given at the opening of the exhibition by someone other than myself. The script for this speech has been modified slightly each time it has been delivered, reflecting the changed circumstances and the ways in which my own reaction to the work cumulatively changes over time. The crisis born out of a simple, poor circumstance disappears, while new challenges around the piece emerge, so the modification is necessary. The speech describes a couple of pieces found within the work that people cannot see, because everything is wrapped up. Very much a monologue, which fluctuates from being super-confident on the one hand – suggesting that this is a great solution, even a brilliant one, given the challenge of the circumstances – but at the same time being filled with doubt, based on a belief in concept and idea – that one should not hold on to the physicality of the work. Overall, this oscillation itself reinforces the potential and the ecology behind the work. It reflects a kind of timid negation of the 'either/or' dichotomy of an object. When *Storage Piece* was sold, I handed over the conceptual authority over the work, thus the collector could unfold the piece according to his own desires and situation.

HC *So he could have unpacked the work?*

HY Indeed. In 2007 the collector Axel Haubrok proposed that he unpack the work in order to see what he had collected. As part of this agreement, under the title 'Unpacking the Storage Piece', everything would be fiercely unpacked and neatly installed. I agreed, and the traces of *Storage Piece* – the packaging – were also included in the exhibition, as 'Cabinet of Packaging'. And there was a new speech written for this chapter. So ever since then, *Storage Piece* has been unpacked many times, sometimes gradually, sometimes as it is.

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opening pages Heman Chong, *Smoke Gets In (Your Eyes)*, 2015,
two ashtrays. Photo: Sang-tae Kim. Courtesy the artist,
Art Sonje Center, Seoul, and Wilkinson, London
above Haegue Yang, *Shooting the Elephant* & *Thinking the Elephant*, 2015
(installation view, Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art, Seoul).
Photo: Kim Hyunsoo. Courtesy the artist

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Haegue Yang, *The Intermediate – Triple Sphere on Pyramid Totem*, 2015 (installation view, *Shooting the Elephant & Thinking the Elephant*, Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art, Seoul), artificial straw, steel stand, powder coating, casters, Indian bells, artificial plants, plastic twine, cord, metal rings, metal bells, 280 × 120 × 120 cm. Photo: Kim Hyunsoo. Courtesy the artist

HC *Let's move along to the next work. Tell me more about your light sculptures.*

HY Here there are six individual light sculptures, which are in the collection of Leeum, shown as one installation, *Seoul Guts*, which was first exhibited at Artsonje Center in 2010 (that exhibition, *Voice Over Three*, was also my first institutional exhibition in my hometown; this one is my first in five years). I spent three months in Seoul preparing the show, and *Seoul Guts* is one of very few light sculptures that I produced out of my studio. The portrait of the city of Seoul is articulated by the small objects, mostly expressing ridiculous and trivial desires and the nostalgia of people. Here you see an object made of seashells and urban waste, disguised as a romantic souvenir of a possible holiday, which I collected from seafood restaurants, day by day. There you see some artificial plants, cosmetic supplies, pseudo health devices, all of which constitute a pitiful portrait of Seoul. Pill cases were somehow most touching to me.

HC *Why were these the most touching for you?*

HY Seoul is full of people who are 'sick': in a sense they're all not fit, they're tired and wasted. The daily life in Seoul is just tough, you come up with ideas to survive – taking vitamins or medicine against cancer, for diabetes, it's just crazy. They're all functioning, but at the same time they're not functioning at all. There is no border any more between healthy and sick. These two things build a parallel, and in this you still have to keep going. For example, these objects I use, these small objects for massaging your body, it's at once humorous and pitiful. You only can spend a small amount of money with such a big hope that it will make you feel better. These items I discovered while I was shopping, or 'hunting' for material; I think this shopping process in the city was crucial.

HC *What was the trigger for you to use these standing structures to hang these objects on?*

HY At the very beginning I started using IV (intravenous) drip poles, which are frail, much like a line in space, on which you cannot hang so much. I used them for the first time in 2006, in a project called *Sadong 30*, at an abandoned house. The ceiling in that house was about to collapse, so you couldn't hang anything from it. In order to illuminate the space, I registered and reinstalled the electricity supply, but I needed a stand from which to hang lights. The IV poles were easy to get and it seemed natural to have them in that space. But I wasn't aware of the association of that object with body and health. After using them once as a lighting device, I started to make sculptures of out this stand. I was very touched by the melancholic look of it, how the cables are

draped from/over it. Over time, it became an autonomous sculpture. By the time I switched over to the much chunkier clothing racks, each stand became anthropomorphic, to portray certain qualities of possible figures.

HC *In a way you're building characters.*

HY Yes, quite. In this series it comes across very strongly. Originating from the *Sadong 30* project, where I plugged in the lights, it became apparent to me that this work comes from this gesture: plugging into a power source. This gesture meant a lot to me. The house was locked up for many years, and the address, Sa-dong 30, was dropped out from the redevelopment of the city of Incheon. So there was no electricity, no water, and the house was kind of dead. When I succeeded in reregistering the address in the city council's system in order to reconnect the electricity, the house could finally be illuminated. I locked the space with a lock that had a number code on it so that people with the code could have 24-hour access. I had limited the luminosity of

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or language group, etc.

each bulb to under 25w; again, at the beginning I was afraid that the bulbs would get too hot while there was no guard or other attendant there, so it was a practical decision. But over time I really liked the low luminosity, because it prevented the lights from being absolutely functional: they would be able to light up little corners – efficient enough. The light sculptures inherited this principle, where each bulb is only 15 to 25w.

HC *What are these chairs and tables on the other side of the space?*

HY In 2001 I was commissioned to conceive the so-called VIP lounge for an art fair, Art Forum Berlin. Commenting on the aspect that one can only access this space with a VIP pass, I decided to equip the space with furniture pieces borrowed from Berliners, whose equivalent significance (VIP) can be only measured by their participation rather than predetermined and hierarchical status. And people (VIPs) could sit on the furniture (from VIPs), achieving an open heterogeneity. The loan of the furniture would be for the duration of the exhibition,

and each piece would be returned after the show. I continued to adopt this principle and made a lot of lounges ever since in the middle of exhibitions, and now this is the Seoul version. Seen in the same space as *Storage Piece* and *Seoul Guts*, you can sense that they are different configurations of similar observation, an expression of my position as a semi-insider/outsider.

HC *Let's address your new work in this show. Can you walk me through it?*

HY This is a new series of sculptures titled *The Intermediates*. They are made of straw, woven into different architectures and figures. They create a kind of 'parcours' through a set of obstacles. These pieces reference actual architectural sites, such as those produced by the Mayan civilisation, the Borobudur Temple, and features found in a contemporary Islamic mosque with minarets in Russia. In between them there are figures. Some of them are abstract, some are more figurative.

HC *This material that you use, is this real straw? How did you discover and begin to work with this material?*

HY No, it's artificial straw. By critically reexamining the notion of 'folk', I realised that the use of natural straw would only conform to the given narrow idea of 'folk art', confirming the notion of 'us,' which is often a race, nation, religious or language group, etc. But this artificial straw gives me a bit of distance from this definition of 'our tradition', empowers the works and makes them immune to this tribal claim. The project is not about expressing traditional craftsmanship, but to take a step out of it, to become alien to or a hybrid of it. In a sense, for me, they rather associate with rituals and exotic forms than the familiar.

HC *You are personifying the technique, extending the technique as a metaphor, rather than simply mastering the technique of straw weaving. It's far from rejuvenating the idea of folk.*

HY It has never been a primary feature of my production method, but I always worked with two very different ways simultaneously. One relies on using industrially manufactured objects, while the other is based on craft – almost a domestic way of approaching craft – believed to be of low efficiency – such as crochet and knitting. At some point I realised that I'm completely into weaving. But a very inefficient weaving. I used to take a lot of photographs of these straw wraps around trees over the winter in Japan and Korea. These appeared once in a while as reference material in my catalogues, but I never used the observation of straw wrap, realised as a production yet. But when I settled in Seoul a year ago, the first thing I wanted to learn was straw weaving from a craftsman, and *The Intermediates* was initiated.

OCULA



Haegue Yang (b.1971) is a South Korean artist, who lives and works in Berlin and Seoul. She is best known for drawing on a wide repertoire of ordinary household objects to create visually abstract sculptures and installations that often evoke the senses on several levels and delve into a cacophony of social, historical and political narratives.

While venetian blinds have come to be the most recognisable motif of Yang's practice, they obscure a far reaching exploration of both materials and ideas that has continued to evolve. Two presentations of the artist's work this year will serve as timely reminders of the scope of her work and the ongoing development and exploration of her practice, namely *Medicine Men and Female Natives* (2010) which will be shown at the Taipei Biennial and the sculptural ensemble of so-called 'Sonic Sculptures' for *Mediacity* in Seoul. While the first part of this two part interview investigates her earlier works, and some of the ideas underpinning her practice, this second part delves into her upcoming projects, and in particular the works that will appear at the Taipei Biennial and *Mediacity* Seoul, as well as the challenges she still wishes to explore.

OCULA

WHAT NEXT

What projects do you have coming up?

There are only several projects on this year, often where I will be showing older works, yet juxtaposing them with a new context. There is one group show and two Biennale participations: there is the light sculptures *Medicine Men* and *Female Natives* from 2010 for Taipei Biennial, blind installation *Mountains of Encounter* from 2008 for a three-men show at the Contemporary Art Museum in Houston and lastly, a sculptural ensemble of so-called sonic sculptures for *Mediacity* in Seoul.

There are also some pending projects in 2015 and 2016, including solo shows in Seoul, Beijing, Berlin, Brussels and presentations at Biennales, such as Sharjah Biennale and Asian Pacific Triennial in Brisbane. One of my current areas of focus is my solo exhibition at Leeum, Seoul in February 2015. I am conceiving some new pieces, while setting up a second studio in Seoul, which is in fact my first working space ever other than in Berlin.

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Haegue Yang
Sonic Full Moon – Medium Regular #2, 2014
Steel frame, metal grid, powder coating, brass plated bells, metal rings
173 x 54 x 54 cm
Courtesy of Kukje Gallery, Seoul
Photo: Studio Haegue Yang



Haegue Yang
Approaching: Choreography Engineered in Never-Past Tense, 2012
Motorized aluminum Venetian blinds, aluminum hanging structure, powder coating, steel wire, cable, module box, DMX recorder
Dimensions variable
SBS Prism Tower Art Collection, Seoul
Installation view of dOCUMENTA (13), Kassel, Germany, 2012
Video: Nils Klinger

O C U L A

TAIPEI BIENNIAL 2014

You will show *Medicine Men and Female Natives (2010)* at the Taipei Biennial 2014. Both *Medicine Men and Female Natives* were part of a large group of 33 sculptures, *Warrior Believer Lover* that you created in 2010. What was the impetus for originally creating this group of sculptures?

Originally conceived for Kunsthau Bregenz in 2011, *Warrior Believer Lover* is a selection of thirty-three anthropomorphic light sculptures that can be further distinguished into groups, couples and individuals, including the group of six of *Medicine Men and Female Natives*. Each light sculpture is a composition of light bulbs, electric cords and readymade and handcrafted materials such as artificial plants and wigs around a commercial metal stand, conjuring up figures imbued with personality and history. I have been creating light sculptures since 2006 and when thinking about the title, the human-like quality of these sculptures prompted me to consider archetypes whose lives testify deep commitment to a particular value. For instance: the warrior who fights for something with intensity; the believer who lives with absolute faith; and the lover who courageously exposes themselves to the other.

Is there a specific significance in the process and materials you used to create these works?

Each set of sculptures are adorned with elaborate ornaments and I work intuitively, drawing on the associations and origins of the industrial, readymade or handcrafted objects, while decontextualizing them - allowing their inherent qualities to emerge in new and unfamiliar ways. For example, in using artificial plants for *Female Natives*, there is an evident narrative around understandings of nature and artifice. One could possibly relate to these sculptures as indigenous females who have a close relationship to a nature that is apparently manmade. Isn't all that we seek or obtain artificial, in some way? Is our nature in fact essentially akin to an extraterrestrial being?

Questions on humankind's achievements and pursuits come into play too. The selection of plants addresses various vegetation and climates; and is also made to draw a landscape of multiple cultures and communities.

OCULA



Haegue Yang
Installation view of Journal of Echomimetic Motions, Bergen Kunsthall, 2013
Photo: Thor Brødreskift

Galerie
Chantal Crousel



Haegue Yang
Sonic Dances, 2013
Installation view of *Ovals and Circles*, Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris, France, 2013
Photo Credit: Florian Kleinfenn
Courtesy of Galerie Chantal Crousel

And what about Female Natives male counter-part, Medicine Men?

Medicine Men are decked out with party wigs of multiple colors and hair types, destabilizing the title's masculine connotations. If we look at medicine men in animalistic religions, many assume an ambiguous gender. A myriad of decorative objects from mylar to tinsel, aluminum reflectors, feather dusters, dried spices, plant leaves, and even seashells, reinforce this ambiguity. Wigs are also part of the transformation that shamans went through when they intended transforming their appearances to 'connect' themselves to spirits, inhabiting another world.

The original shapes and substances of the readymades are retained and the sculpture is at times, an insight into crisscrossing migratory and trade routes. Yet, one should venture beyond the conventional readings of these objects. Assembling these objects, often ordinary and domestic items, decontextualizes and transforms them in surprising ways. They become foreign, yet strangely familiar. I am interested in both my own process of discovery, and also that of the viewer. I am also interested in how the chance encounters with an object can open up new, and sometimes unexpected narratives or emotions.

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Haegue Yang
Sonic Rotating Oval – Brass and Nickel Plated #3, 2013
Steel sheet, powder coating, ball bearings, metal grid, brass plated bells, nickel plated bells, metal rings
103 x 73 x 8 cm
Private collection, Trets
Installation view of Ovals and Circles, Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris, 2013
Photo: Florian Kleinfenn



Haegue Yang
Series of Vulnerable Arrangements – Shadowless Voice over Three, 2008
Aluminum Venetian blinds, aluminum hanging structure, powder coating, steel wire, moving spotlights, mirror, infrared heater, fan, sound system, microphone, speaker, amplifier, scent emitters ('Fresh Air', 'Fresh Cut Grass', 'Earth, Dinosaur Dung', 'Buddha Temple', 'French Bread', 'Coffee Shop', 'Garlic Butter')
Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art, Seoul
Exhibition view at Voice over Three, Artsonje Center, Seoul, South Korea, 2010
Photo: Kim Sang Tae

OCULA

Research into cultural, social and political history often underpins your work. I understand the sculptures in *Warrior Believer Lover* refer to a multiplicity of cultural references from the ballet and orchestral concert work, *The Rite of Spring* to Walter de Maria's *Lighting Field*. Can we discuss some of these references?

For installations of *Medicine Man* and *Female Natives*, Igor Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* (1913) is played two to three times a day and at the Islamic prayer hour. *The Rite of Spring* was written for the 1913 Paris season of Sergei Diaghilev's Ballets Russes company; and the original choreography was by Vaslav Nijinsky. Its dissonance and primitive rhythms underline the anthropomorphism of the light sculptures and the asynchronous layering of ritualistic practices. Through the ballet and allusion to Islamic prayer, we encounter layers of multiple cultural references, which in turn are intended to build upon those already implied by Stravinsky and Nijinsky's use of Native Indian's spring ritual in the radical eclectic choreography and challenging musical score of the ballet. It is as if the sculptures are Nijinsky's dancers, gathered together as historically marginalized cultural subjects, demonstrating the different topography and chronology of the globe and juxtaposing the primitive with the industrialized; and ultimately in pursuit of hybrid bodies that capture the moment of community in constant mutation.

In complete violation of classical traditions and representing a sacred pagan ritual, shudders, jerks and thumps dominated the choreography of Nijinsky - a reflection of the anticlassical trajectory of my light sculptures. Written for the Ballets Russes, the primitivism of the dance did not enjoy the same radicalism claimed by Gauguin, Picasso, and other Parisian artists. As Russians bearing pagan and mysterious origins, they were considered exotic which ironically worked against them, as only those from within were deemed capable of producing exotic art. The ambiguity of exoticism is, still today, an issue for artists. But I am less interested in political correctness around post-colonial discourse. I am more interested in the concept of 'detour' - the strategy of diversion and the presentation of alternative paradigmatic formulas for understanding identity.

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Haegue Yang
Storage Piece, 2004
Collection of various wrapped and stacked art works
on four europallets
Haubrok Collection, Berlin
Installation view, *Your Bright Future: 12 Contemporary Artists from Korea*, LACMA, LA, USA 2009
Photo © 2009 Museum Associates/LACMA

OCULA

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Haegue Yang
*Installation view of Warrior Believer
Lover; Arrivals*, Kunsthaus Bregenz, Bre-
genz, Austria, 2011
Photo: Markus Tretter



Haegue Yang
*Accommodating the Epic Dispersion – On Non-cathartic
Volume of Dispersion*, 2012
Aluminum Venetian blinds, aluminum hanging structure,
powder coating, steel wire
Dimensions variable
Courtesy of Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris and Kukje
Gallery, Seoul
Installation view of *Der Öffentlichkeit – von den Freun-
den* Haus der Kunst, Haus der Kunst, Munich, 2012
Photo: Nozomi Tomoeda

OCULA

MEDIACITY SEOUL

Tell me about what you will be showing at Mediacity Seoul, which opens soon?

I will create an entirely new ensemble for Mediacity in Seoul.

"Ghosts, Spies, and Grandmothers", is the theme of the upcoming Mediacity Seoul, and my contribution to this event is very much driven by these keywords. Against the prevailing socio-political climate in Asia of rising nationalism and mutual distrust, and underpinned by economies powered by technological advancements, figures whose voices have been silenced or under the radar are being awakened. These otherworldly and traditional figures from a past era, typified by the 'Ghost, Spy and Grandmother', are summoned back as alternative voices of counsel, tradition and hope to the dominant narratives of today.

On the ground floor of Mediacity Seoul, a spherical bell sculpture, Sonic Full Moon – Medium Regular #2 (2014) is hung from the ceiling, right above the start point of the taped drawing, implying a kind of orbital constellation while Sonic Dance – Half Sister (2014) and two Windy Orbits, Windy Orbit– Brass Plated and Windy Orbit– Brass and Nickel Plated (2013), are placed at a junction of lines.

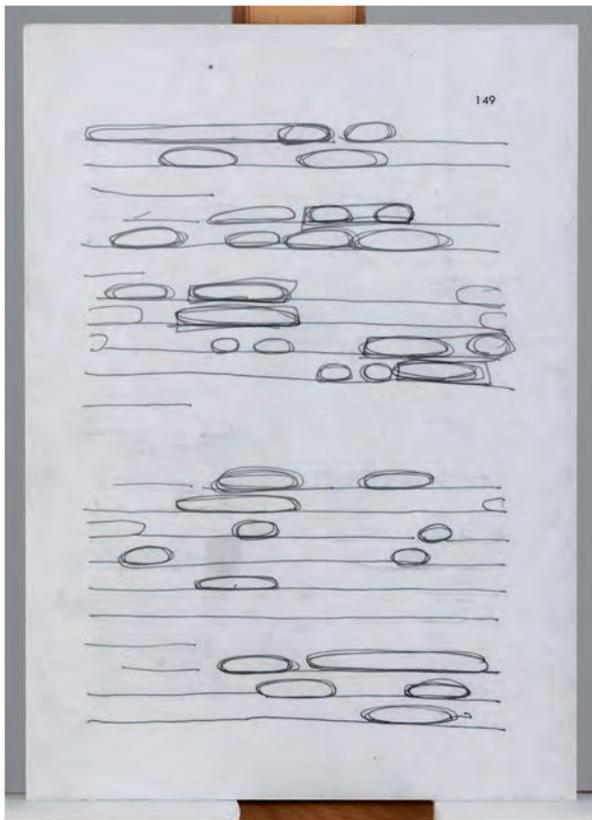
Galerie
Chantal Crousel



Haegue Yang
Lethal Love, 2008
Aluminum Venetian blinds (gunmetal gray, perforated), hanging structure, free-standing mirror wall, moving spotlights, scent emitters (wildflower, gunpowder)
Courtesy of Artist Pension Trust, Berlin
Installation view of *Lethal Love*, Cubitt, London, 2008
Photo: Andy Keate

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Haegue Yang
Traces of Anonymous Pupil Authors, 2001
16 b/w offset prints, each 42 cm x 29.7 cm
Edition of 30
Courtesy of Galerie Wien Lukatsch, Berlin

I understand movement is very relevant to these works?

The notions of movement animated by visitor's manual input, as well as the cosmic geometry resulted from each movement is one of the focal interpretations of this ensemble. The viewer could actually 'dance' with the sculptures, supplying the given space with new sonic effects that are created by bells attached on the surface of metal-mesh structures. The bells are intended to trigger associations with ancient times in the history of civilisation, where they were often used for shamanic rituals, calling out to the spirits through their sound. In my recent sculptural development, the bells seem to be endowing a life-giving and communicative quality to robot-like and rigid figures.

The bells also mirror and therefore multiply the viewer's reflection. In the Mediacity presentation, these visual as well as the non-visual sensorial and metaphoric aspects are accentuated by focusing on the wind, sounds and patterns that movement brings to the work. This ensemble on the ground floor of Seoul Museum of Arts at Mediacity will construct a constellation of an imaginary cosmic order, which is less rational, yet valuable to reconsider less pre-determined ways of thinking.

In the upper floor, a range of Sonic Rotating Ovals are hung, where the 'blurring' of the initial geometric form that occurs through the rotation suggest the 'unlearning' of the original form and material. This spinning transforms the ovoid shape of the piece into a circular form, a moment close to a 'perfect geometry.'

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Haegue Yang
Medicine Man - Indiscreet Other World, 2010
Clothing rack, casters, light bulbs, cable, cord, water-color, lacquer, metal ring, metal chain, milar, aluminum reflector
180 x 90 x 110 cm
Photo: Nick Ash



Haegue Yang
Mountains of Encounter, 2008
Aluminum Venetian blinds, aluminum hanging structure, powder coating, steel wire, moving spotlight, floodlight, platform ladder, cable
Courtesy of Galerie Wien Lukatsch, Berlin
Installation view of Wessen Geschichte (Whose History), Kunstverein, Hamburg, Germany, 2008
Photo: Fred Dott

REFLECTION

When looking back over the course of your career – from early works like *Traces of Anonymous Pupil Authors* (2001) to *Storage Piece* (2004), to more recent work like the sculptures in *Warrior Believer Lover* (2011) or the *Sonic Rotating Ovals* and *Sonic Dances* that will be presented at *Mediacity Seoul 2014* – is there a common thread that you feel defines who you are as an artist?

Well, I guess I am not an artist whose practice could be bound to specific topics or subject matters easily. In fact, I am almost ignorant to that. My aspirations relate to fostering an understanding of how human interests extend beyond the given boundaries and categorisations. In other words, an artistic practice should be something actual; something to experience, not necessarily to understand; and it should rather resist the conventional idea of possessing a common thread or summary in the sense of an understandable message.

OCULA

There is an evolution of an artist's practice and even if I feel I am aware of this, I might be not the best person to analyse it or draw conclusions from it. The only thing I could tell for a moment is what unknown mental adventure my work attempts to cause and what goes beyond that. I would rather hear from the audience, writer and various recipients a desire to interact further with my work, or an idea fostered by the work.

Galerie
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Haegue Yang

Series of Vulnerable Arrangements – Blind Room, 2006

Aluminum Venetian blinds, aluminum hanging structure, powder coating, steel wire, DV-PAL Trilogy, MDF, spotlight, mirror, humidifier, infrared heater, fan, origami objects, photocopies, found objects, seating, scent emitters ('Wood Fire,' 'Fresh Linen')

Collection of Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, T. B. Walker Acquisition Fund, 2007

Installation View of *Como Viver Junto – How to Live Together*, 27. Bienal de São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil, 2006

Photo: Juan Guerra, Fundação Bienal de São Paulo



Haegue Yang

Medicine Man - A Good Hunk of Safety, 2010

Clothing rack, casters, light bulbs, cable, cord, wig, paper mâché, watercolor, lacquer, metal ring, metal chain, pine cones, sea shells, hair rollers

200 x 90 x 110 cm

Photo: Nick Ash

OCULA

Is there anything in particular you feel you would like to explore that you have not yet tapped into?

Well, I wish to explore more about Korea, especially the significance of the country's division. I also generally would like to further explore Asia as a region, which ranges from Istanbul via the Middle East and Central Asia and up to the so-called Far East (over India or via Central Asia). I guess it will be a long-term engagement that will occupy me for a while as an almost-subconscious task underlying all the projects I am currently conceiving. It is exciting and terrifying, since whatever I attempt to delve into, requires a visual response through materials, method and the creation of a new way of perception. It is a long way..., but I guess I am willing to face a new chapter of challenges. Since my development from 2006 up to now has been rich and rewarding, I look forward to a new complex and difficult chapter to struggle through.

Galerie
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Haegue Yang
Quasi MB – in the Middle of Its Story,
2006/2007
18 Plates, original writings on paper or
photography
each 37 x 52 cm, framed

Courtesy of Wien Lukatsch, Berlin
Photo © Roman März



Haegue Yang
Quasi MB – in the Middle of Its Story,
2006/2007
18 Plates, original writings on paper or
photography
each 37 x 52 cm, framed

Courtesy of Wien Lukatsch, Berlin
Photo © Roman März

Anna Dickie. "Ocula conversation. Haegue Yang - Part II", *Ocula*, 2014.
<http://ocula.com/magazine/conversations/haegue-yang-part-ii/>

OCULA



Haegue Yang
Three Kinds, 2008
Aluminum Venetian blinds, aluminum hanging structure, powder coating, steel wire, moving spotlight, floodlight
Courtesy of Galerie Wien Lukatsch, Berlin
Installation view of *Life on Mars*, the 55th Carnegie International, Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, USA, 2008
Photo: Tom Little

Eric Loret. "Haegue Yang, compliment d'objets", *Libération*, August 22, 2013.
http://next.liberation.fr/arts/2013/08/22/haegue-yang-compliment-d-objets_926401



Haegue Yang, compliment d'objets par Eric Loret

Arts. Dans son exposition «Equivoques» présentée dans deux lieux à Strasbourg, la plasticienne sud-coréenne poursuit son travail conceptuel de mise en scène et de poétisation des articles du quotidien.

Galerie
Chantal Crousel



«Blind Curtain- Flesh Behind Tricolore», 2013. - Photo M. Bertola. Musées de la Ville de Strasbourg. Courtesy Gal. Ch.Crousel, Paris

On avait vu le travail de Haegue Yang, séoulienne de Berlin, entre autres à l'expo «documenta (13)» l'an passé, une flopée de stores vénitiens s'ouvrant et se fermant lentement au-dessus des rails de la gare désaffectée de Cassel : *Approaching : Choreography Engineered in Never-Past Tense* (2012). A la galerie Chantal Crousel à Paris, aussi, ses *Dress Vehicles*, encore des stores vénitiens, richement décorés, arrangés en costumes délirants dans lesquels le visiteur est convié à se glisser pour, peut-être, interpréter une danse dada.

Eric Loret. "Haegue Yang, compliment d'objets", *Libération*, August 22, 2013.

http://next.liberation.fr/arts/2013/08/22/haegue-yang-compliment-d-objets_926401

Strasbourg propose la première grande expo française de Haegue Yang, 42 ans, où le conceptuel plus dur cohabite avec les expériences sensorielles des stores. Avec les Certificates (2010-2011), par exemple, œuvres qui consistent en contrats conclus entre l'artiste et leurs acquéreurs, aux termes desquels Yang livre à celui qui l'achète un secret (un code bancaire, un mot de passe en ligne, etc.). Si l'interface du Certificate est un bout de papier, son contenu est une épreuve mentale, fondée sur l'engagement et la confiance.

Hameau. Résistance, opposition et contre-pied passifs par réarrangement de l'espace (Grid Bloc, série de papiers millimétrés non standards) et des gestes, en tissant un «milieu» où tous les rapports sont potentiellement inversables, l'univers de Haegue Yang n'est pas très aisé à résumer ni même à appréhender - on ne va pas faire les malins.

Une de ses œuvres «anciennes» (Picture Study, 2003) consiste en deux murs de photos faites par les enfants d'un hameau nippon. D'un côté, les images dans l'ordre de leur prise de vue, chaque ligne correspondant à un écolier. En face, les mêmes clichés réorganisés par l'artiste en fonction des thèmes, matières ou couleurs car, de fait, eu égard à la petite taille du village, les photographes en herbe ont souvent immortalisé les mêmes objets, animaux et lieux : où l'on se rappelle que l'art précède le réel, dont nous ne voyons que ce que nous en avons appris à voir.

Encore plus tôt, Yang s'était intéressée aux traces, autre grand passage obligé de la création conceptuelle : Traces of Anonymous Pupil Authors (2001, jamais exposé jusqu'ici), des soulignages de manuels scolaires (lignes, encadrés, etc.) dont le texte a été effacé. Il ne reste plus qu'une sorte de dessin étrange de la page, témoignant du plan de lecture des élèves qui l'ont eue entre leurs mains, comme pour Carsick Drawings (2006), créé en bus sur des routes cahoteuses du Japon, où Yang entourait des blocs de texte dans un journal, le trait obtenu rendant compte à la fois de la suspension (mauvaise) du bus et du trajet oculaire de l'artiste dans la feuille de papier.

On comprend donc à peu près que c'est sur l'appropriation, la façon dont on saisit les objets et les idées, comment ceux-ci glissent des mains et des synapses, comment ils s'imposent à nous tout en se refusant : ainsi d'un miroir ovale retourné vers le mur (Back, 2006) ou des frustrants Whatever Beings de 2011, «sculptures murales avec déviation tangentielle vers le haut et sur le côté», à savoir des rectangles moulés dans le mur, mais inclinés à 10 degrés d'un côté, et dans les tailles exactes des papiers de format A0, A1, A2, A3, A4 et A5, qui sont des normes internationales. Le résultat est la matérialisation d'un étalon sous une forme inhabituelle et littéralement «déviante», puisque nous ne connaissons généralement la série des «A» qu'en fournitures de bureau. On a envie de décrocher ces Whatever Beings (pour quoi faire, on l'ignore), de les prendre en main, et l'on ne peut pas.

Contrariété. Dans un entretien de 2006 pour le BAK d'Utrecht (traduit à partir du catalogue d'«Equivoques»), Haegue Yang explicite le principe de contrariété sensorielle qui régit son œuvre : «J'aimerais [...] créer dans le public une impression d'immédiateté et d'accessibilité. Ce faisant, j'entends aussi mettre en place un cadre étrange mais "(en) commun", où puisse prendre corps l'idée quelque peu fragile et vulnérable de "communauté d'absence".» On croirait entendre Maurice Blanchot revisitant Marguerite Duras. Normal, Haegue Yang compte l'écrivaine parmi ses sources et elle a déjà mis en scène plusieurs fois la Maladie de la mort, dont la dernière fois à Kassel avec Jeanne Balibar.

Origamis. La Maladie..., on le sait, est le socle de «La communauté négative», article de Maurice Blan-

Eric Loret. "Haegue Yang, compliment d'objets", *Libération*, August 22, 2013.
http://next.liberation.fr/arts/2013/08/22/haegue-yang-compliment-d-objets_926401

chot. Ce dernier s'intéressait peu à la danse, autant qu'on se rappelle. Il existe en revanche chez Haegue Yang un geste inversé de la «communauté d'absence», qui est le «déploiement du corps» par la chorégraphie : à la fois accueil et annulation.

Qu'il s'agisse de tancarvilles (2006-2011), photographiés en train de faire leur gymnastique quotidienne ou d'origamis dépliés et écrasés en 2D, les objets mis en scène par Yang sont vivants et, dit-elle, «généreux», à l'instar du portant ou de l'étagère : «Pour moi, cette capacité du portant de recevoir des objets très hétérogènes est presque touchante. Comme s'il était suffisamment tolérant ou généreux pour accepter la différence et la variété. [...] J'aime "lire" des choses dans des objets simples et apparemment insignifiants et m'intéresser à leur capacité cachée d'accueillir autre chose» (catalogue page 37).

Les tendances de Haegue Yang à l'ouverture, au déploiement, à la danse, se manifestent dans des œuvres à la limite du cinétique (*Rotating Notes*, 2010) et de l'op art (65,21 m² et 35 m², 2013) mais surtout dans les *Trustworthies* de 2012-2013, grands collages géométriques réalisés à partir de motifs d'enveloppes, déchirés d'un côté, découpés de l'autre et assemblés par couleurs ou formes. La déchirure, explique Haegue Yang, est d'origine, puisque toutes ces enveloppes ont été ouvertes. Le découpage est de son fait. Les arrangements de l'artiste ressemblent ainsi à des origamis, déplaçables et repliables à l'infini, «l'état animal ou animé par excellence : l'inquiétude», comme disait Gilles Deleuze, qui s'y connaissait en plis.

Lola Juan. "Haegue Yang au MAMCS et à l'Aubette : invitation à se laisser surprendre...",
Rue 89 Strasbourg, August 14, 2013.

<http://www.rue89strasbourg.com/index.php/2013/08/14/culture/haegue-yang-strasbourg/>

Rue89
Strasbourg

Haegue Yang au MAMCS et à l'Aubette : invitation à se laisser surprendre...

Galerie
Chantal Crousel



Haegue Yang, « Sonicwear – Poncho », Nickel Plated, 2013, sculpture portable, clochettes en nickel et anneaux, 60 x 82 cm, 8,90 kg, Courtesy de la Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris, France, photo : Studio Haegue Yang

Haegue Yang, jeune artiste coréenne, a été invitée par les Musées de la Ville de Strasbourg et s'y expose cet été au musée d'art moderne et l'Aubette 1928 avec *Équivoques*. Haegue Yang mêle ambiguïtés et dualités en une œuvre protéiforme : deux lieux, deux ambiances avec une multiplicité des matériaux et de mises en scène.

Au musée d'Art moderne et contemporain de Strasbourg, c'est un éclairage au néon froid qui nous accueille. La première installation sert à la fois à ouvrir et fermer l'espace, il s'agit de *Blind Curtain – Flesh behind Tricolore*. Sorte de moucharabieh moderne, le store vénitien est l'un des matériaux qui revient régulièrement dans l'œuvre d'Haegue Yang. Ici, il s'agit d'un ensemble de stores répartis en carrés qui dessinent et masquent l'espace dans lequel nous allons pénétrer. Au Mamcs, nous sommes face à un éclatement des propositions plastiques de l'artiste, on y trouve des installations, des photographies, des photo-montages, des cadavres-exquis, des sons et des sculptures qui dénotent de la richesse de son imagination.

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Galerie
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Haegue Yang, « Blind Curtain – Flesh behind Tricolore », 2013, stores vénitiens en aluminium, cadre en aluminium, 460 x 700 x 150 cm, Courtesy de la Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris, France. Vue de l'exposition, MAMCS, Strasbourg, 2013, photo : Musées de la Ville de Strasbourg, Mathieu Bertola

Rideaux et origami au Mamcs

Elle détourne, dans certaines de ses mises en scène, le principe du ready-made des dadaïstes. Ainsi, les œuvres Non-indépliable, azuré ou Gimnastics of the Foldables mettent en scène un séchoir à linge. Dans la première, il est recouvert d'un tissu bleu ciel et est figé dans une forme alors que, pour la seconde, il s'agit de photographies qui le présentent comme s'il faisait sa gymnastique et les différentes positions qu'il peut prendre. Haegue Yang joue avec les objets, les détourne de leur usage premier : le séchoir à linge perd son but et devient possibilité d'un combat contre la norme établie pour l'artiste.

Des origamis comme point de départ

Pour d'autres œuvres, Haegue Yang utilise comme point de départ des origamis qui ressemblent aux cocottes en papier de notre enfance : soit elle les photographie dans la série des Imperfections (il s'agit d'origamis ratés), soit elle projette dessus de la peinture en spray dans ses Non-Foldings – Geometric Tipping, ceux-là on dirait des rayogrammes, ceux qui lui ont servi pour cette dernière série, elle les aplatit ensuite et nous les donne à voir encadrés dans la série Non-Foldings – Scenarios of Non-Geometric Folding.

Lola Juan. "Haegue Yang au MAMCS et à l'Aubette : invitation à se laisser surprendre...",
Rue 89 Strasbourg, August 14, 2013.

<http://www.rue89strasbourg.com/index.php/2013/08/14/culture/haegue-yang-strasbourg/>

Avec son travail à partir d'origamis, l'artiste s'inscrit dans un travail minutieux et traditionnel lié à son pays d'origine (pour info, elle est coréenne mais vit et travaille à Berlin) mais elle se réapproprie cette pratique en les montrant ratés, détruits, en négatifs ou en deux dimensions, ils sont bien loin de l'esthétique léchée et maîtrisée qui va de pair avec cette pratique.

Galerie
Chantal Crousel



Haegue Yang, « Dress Vehicle – Yin Yang », 2012, sculpture performative mobile, stores vénitiens en aluminium, cadre en aluminium, aimants, tricot, clochettes, cordes en caoutchouc et roulettes, 318 cm de haut, 310 cm de diamètre, Courtesy de la Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris, France. Vue de l'exposition, Aubette 1928, Strasbourg, 2013, photo : Musées de la Ville de Strasbourg, Mathieu Bertola

Des clochettes à L'Aubette 1928

Changement de décor, autre ambiance, autres œuvres : L'Aubette 1928, espace dédié aux plaisirs et à la fête à la fin des années 1920 qui réunissait, au centre de Strasbourg, un ciné-dancing, une salle des fêtes ainsi qu'un foyer-bar, chaque salle étant décorée par Théo Van Doesburg, Jean Arp et Sophie Taeuber-Arp.

Chaque pièce réalisée par Haegue Yang a été choisie par l'artiste pour créer un écho avec les différents espaces. Dans la salle des fêtes, par exemple, se trouvent deux Dress Vehicles : Zig-Zag et Yin Yang. Il s'agit de grandes sculptures montées sur roues, ces deux œuvres sont constituées d'éléments métalliques, de stores vénitiens (que l'on retrouve ici comme au Mamcs), de macramé et de clochettes. « M'accorderiez-vous cette danse ? », nous disent-elles. Il nous est possible d'y entrer (dans la danse

Lola Juan. "Haegue Yang au MAMCS et à l'Aubette : invitation à se laisser surprendre...",
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<http://www.rue89strasbourg.com/index.php/2013/08/14/culture/haegue-yang-strasbourg/>

mais surtout dans les œuvres) et, grâce à des poignées, on peut les bouger et tourner dans cette salle des fêtes. Haegue Yang rend hommage au mouvement dada et aux murs qui l'accueillent tout en se les réappropriant : les éléments parallélépipédiques et les couleurs qu'elle y associe répondent aux aplats de couleur carrés de l'espace.

Dans le foyer-bar se trouve une œuvre étonnante : Incarnation of Wind and Condensation. Il s'agit d'un bar sous lequel se trouve un congélateur et sur le plateau duquel on peut voir un ventilateur. De part et d'autre, se trouvent deux bouteilles d'eau congelée. Le plateau reprend les couleurs choisies par Sophie Taeuber-Arp pour la décoration de cette salle et l'inscrit ainsi comme pouvant vraiment en faire partie. Les bouteilles sont changées régulièrement par le personnel de l'Aubette afin que le processus de condensation puisse se produire en continu.

Puis, pour finir, les Sonicwears, ensemble de costumes dorés et argentés constitués de clochettes, sont disposés sur des tables au centre de la salle du ciné-dancing. Ils sont à enfiler : le poncho argenté fait neuf kilos. Une fois porté, il est possible d'y ajouter des sortes de menottes ou des bracelets et d'alors faire tinter les clochettes qui nous recouvrent. Haegue Yang invite le visiteur à faire de la musique qui, grâce à lui, va à nouveau résonner dans cet espace du ciné-dancing : dansez !

L'exposition des musées de la ville de Strasbourg nous invite à entrer dans une œuvre riche et dense. Elle est très référencée, ce qui pourrait être reproché à Haegue Yang, parce que, en effet, pourquoi ne pas se délivrer des influences de ses prédécesseurs ? Mais elle joue avec ces ascendants du passé, se les réapproprie et en donne une nouvelle lecture décalée et pleine d'humour.

HG Masters. “Family of Equivocations Haegue Yang”, *Art Asia Pacific*, July 2013.

<http://artasiapacific.com/Magazine/WebExclusives/FamilyOfEquivocationsHaegueYang>



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HAEGUE YANG, *Dress Vehicle – Zig Zag*, 2012, mobile performative sculpture, aluminium Venetian blinds, powder-coated aluminium frame, magnets, knitting yarn, bells, rubber ropes, castors, 278 cm high, 343 cm diameter. Courtesy Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris. Installation view, Aubette 1928, Strasbourg, 2013. Photo: Musées de la Ville de Strasbourg, Mathieu Bertola.



HAEGUE YANG, *Sonicwear – Poncho*, Nickel Plated, 2013, nickel-plated bells, rings, 60 × 82 cm, 8.90 kg. Courtesy Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris. Photo: Studio Haegue Yang.

Between the modern art capitals of Paris and Berlin, the modest city of Strasbourg made a just brief cameo in the interwar chapter of European Modernism. This oft-forgotten moment is central to the plot of Haegue Yang’s first large-scale solo show at a French institution, “Family of Equivocations,” a project two years in the making with Strasbourg Museum’s curator Camille Giertler.

Historical personages—often intrepid, and sometimes tragic, women—are central figures in Yang’s practice, their lives and works serving as inspiration for the artist’s diverse sculptures, installations and conceptual projects. In Strasbourg, the central protagonist was Sophie Taeuber-Arp, the Swiss-born artist, textile maker and dancer, who, until her death in 1944 of carbon monoxide poisoning, was a major figure in Zürich’s Dada movement and an early Constructivist. Her work, however, was often overshadowed by that of her husband, fellow Dada-ist Jean Arp. In 1926, the couple had relocated to Strasbourg from Switzerland and there were commissioned to design a new social space at the heart of the city, the Café de l’Aubette. They invited Theo van Doesburg, founder of the De Stijl movement, to join them in what was intended to be the “Sistine Chapel of Abstract Art.” Together they produced a jubilant and elegant modern banquet hall, foyer-bar area and Ciné-Dancing hall, including a film screen, with large, colored square panels on the walls and ceiling. Before World War II, L’Aubette was a temple to both abstraction and the popular arts of film and dancing, where locals spent the evenings in the company of friends.

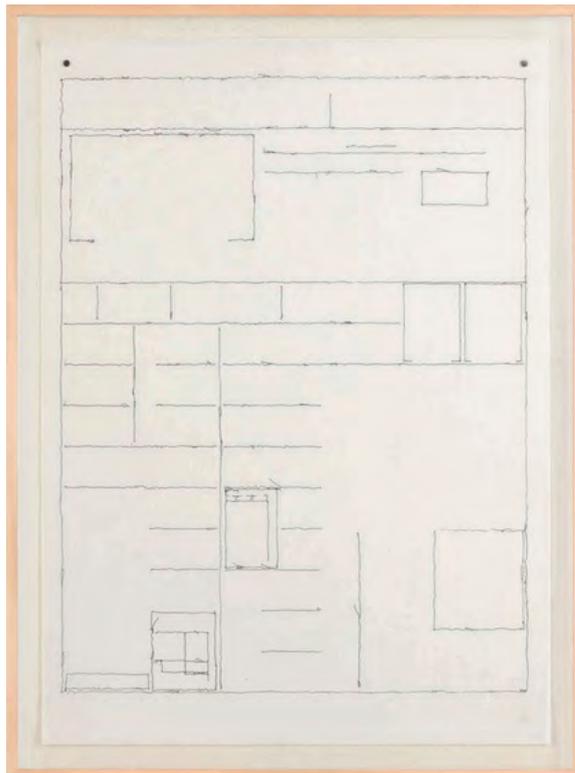
The commingling of the modern and popular arts—including painting, sculpture, architecture, design, film, dance, music and theater—is perhaps lost from the vantage point of today, when the exhausted 20th-century avant-garde disciplines look codified and discrete. Yet Yang’s recent sculptures, as hybrid objects, return to the early 20th-century when artworks were much more free to be their own curious things. In



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HAEGUE YANG, *Non-Foldings – Scenarios of Non-Geometric Folding*, 2013, flattened origami objects, spray paint, framed, 6 pieces, each 62.4 × 62.4 cm. Courtesy of Kukje Gallery, Seoul. Photo: Musées de la Ville de Strasbourg, Mathieu Bertola.



HAEGUE YANG, *Carsick Drawings*, 2006, ink, tracing paper, framed 10 pieces, each 65 × 47.6 cm. Courtesy the artist. Photo: Musées de la Ville de Strasbourg, Mathieu Bertola.

Yang's case, her *Dress Vehicle – Zig Zag* and *Dress Vehicle – Yin Yang* (2012), located in the *Salle des Fêtes*, in the *Aubette 1928*, which served as the first exhibition venue for Yang's solo show, are three-meter-tall sculptures on wheels. The panels of colorful macramé, yarn and bells and Venetian blinds can be wheeled (and danced) around the space, and have bells and blinds that make noise and rattle. From the inside, a walker drives the sculptures, while from the outside, their many pointed sides can be swung open or closed and the blinds lifted and lowered. Wonderfully awkward to steer, they are at once machines, structures, costumes, prototypes and models.

Making noise and dancing about was further encouraged in the *Ciné-Dancing* hall, where Yang's new series of garments made from miniature bells, "*Sonicwears*" (2013), were placed on tables in the middle of this film-viewing and dance salon. Made of nickel-plated bells, some of the "*Sonicwears*" are like ponchos or vests, others like shawls, bracelets, ankle socks, or elaborate (and vaguely kinky) handcuffs. All are terrifically heavy to wear, like chain-mail armor, and offer a wide percussive range of sounds—depending on the wearer's motion while strolling, skipping or twirling around the space. They are homages to *Taueber-Arp's* Dada costumes and an invitation to the audience to make something like a performance.

Between these two festive spaces is the *Foyer-bar*, where dancers and revelers could cool off and quiet down with the introspective sculpture *Incarnation of Wind and Condensation* (2013), which features a black metal fan atop a custom-designed bar where two bottles of frozen water taken from a small freezer underneath are placed at regular intervals throughout the day. Situated between the two grand rooms of *L'Aubette*, the two perspiring bottles perhaps represent the chance meeting of two revelers, or for the meeting of past and present. The new work harks back to Yang's sculptures from the 2009 Korea

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HAEGUE YANG, *Central Composition in Explosion – Trustworthy #184*, 2012–2013, various envelope security patterns, framed, 11 pieces either 98.1 × 98.1 or 68.1 × 68.1 cm. Courtesy Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris. Installation view, MAMCS, Strasbourg, 2013. Photo: Musées de la Ville de Strasbourg, Mathieu Bertola.

Galerie
Chantal Crousel

Pavilion at the Venice Biennale, “Condensation,” and an earlier cycle of her works that featured fans and heat-lamps. In these works, the motif of “condensation” (the transformation of vapor into liquid) was an analogy for how intellectual ideas become tangible realities, or for the survival of progressive ideals long after their originators had physically departed from the world.

The exhibition’s second venue, Strasbourg’s Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art, houses a model of L’Aubette 1928 and many artworks by both Arp and Taeuber-Arp, including her *Coupe Dada* (1916), a rounded painted-wood object resembling a hat stand and assuming a kind of anthropomorphic presence. Yang’s “Family of Equivocations,” located in a two-storey gallery nearby, is demarcated by a hanging installation of colored Venetian blinds, *Blind Curtain — Flesh Behind Tricolore* (2013), comprised of seven vertically suspended rows of 60-centimeter-square shades. The semi-transparent forms allow the colors—ranging from white, gray and “flesh-tone” to solid reds and forest green—to mingle and vary depending on the vantage point. This work, like their siblings that Yang has created in recent years, may be a “domesticated” object—being made of this simple household material—yet, as an abstraction, it is a sharp rebuke to the principles of High Modernism that command a single, frontal vantage point, a flat surface and solidity of form. In other words, the blind series are made of a material that light passes through, rather than a flat structure that dominates a space or reflects the light off its surface. These hanging structures—in their colors, variations and lightness—are everything that a minimalist steel sculpture or Barnett Newman canvas is not. This is abstraction as we have not known it before.

Inside the galleries were many new works by Yang, several ongoing series shown in a new, fuller form, and several works that had never or rarely been shown before. Greeting one in the middle of the

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gallery, like a familiar, old friend, is *Non-Indépliable, Azuré* (2010), a drying rack covered in a blue fabric with its “arms” outstretched—an inadvertent figure. On the walls is *Eclectic Totemic* (2013), a wallpaper created in collaboration with London graphic designers OK-RM (Oliver Knight and Rory McGrath), that, in the manner of the Surrealist game “cadavre exquis,” combines figures taken from 1920s literature and dance.

On top of this, on the wall in frames are “Non-Foldings – Scenarios of Non-Geometric Folding” (2013), which are flattened origami objects used for the “Non-Folding — Geometric Tipping” series (works made by placing origami objects on paper and spray-painting the paper in black, leaving behind only their outline forms). The “Non-Folding — Geometric Tipping” works, themselves austere black-on-white constellations of forms from the origami figures, return to the idea of a single geometric form (the origami object) dancing across the page to produce these improvised images. *Hardware Store Collages* (2012–13) translates animatronic-motion across a flat surface with its catalog clippings of light bulbs, door handles and other fixtures pasted across a black surface. Motion and abstraction arises again in the never-before-seen *Carsick Drawings* (2006). Yang made the jagged tracings around the perimeter of articles in Japanese newspapers while riding the bus in the rural Akiyoshidai region in Japan. A whole room upstairs is devoted to the *Trustworthies*, which are Yang’s collages made from the security linings of envelopes and graph paper. *Diagonal Composition in Flow — Trustworthy #183* (2013) takes up three walls of the gallery, the colorful forms spanning multiple framed panels, and on the fourth wall *Central Composition in Explosion — Trustworthy #184* (2013) uses more complicated, octagonal forms.

While the “dancing object” and “abstraction in motion” are key motifs in Yang’s oeuvre, these are abstractions that do not privilege one vantage point or one material—they are aspects of a larger conception of the “minority” that runs throughout Yang’s works in Strasbourg. For one thing, *Taeu-berg-Arp* herself had long been the neglected partner in her marriage with Jean Arp, and thus within the Dada movement at large. Textiles feature less prominently in the history of abstraction than paintings. Materials such as the macramé, Venetian blinds, origami, the inside linings of envelopes, hardware-store catalogs, the reverse side of a mirror (a piece called *Back*, 2006), the slightly malformed or “defective” origami objects in the photograph series “*Imperfections*” (2010) and the hand-knitted sleeves of *Roll Cosies – Cash Register Rolls, 50 Meter* (2012) are Yang’s veneration of the humble, marginalized and overlooked. You don’t have to name the structures and ideologies that she is pushing back against—or even know that there are any—to appreciate the ways in which Yang is proposing a revised understanding of abstraction, modernism and 20th-century history.

HG Masters is editor-at-large of *ArtAsiaPacific* and is based in Istanbul.

Mara Hoberman. "Haegue Yang's "Ovals and Circles","
Art Agenda, April 17, 2013.

<http://www.art-agenda.com/reviews/haegue-yang%E2%80%99s-%E2%80%99Ovals-and-circles%E2%80%9D/>

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Haegue Yang's "Ovals and Circles"

By Mara Hoberman

Hot on the heels of her first solo exhibition with Chantal Crousel ("Ajar" at the gallerist's satellite showroom, La Douane, October 18–December 7, 2012), Haegue Yang's current show at Crousel's flagship gallery moves beyond the venetian blind installations and drying rack sculptures for which the South Korean-born, Berlin-based artist is best known. These signature works, however, do make a two-dimensional cameo in photographic wallpaper—a collaboration with designer Manuel Raeder—that covers three walls at one end of the gallery. Field of Teleportation (2011) is a disorienting digital collage combining installation shots from Yang's past exhibitions with not-to-scale images of individual works. Domesticized with a pair of easy chairs, a standing ashtray, and a dining table set, this room is a habitable microcosm of Yang's oeuvre. The only actual sculpture in the room is a small venetian blind in a powdercoated steel frame installed low on the wall, just beneath its own photographic image. Manteuffelstrasse 112 – Single and Solid (bathroom radiator) (2010)—a window/radiator hybrid—reacquaints the viewer with Yang's alternate reality wherein useful household items are reborn as nonfunctional curios. But apart from a sculpture/bench made from nine colorful vintage side tables (Facilitating Pentagon Seating [2013]), Yang's latest works appear freed from the domestic sphere. Her most recent objects have more in common with geometric abstraction and the materials are less crafty than the yarn, paper maché, and origami she has previously favored.

The Sonic Rotating Ovals (2013) are three wall-mounted ovoid forms covered completely with small bells—of the festive variety used to decorate door wreaths or Christmas stockings. Mounted at eye-level on facing walls, the ovals are designed to rotate on a central axis. With one push they can be sent spinning like a game show money wheel. Once in motion the ovals become circular blurs (hence exhibition's title.) Known for creating experiences that incorporate non-visual elements like scent and heat, the artist here appeals to our senses of touch and hearing. With no handle, button, or otherwise designated spot at which to activate the work, these objects' bumpy and cool metallic surfaces are meant to be manhandled. The consequent clamor of ringing bells ebbs from frantic reverberations to cheery jingles before ceasing completely once the sculpture reclaims its equilibrium on the wall.

Also made with jingle bells, two freestanding sculptures populate the center of the gallery with an eerie humanoid presence. Bloated and amorphous, the bell-dazzled bodies of Sonic Nickel Dance and Sonic Brass Dance (both 2013) are stabilized by vertical steel poles and stand just under seven feet and six feet, respectively. Industrial metal handles protrude from three sides of the sculptures' midsections like bent arms. The figures' feet are a star of metal wheels that look like they originally belonged to a swivel chair or an IV stand. Consistent with Yang's penchant for imbuing ostensibly inelegant forms with surprising grace—exemplified by her photographic series of a drying rack in various acrobatic positions (Gymnastics of the Foldables [2006]) and her venetian blind walkers ("Dress Vehicles" [2011–2012])—these beings make charmingly awkward dance partners.

At the opposite end of the gallery from the wallpapered room, two subtly rendered geometric works act as a foil to Field of Transportation's overwhelming jumble of representational imagery. Redefining and

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creating space in an entirely different way, 56.27 m³ and 27.12 m² (both 2000/2013), are two separate works that have been installed together to cordon off a large triangular space at one corner of the gallery. 27.12 m² covers two abutting walls with thin horizontal stripes of red chalk, evenly spaced from floor to ceiling at 10 cm apart. Stretching between these two walls, 56.27 m³ forms a hypotenuse with lengths of red thread (also spaced 10 cm apart). The effect is like a three-dimensional Sol Le Witt wall drawing wherein the space captured inside the triangle is simultaneously orderly and disorienting. Reiterating themes of permeability and filtration associated with Yang's venetian blind works, this installation is a more delicate evocation of displacement.

The "Rotating Notes" series (2013) in the gallery's back room reprises the rotating oval form. In this case, the wall-mounts' surfaces are smooth magnetic boards adorned with small squares of typed text. These are in fact excerpts from Yang's research towards her recent installation at Munich's Haus der Kunst, *Accommodating the Epic Dispersion – On Non-cathartic Volume of Dispersion* (2012). Exposing her source material, Yang invites the viewer to consider accounts describing various postcolonial diasporas. The subject matter is heavy, but the presentation is characteristically energetic. Set a-whirl, the thought boards' contents flutter and slide, evoking a dizzying visualization of forced migration.

While moving away from what she has referred to as a process of "domestication," (1) Yang continues to explore themes of disorientation and displacement. Subtler than her previous exhibitions featuring functional-turned-fanciful household objects in labyrinthine settings, "Ovals and Circles" offers a more conceptual experience of disarticulation. Though her cache of materials—bells, thread, magnets, chalk, and various industrial accessories—remains rooted in the everyday, Yang's latest abstract and geometric forms are unsettling not because they subvert a prescribed functionality, but because they create a new one.

(1) Artist interview with Heidi Zuckerman Jacobson in *Flash Art*, vol. 282 (January–February 2012).



View of Haegue Yang's "Ovals and Circles," Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris, 2013.

ARTFORUM

OCTOBER 2012 INTERNATIONAL

Documenta 13

VARIOUS VENUES,
KASSEL, BANFF, CAIRO, AND KABUL
Daniel Birnbaum

WHAT WOULD IT MEAN to think that things could have stories as troubled as those of people? Many of the objects in this year's Documenta—among them engines, a beehive, a palette knife—had complex, sometimes difficult, stories to tell. Take the Korbman, a German apple. Its origin arguably lies in 1923, when the Bavarian priest, activist, and apple lover Korbman Agner saw Adolf Hitler speaking in Munich. Agner began to protest the Nazi regime, was arrested in the fall of 1939, and was subsequently moved to Dachau—where, unbelievably enough, he tended a small orchard between two barracks and even bred several new varieties of apple. Using the German abbreviation for *concentration camp*, he named them KZ-1, KZ-2, KZ-3, and KZ-4. Documenta 13 curator Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev included nearly four hundred of the priest's drawings of apples in her sprawling exhibition, which was so full of odd objects and curious constellations that nothing, in the end, should have surprised us. The meticulous illustrations, made between circa 1912 and 1960, were installed in strict grids reminiscent of 1970s Conceptualism. They looked monotonous from a distance, but on closer inspection the graceful depictions—some shown singly, some in pairs—displayed all the quirks and blemishes we'd expect from real fruit. Together with artist Jimmie Durham, Christov-Bakargiev

also planted two apple trees in Kassel's Karlshof Park as a modest monument to the rebellious priest, whose KZ-3 was renamed the Korbman in 1985.

In the Kunsthalle Fridericianum, Documenta's central venue, the grids of apples were displayed in the same room as the late Mark Lombardi's large drawings mapping the personal and financial connections behind major political scandals such as the Iran-Contra affair. The adjoining gallery contained tables with scientific instruments exploring the nature of light and speed—a "work" by Austrian physicist Anton Zeilinger. The mathematical calculations scribbled on an adjacent wall were impenetrable to me, but according to the catalogue they pointed to a necessary "renewal of the discussion of the definition of reality." The diversity of these examples can perhaps serve as an illustration of the vast ambitions of this exhibition and of the radical heterogeneity of the projects included.

Christov-Bakargiev—who, as the hundred pamphlets published in the run-up to her exhibition demonstrated, is not opposed to metaphysical speculation or to the most complex of thinkers—insisted that her project was not limited by an overarching theme. What was on offer instead, for those of us who wanted some guidance, was a section of the exhibition called "The Brain," located in the rotunda of the Fridericianum and separated from the other rooms by a glass wall. This was described as an "associative space," in which "a number of artworks, objects, and documents [were] brought together in lieu of a concept." It was posited as the very locus of Christov-Bakargiev's vast project, as Lawrence Weiner's *THE MIDDLE OF THE MIDDLE OF THE MIDDLE OF*, 2012, applied to the glass partition, made clear.

The Brain was thus pushed as a "puzzle of an exhibition that condenses and centers the thought lines" of the whole Documenta. Among the items on view were artifacts from the National Museum of Beirut that had melted into one another when the museum was shelled during the Lebanese Civil War, an excerpt of a video made by the Egyptian artist Ahmed Bassyoni just three days before he

died from gunshot wounds inflicted by the Egyptian police in the winter of 2011, a palette knife used for more than thirty years by the marvelous Lebanese poet and painter Erel Adnan, a barbitub thermometer that the photographer Lee Miller took from Hitler's Munich apartment in 1945, and a selection of figures made some three thousand years ago in Central Asia that are today known as the Bactrian Princesses. Many of these objects could be considered troubled—as the catalogue puts it, there are "innocent objects and objects that have lost something; destroyed objects, damaged objects and indestructible objects . . . hidden or disguised objects, objects on retreat, objects in refuge, traumatized objects." That's where we may want to pause: traumatized objects?

There was, I think, a conflict—perhaps a productive one—at the heart of this enormous multidisciplinary show, and it can be located exactly in the tension between those two words. On the one hand, many of the artworks and the stories they told circled around collective traumas: those of Nazi Germany and, much more recently, those of

Things have stories, but are they so much like us that they are capable of experiencing trauma or having political intentions?

Afghanistan or the countries involved in the Arab Spring. Indeed, Christov-Bakargiev's focus on what she calls "collapse and recovery" is so familiar from recent cultural theory that it is almost a cliché to speak of a traumatic temporality at the very core of all avant-garde artistic developments. But on the other hand, such psychoanalytic language here collides with the idiom of a new, object-oriented philosophy that wants to liberate us once and for all from anthropocentrism and consider instead what the catalogue calls the "inanimate makers of the world." In fact, Christov-Bakargiev's project is in many ways perfectly in tune with the approaches today discussed as "speculative realism,"

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From left: Korbman Agner, *Apples (detail)*, ca. 1912-60. 302 drawings, gouache, pencil, watercolor. Colored pencil on cardboard, each 4 1/2 x 6 1/2", Kunsthalle Fridericianum, Kassel. View of "The Brain," 2012, Kunsthalle Fridericianum, Kassel. Photo: Roman März.



with its ambition to rid our thinking of the obsession with that historically overemphasized relationship between a perceiving subject and a known object. Instead, the argument goes, we should look into other equally exciting and productive relationships in the world, consisting of so many human and nonhuman actors, or "actants," as Bruno Latour would put it. Philosopher Graham Harman goes so far as to claim: "Atoms and molecules are actants, as are children, raindrops, bullet trains, politicians, and numerals. All entities are on exactly the same ontological footing." One can go further still: To quote from an interview with Christov-Bakargiev, "The question is not whether we give dogs or straw berries permission to vote, but how a strawberry can assert its political intention."

Things have stories, but are they so much like us that they are capable of experiencing trauma or having political intentions? If we end up attributing human subjectivity to nonhuman actors, isn't there a risk of making anthropocentrism a model for the rest of the world, rather than eradicating the problem? Indeed, the show's own structure illustrated this paradox: Its center was called the Brain, after all. But it was not at all clear whether we should understand the Brain as importing subjectivity to the entire exhibition or take it as a neutral scientific metaphor pointing a new relationship to things (including artworks) and other living beings.

Either way, the resulting tension played out among numerous assemblages and apparatuses that hovered indecisively at the division between subject and object. What were we to make of the impressive array of car engines that Thomas Bayrle had made into praying machines—as well as the windshield wipers whose movements became inseparable from an audio track of Hail Marys? How, and in what language, were we to respond to the scenario that Pierre Huyghe staged in the composing area of the Baroque park, a scene involving a female statue reclining in the mud with a beehive taking the place of her head, an *acephale* who was guarded by an uncanny dog with a fluorescent leg? It was as mysterious

a tableau as that behind the wooden door in Duchamp's *Etant donné* and reminded us that one of the show's "thought lines" led back through the history of Surrealism. Collected in the Brain were several versions of Man Ray's *Ohjet indestructible*, 1923/1965, in which Lee Miller's wide-open eye, set atop a meteorologic, never-blades, although it has seen unlikely things, including Eva Braun's perfume flask and the Führer's monogrammed towel on the day of his suicide.

In several of the roughly dozen works installed at the Hauptbahnhof, Kassel's former main train station, the ghostly presence of the past reminded us of the function of the German railway not so many decades ago. It was addressed directly in Susan Philipsz's *Study for Strings*, 2012, installed at the end of a functioning platform, where seven speakers played music composed by Pavel Haas in the Terezin concentration camp in 1943. In a disused part of the station, meanwhile, Haegue Yang's *Approaching: Choreography Engineered in Never-Past Tense*, 2012, comprising motorized venetian blinds suspended above the tracks, created an uncanny sense of trains arriving and departing. Yang's installation was one of the most substantial works in an exhibition with many great new pieces. Another, also at the Hauptbahnhof, was Clemens von Wedemeyer's riveting three-channel film *Muster (Ruhes)*, 2012, a tightly knit narrative about the former Benedictine monastery Breitenau, just outside Kassel. The work is a mazelike telling of a German psychohistory spinning out from the history of the site. (The Nazis converted it into an early concentration camp, and after the end of World War II it housed a reformatory for girls; parts of it are used today as a psychiatric clinic.) Installed in a large dark space in a triangular fashion, von Wedemeyer's piece could only be viewed from one side at a time, so one kept circling to get a grip on the connections between Breitenau's history and such scenes as the liberation of a concentration camp's inmates by American soldiers, a punk concert, and fragments from Ulrike Mühlhof's 1970 film *Bambule*.

This Documenta, with a firm footing in Kassel as well as outposts unknown to most of us in Cairo, Kabul, and Banff, Canada, was a wildly ambitious and in many ways outrageous exhibition. It created its own imaginary geographies, insisting that there are secret relationships that most of us have never paid attention to. Kassel, Kabul, Kassel, Kabul. Mention the two cities often enough together and things start happening. Energies start rubbing off, layers of meaning migrate. Naturally, there were plenty of times such frictions did not go anywhere, plenty of non-so-fantastic projects, and a few yarn decisions. An awkward handwritten letter in which Kai Althoff explains to Christov-Bakargiev why he could not participate in the show was displayed prominently in the Fridericianum's ground-floor gallery, which was otherwise almost entirely empty, albeit suffused with an artificial freeze. Ryan Gander's *I Need Some Meaning I Can Memorize (The Invisibile Pull)*, 2012. But much more evocative was the exhibition's plethora of magnificent projects, which included immersive installations by Theater Gates and Tino Sehgal, both of which made viewers part of musical activities that went far beyond anything they might have expected, as well as subtle meditations on painting in spite-of-everything by the likes of Paul Chan and Francis Alys. Wandering into a beautiful cinema in the north of Kassel, I saw a truly majestic and inexplicable shiny entity appearing and disappearing on the screen, elusive, like some sort of cosmic quicksilver. This piece by Trisha Donnelly (*Untitled*, 2010) existed—like everything else the artist has ever touched—without any explanation. A more modest film elsewhere in the exhibition, Tamiara Henderson's *Shaded Ballot & Anonymous Team*, 2011, showed everyday objects being manipulated by invisible hands. There is, after all, so little we actually know about the true nature of the things that surround us. However contradictory, the show's attempt to blur the line between the perceiving subject and the rest of the world left me with a question: Was I looking at this show, or was it looking at me? □

DANIEL BIRNBAUM IS DIRECTOR OF MODERNA MUSEET IN STOCKHOLM.



From left: Clemens von Wedemeyer, *Muster (Ruhes)*, 2012, 27 minutes, installation view, Hauptbahnhof, Kassel; Francis Alys, *Untitled (Close)*, 2011–12, performance, photographs, video, audio, in central dimensions variable, Oskar Kutschera, Kassel; Haegue Yang, *Approaching: Choreography Engineered in Never-Past Tense*, 2012, motorized installation, metal, fan, suspension, 2.50 x 2.00 x 1.00 m, 1947–1970, 1943 and 1945, Hauptbahnhof, Kassel; Photo: Nils Hinger



Flash Art

Asia #1

Galerie
Chantal Crousel



HAEGUE YANG, *Can Cookies-Tuna Chunks in Sunflower Oil* (705g), 2011 (detail). 2 cans tuna, 705g each, knitting yarn, 2 pieces 10.5 x 15.7 cm e (each). Courtesy Chantal Crousel, Paris. Photo: Stuart Whiggs.

SURVEY — *Asia at a Glance* • FEATURES — *T.V. Santhosh, Haegue Yang, Ik-Joong Kang, Zhang Yu, The Sultans of Indonesian Art*

FOCUS ASIA • INTERVIEW



Haegue Yang

DOMESTICATION

Heidi Zuckerman Jacobson

HEIDI ZUCKERMAN JACOBSON: *Tell me about the title of your exhibition at the Aspen Art Museum.*

Haegue Yang: The title "The Art and Technique of Folding the Land" is a translation of a Korean word I had in mind. It refers to a very specific technique for moving through the world. For example, as described in Taoism, you jump from mountain peak to mountain peak by folding the land. I found this and many other techniques described in ancient Taoism interesting because they are mystical and spiritual. But at the same time, they are similar to what we try to do with modern

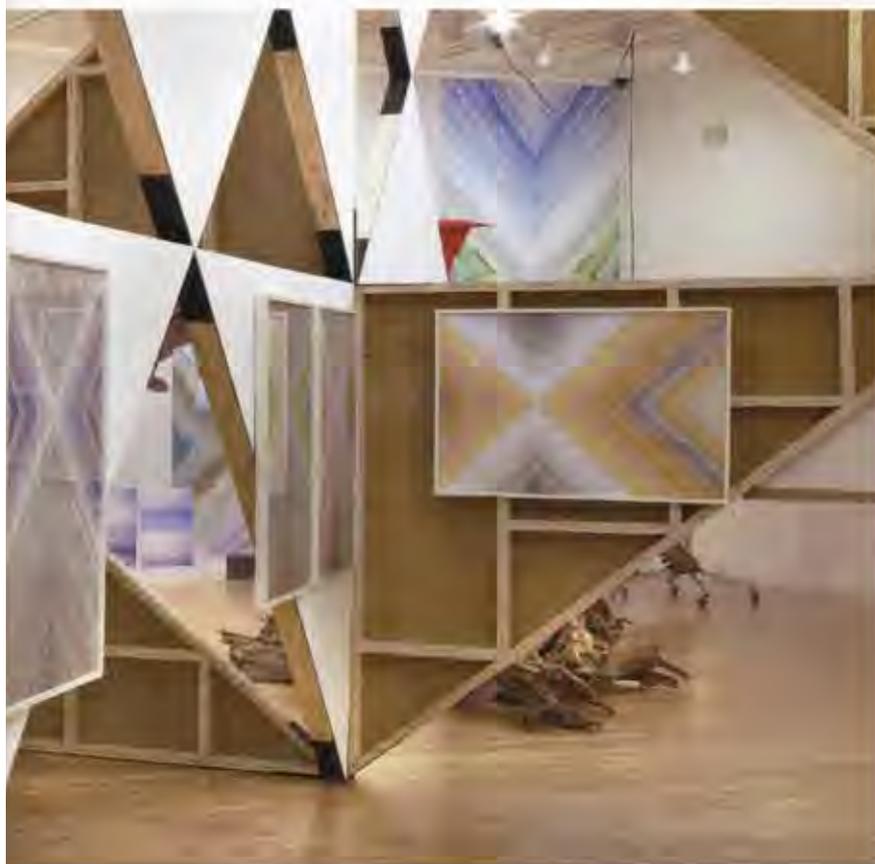
technology to overcome the distance between places and people. I'm an artist who travels a lot, and I think there is a specific sentiment and identity that comes through excessive traveling. It is being alone but thinking about the relationship to oneself at the same time. This happens while moving around with exhibition schedules. I like to see these mundane aspects of contemporary life in a Taoist way.

HZJ: *You're interested in many different philosophies, spiritual practices and concepts of the sublime. Can you talk about those interests?*

HY: Yes. I'm wondering about that myself

actually. I'm not a person who necessarily does yoga, meditation or spiritual practice in my daily life, so I question why I am intellectually concerned with these notions, and what it means. Must we call it spiritual practice instead of just a reference? I think at this point the only answer I can come up with is dance. Dance as a general term for movement; movement is physical but at the same time can refer to ideological and social movements. Maybe I'm someone who is interested in taking ideological movement from the physical. I think the same goes for spirituality. I'm interested in simple daily life

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vegetable steamer or a piece of wood or some spam or some knitting. To be known beyond the immediately knowable is a very difficult and profound life question. If we're honest with ourselves, we all seek to be truly understood, to be truly known.

HY: That's tough to accept but it's very true; and I agree that it's difficult to decide whether I have an ability to convince the public to think in a certain way. As an artist you attempt to communicate with your audience. I hope that the way I work is ambiguous and demanding enough that, even if elements of it are familiar, or even intimate, there is a hybrid quality that makes people question. So in the group of sculptures *Wild in Aspen* (2011), for example, a steamer plus a washing sponge plus a clothing rack is something questionable. There is some kind of plus/minus that brings us — it sounds almost cliché — to a different dimension and level of thinking that goes a little bit beyond what we call conventional.

HZJ: There's no question that your work is ambiguous, rigorous and difficult enough to pose questions. Your reference to this idea of going to another dimension is what I call the possibility of transcendence. I don't think it's possible to take the viewer there if they are comfortable. It's only through the fracture you referenced — the moment of fusion or fracture between the known and the unknown — that allows the possibility to occur.

HY: Comfortable, easy, convenient things are pursued collectively in society, and terms such as "difficulty," "ambiguity," "pain" or "effort" have a negative connotation. This is the stuff we try to avoid. Another way to approach these negative terms is to see them as "oblique" instead of difficult — so that we can face them more courageously. We could think of the perception of the concept in art; it's a tricky thing to achieve perceptual "obliqueness," that is, perceiving something without a didactic, verbal explanation. In "The Art and Technique of Folding the Land" you see the space through layers such as walls, sculptures, wallpaper. You find seating next to a pyramid of Spam cans — *Can Cosies Pyramid - Spam 340g Gold* (2011) — which will all filter and trigger your perception. You can physically walk around the sculpture, which is almost life size, anthropomorphic. There is a figurativeness in which you slowly reflect yourself, and in the best case, there is an immediate dialogue between the figures and yourself as another figure in a shared space. That is what I hope — that my works become props and that there is a sympathy, empathy or even antagonism that helps you become a part of this field.

HZJ: What is the relationship between thinking and emotion in art?

HAEGUE YANG, "The Art and Technique of Folding the Land," 2011, installation view at the Aspen Art Museum, US. Courtesy the artist and Chantal Crousel, Paris. With Lukerick, Berlin, Gionzo Naitoh, New York and Wake, Seoul, Paris. Jason Dewey

as well the mystical aspect of it, however not necessarily in religious practice. It is difficult to be engaged both in everyday life and reality and the contingency of it; my belief is that there is a mysteriousness and spirituality in the most banal things. So my interest might be to reveal or make a crack in that mundaneness and show a glimpse of the miraculous.

HZJ: One thing that happens in your work is the creation of a poetics of the mundane. So a lot of your materials are objects that you find in a supermarket or an electronics store, but you add something, like knitting for example. Taking things that are everyday objects and changing them in these little ways is maybe what lends insight.

HY: I call the process "domestication." Which is happening both to the materials and objects as well as to me. Primarily, I think I want to be domesticized in a unique way since I am often in the position of observer or visitor. When that happens, I am changed by thoughts and emotions, I feel like I'm domesticized in that place, by that person, or by the very moment of an event or encounter.

HZJ: For me it's a very hopeful notion that there can be something greater than that which we

think we're doing. If we can see in the things that we have to do every day — whether it's cleaning or any kind of repetitive activity — something more than it is, connect it to something that has value beyond the immediate, then I think that's a very hopeful idea.

HY: I am a strange optimist in the sense that most of the time I'm complaining. It almost sounds perverse, someone who invites pain and discomfort but at the same time is an optimist. I really do believe that there is nobility in the recognition and endurance of difficulty. With sufficient energy and capacity, we can interpret the difficult, painful and exhausting as noble and dignified. Also, we all know that people are not always or immediately understood, so some sort of tolerance is always needed — which is a socially engaged idea, whereas endurance is less socially concerned. I wish I could start with the former, yet eventually reach the latter, which is more absolute than relative.

HZJ: I think the question of how we are understood is really interesting, and particularly with your work, because when you look at it, there are elements that are very familiar. So there is a place for the viewer to ground him or herself with comfort or knowledge. They recognize a

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HY: Tough question. I think I can only talk about it indirectly by revealing how I deal with my emotions, and similarly, how I see my profession. The primary and fundamental emotion I have as an artist is a feeling of embarrassment. If I want to feel comfortable, I shouldn't do anything but lead a very simple life, just live in satisfaction. But that's not the life I'm currently leading, so I have to get over this embarrassment of expressing things, of insisting on something, and that's not so easy. I think we all lead our life in a certain way, and there comes this uncomfortable and uneasy emotion out of our eagerness that is difficult to embrace because we recognize that our aim and goal feel bigger than us. This overwhelming feeling is a sign that we feel responsible and whatever we do in society affects other people, so we want to do the job well, and therefore all these difficult emotions arise. Being vulnerable has been such an important emotion for me, because it has something to do with being in a community and aspiring to something better, enduring one's own uneasy emotions to attempt something hopeful. Politics, being innovative — all those things we want to achieve socially have something to do with these emotions, and there is a close relationship I believe.

HZJ: It sounds like you think — and I would agree with you — that there's great responsibility in the creation and presentation of art, and those responsibilities include not just the personal and psycho-emotional, but the political and social.

HY: Being creative is a privilege, and privilege

always comes with responsibility and a feeling of duty. I feel quite privileged in that sense. I guess that's probably how most artists feel, and maybe that's why society needs art and culture, although I can't understand why the cultural producer should exist and have all this opportunity. Even in quite difficult circumstances art has been really supported by society, as we know from history and other studies.

HZJ: You mentioned to me earlier that you make art in your home. When you're not making art, what else do you do?

HY: That's a difficult question because I think I'm quite a slave to my work, so I tend to instrumentalize or sacrifice something in my life in order to focus.

HZJ: That's kind of why I asked you the question, because I figured that was the answer. So when you're not actually physically making art, what you're doing is preparing to make art, either through reading or looking or your other experiences.

HY: I think my strategy for dealing with my so-called free time is very passive-aggressive. So if I go out, I only go out if someone asks me, meaning there is a role to play. If I take a rest, it's just because I'm really exhausted, so literally exhausted that I can feel it. I make my own very strange subjective distinction between work and labor. For me work is something so complex that the backside of work is not rest. Work even includes rest and maybe just being bored, while labor is driven by the practicalities of efficiency and

From left: HAEGUE YANG, *Drone Vehicle—Golden Chewing*, 2011. Mobile performative sculpture, aluminum, venetian blinds, powder-coated aluminum frame, casters, waxpots, 150 cm high, 215 g. Courtesy the artist and Chantal Crousel, Paris; Wien Lukatsch, Berlin; Greene Nafrai, New York and Kukje, Seoul. Photo: Stuart Whippo; *Three kinds in transition*, 2009. Silkscreen projection with 235 images. Courtesy Wien Lukatsch, Berlin. Photo: Ollie Kirchmaier.

productivity. At some point I got a lot of advice from my beloved friends, who said: "Haegue, you need to rest." But because I'm interested in work, not in labor, there is no need for rest, only a need for exhaustion. I think the work of creative people is out of sync with the conventional economy. Sometimes we're paid very well, sometimes horribly. We don't get paid per hour. We don't compare our salary with others. We just don't use the same metrics. Maybe therefore artists share the Taoist dream of folding the land. ■

Heidi Zuckerman Jacobsen is director and chief curator of the Aspen Art Museum.

Haegue Yang was born in 1971 in Seoul. She lives and works in Berlin and Seoul.

Selected solo shows: 2011: Aspen Art Museum (US); Modern Art Oxford (UK); Kunsthau Bregenz (AT); 2010: New Museum, New York; Arsonje Center, Seoul; Barbara Wien Wilma Lukatsch, Berlin; 2009: Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (US).

Selected group shows: 2011: "The Spiral and the Square. Exercises on Translatability," Bonniers Konsthall, Stockholm; "Escaping Things and Words," Haegue Yang, Rivase Neuenchwander, Kunsthalle Lingen, Lingen (DE); "The Sea Wall: Haegue Yang with an inclusion by Felix Gonzalez-Torres," Arnolfini, Bristol (UK); 2009: Venice Biennale.



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This eponymous exhibition by artists Rivane Neuenschwander and Haegue Yang showcased their shared elementary approaches to art-making. Upon entering the gallery, viewers encountered Neuenschwander's *Chove chuva* (Rain rains, 2001): silver buckets hanging at various heights from the ceiling slowly drip water into buckets on the gallery floor. The suspended silver vessels evoke the poetic ambience of Andy Warhol's *Silver Clouds* (1966) while the pavilion's surrounding gardens – visible through the windows in the exhibition space – enhanced this work's allusions to topical issues concerning the sustainability of natural resources. After a few hours, the buckets on the floor filled up with water and had to be emptied by a gallery attendant so the cyclical performance of the work could continue.

In Yang's *Series of Vulnerable Arrangements – Seven Basel Lights* (2007), seven intravenous drip-stands are anthropomorphised: dressed individually with multi-coloured light bulbs, cords and an assortment of beads, charm bracelets, nets and tinsel. A scent machine in the corner of the room made reference to the calming techniques used by department stores while lulling the viewer into the work's spectacle of slowly blinking coloured lights. In the centre space of the pavilion, Neuenschwander's *Anonymous Dialogues* (2010) was juxtaposed with Yang's collaboration with the German artist Peter Lütje, *Engagierte Schönheit* (Engaged Beauty, 2005). Neuenschwander's work is comprised of framed typewritten drawings of generic images such as trees, cars and insects, as well as banal text works such as *IN JESUS WE TRUST* and *FUTURE?*, which were created by visitors to her previous exhibitions, using only the numbers and punctuation symbols on a typewriter set up in the exhibition spaces. Yang's and Lütje's work similarly reflected on artistic authorship: small stacks of seemingly unrelated second-hand German books which were bound together, in homage to Neuenschwander's enigmatic treatment of found objects.

Wes Hill. "Rivane Neuenschwander & Haegue Yang," *frieze-magazin.de*, June, 2012.

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Building upon the dialogue that the two artists started at the exhibition *Escaping Things and Words* at the Kunstverein Lingen in 2011, this show revealed their performative approach to how things go, to paraphrase Peter Fischli and David Weiss's video *Der Lauf der Dinge* (*The Way Things Go*, 1987). In the upper level of the pavilion, Neuenschwander's *The Fall* (2009) offered a compelling example of how art works comprised of simple processes can yield sophisticated results. This looped 15-minute video depicts an egg in a spoon being carried through an out-of-focus forest. The sound of footsteps slowly moving through the forest blends with the sound of the egg tapping against the metal spoon – both sounds filling the space with an hypnotic rhythm and placing the viewer in the tentative position of the unseen protagonist carrying the egg. The work neatly condenses the underlying themes of the exhibition by foregrounding not only a fascination for the material presence of art objects but also an interest in the potential performativity of the viewer's engagement. Balancing formal meditations with theatricality, the exhibition evinced Neuenschwander's and Yang's shared concern for a stylistic harmony, transcending their ostensible cultural differences.

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THE WHITENESS OF MEANING

Eluding her role as a "meaning-giver" and instead handing over sovereignty to her materials, Korean artist HAEGUE YANG deems mobility, fluidity, and disappearance to be necessary conditions for her work to integrate the political in the sentiment.

words by
BART VAN DER HEIDE

This page:
Citadella, 2011
Installation view, Kunsthau Bregenz, 2011
Photo: Markus Tretter
© Kunsthau Bregenz, Haegue Yang

Next page:
Three Kinds in Transition, 2008
Quasi MB – In the middle of its story, 2006–07
Storage Piece, 2004
Installation view, Kunsthau Bregenz, 2011
Photo: Markus Tretter
© Kunsthau Bregenz, Haegue Yang

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It is not often these days that one encounters an artist who talks about sentimentality. As it happens, sentimentality does not fit an image of the artist as an all-knowing aesthetic strategist—an identity that still enjoys the general approval of today's critical evaluations. It is therefore remarkable that Berlin-based artist Haegue Yang (b. 1971, Seoul) has never shied away from bringing her sentiments to the fore. In a conversation published in 2006, the artist introduces her endeavor to "integrate the political in the sentiment, or in other words, [...] to express one's sentiments without losing political position."¹ Yang merges politics and sentiment by bringing her pathos and vulnerability to specific political, historical, and social contexts. She is not an artist who tells us how things work. Instead, she focuses on exposing what it is to be a creative individual in today's politicized arena of art-production.

The most straightforward example of this exposure can be seen in *Storage Piece* (2004). This installation features a collection of earlier works stored in shipping containers that are wrapped together on several transport pallets. This work incorporates two demands: the artist's private need for affordable storage space and the art market's non-stop demand for the display and distribution of artworks. In this way, *Storage Piece* maps out a socio-critical playing field marked by a highly personal and emotional urgency.

Storage Piece features the exchange between the private and the public as a direct alliance. But it may be relevant to emphasize Yang's position when the balance between the private and the public is disturbed. Between the two poles operates an artist for whom mobility, fluidity, and disappearance seem to be necessary conditions. Hence Yang subjects herself, as an artist, to a similar state of instability when it comes to the public "reading" of her work. The abstract arrangements of her artworks obscure the highly personal processes of association and identification that led to their execution. In this way Yang forsakes an essential part of her role as a meaning-giver and opens her work to the fluctuating judgements, impressions, and interpretations of the general art spectator.

The trilogy of video-essays produced between 2004 and 2006 can be seen as an early example of the artist exposing her work to a large network of possible meanings. The first

ARTIST'S BIO

HAEGUE YANG (b. 1971) lives and works in Seoul and Berlin. Her work has appeared in solo exhibitions at New Museum, New York; Korean Pavilion, 53 Venice Biennale; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Portikus, Frankfurt am Main; Kunsthalle, Hamburg; Cubitt, London; and BAK, Utrecht, among others. It has also been featured in group exhibitions including the 8-Gwangju Biennale, 53 Venice Biennale, Venice; Los Angeles, LACMA; 2 Turin Triennial; and MuHKA, Antwerp.

CURRENT & FORTHCOMING

HAEGUE YANG's exhibition "Arrivals" is on view at the Kunsthau, Bregenz, until April 3, 2011. Kunsthalle Lingen will present "Haegue Yang, Rivane Neuenschwander" from October 8 to December 18, 2011. Her work will also appear in solo exhibitions this summer at Modern Art Oxford, Oxford and the Aspen Art Museum.

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two parts of this trilogy, *Unfolding Places* (2004) and *Restrained Courage* (2004), fluidly shift between everyday scenes in public spaces in cities such as Seoul, Frankfurt, Amsterdam, and London. A parallel narrative unfolds in which the narrator recounts isolated incidents that reveal her disjointed relation to her environment. As Emily Pethick writes, "A sense of distance and alienation marks each of these encounters, where instances of people getting lost, or publicly abused are met with her own silence."²

The final part of the trilogy, *Squandering Negative Spaces* (2006), was shot in Brazil. In the film, the artist clearly occupies a position of "otherness" in the process of approaching a foreign culture. Yang's camera follows a succession of unremarkable in-between spaces, non-places, puddles, and stray objects, and finds the subjective within the cracks and incongruities in the urban framework.

A work Yang made in 2006 and 2007, titled *Quasi MB - In the Middle of its Story*, continues to explore the alienation of the private from the public. For this work, Yang took on the 1969 film, *La Pluie (projet pour un texte)*, by an artist who deeply influenced her practice, the Belgian conceptual artist Marcel Broodthaers (1924-1976). *La Pluie* is a two-minute, black-and-white 16mm film shot in the artist's back yard, which features the artist sitting on a garden chair and holding open an unraveled scroll of paper on top of a wooden crate. As he dips an old fashioned fountain pen into the inkwell and begins to write in long, cursive strokes, it starts to rain. The water washes away the ink before it has dried, forming black pools across the paper. As the rain gathers momentum and the film draws to an end, Broodthaers appears to sign the text before laying down his pen.

The work *Quasi MB* similarly displays Yang's attempts to write different texts on paper in the rain. In the end, the papers are battered, torn, and dried up, showing Rorschach-like ink splotches caused by the washed-out text. Yang made eighteen of these and framed them together with the original text she was aiming to write. In these texts, one can see the sentence "Sense of shame" repeated as if it were a forced endurance task.

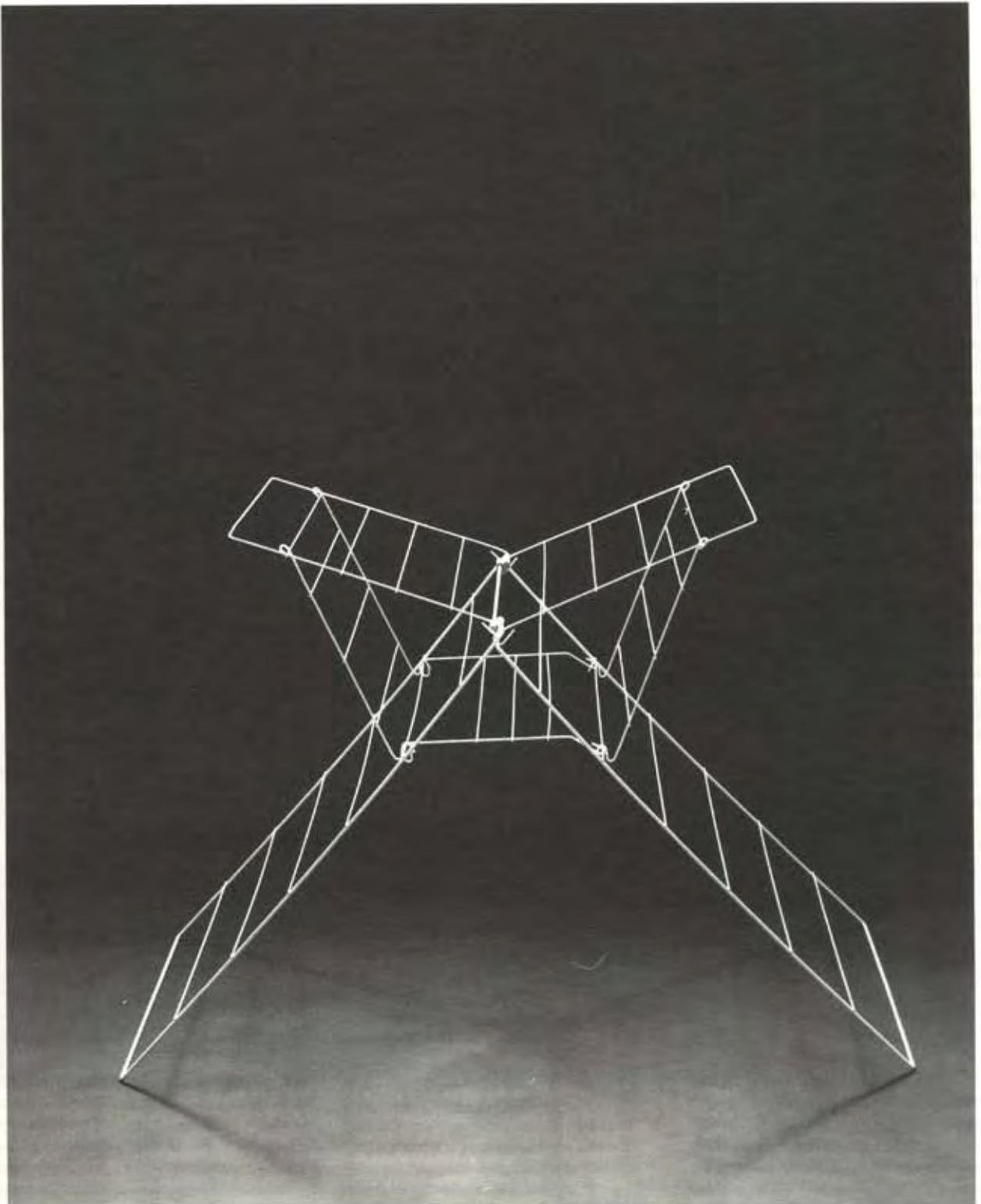
This historical quotation can be seen as emblematic of the erasure of the artist and the sovereignty of artistic material, comparable to the instability of artistic intention described above with regard to the public reading of Yang's work. The memory of artistic intention is replaced by an abstract representation of the media that are normally expected to transmit it. A similar approach comes to mind when looking at Yang's *Illiterate Leftovers* (2004). The work originates from 80 blank sheets of fax paper that were faxed to a receiver with the request to return the sheets by fax unmarked. The consequence of this procedure was that the technical residue of data (name of sender, fax number) that soiled the white pages became the language of its transfer. "Expression is a shameful thing," says Yang. "We live in a world in which one does not need to express." This "shamefulness" of expression leads the artist to prefer saying nothing at all: she has said, "What is lost is what we have."

The particular interest of *Quasi MB* lies in the fact that it demonstrates that there is not one method by which Haegue Yang negotiates her pathos of vulnerability—or in other words, her "sense of shame"—as an artist. In fact, there are several methods that she has explored throughout her career, and in *Quasi MB* two contradicting ones seem to meet. *Quasi MB* also exposes the artist persona in such a way that it instigates a confrontation with the public and even with her inspirations.

The works that Haegue Yang has produced over recent years have lost their previous sense of melancholy and modesty. They are expressive, bold, and awkward, and they are extremely ambitious. When describing *Quasi MB*, the artist explains that she "wanted to make the original performance better to a point that Brood-

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Gymnastics of the Foldables, 2006
Courtesy: Galerie Barbara Wien, Berlin

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thers is completely forgotten." In a group of "memorial"-installations, produced throughout the course of 2008, Yang went so far as to make her historical protagonists speak her words. Each installation stood for a political figure, a writer, or an activist in recent history who has a personal significance for the artist. At the Hamburger Kunstverein, she realized a portrait on the Korean underground fighter Kim San and American journalist Nym Wales; at Cubitt in London, a memorial to German activist Petra Kelly, and at Portikus in Frankfurt, a memorial to Marguerite Duras. All of the selected protagonists personify a narrative in which private and public is differentiated within the life of one person or personal relationship. However, this is where biographical accuracy ends. The individual portraits have been carried out as a systematic assemblage of the same domestic materials, theater lights, scent diffusers, and paper folding. Again the artist remains elusive in her role as a "meaning-giver," yet her methodical return to these specific materials lays bare an accession of private identification instead of its ambiguity.

For example, the portrait of Duras was inspired by the writer's Paris apartment at 5, Rue Saint-Benoit. This apartment set the stage for Duras' private journal—later published as *La Douleur* (1985)—in which she narrates the return of her husband (Robert L.) from Dachau after WWII. As Carol Murphy argues in *Alienation and Absence in the Novels of Marguerite Duras*, the journal's inscription of silence—joined by an insistence on having "nothing to say" as the ultimate manifestation of pain—leads to a "whiteness of meaning." Combined with rhetorical awkwardness, it constitutes a universe of troubling and contagious malaise. As in most of Duras' writings, the subject of *La Douleur* becomes a ghostly subject: operating on the fringes of death and life, presence and absence, the nonappearance of this subject in *La Douleur* is turned into a subject in itself.

When describing this "identification of absence" in the work of Yang, the choice of this specific reference seems significant. The ethical dilemmas concerning muteness, loss, and incomprehension described by Duras portray a collapse of meaning that the works of Yang seem to face as well. But Yang then continues by appropriating this narrative to expose her own domestic context: the Duras portrait was assembled out of micro-installations that took on the dimensions of the main domestic appliances in Yang's Berlin apartment, such as her washing machine and her shower.

In "Arrivals," her first comprehensive European exhibition held at Kunsthaus



Unpacking Storage Piece, 2007
Installation view, haubrokshaws, Berlin, 2007
Photo: Ludger Paffrath
Haubrok Collection, Berlin

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Bregenz, running until 3 April 2011, the embarrassment of expression defines the pathos of Yang's oeuvre. Here, all the different contexts that led to the artist's different positions between silence and speech are mapped out. This fascinating trajectory furthermore sets the stage for her latest production, an impressive work that takes over one entire floor of the museum, in which the artist directs her attention toward an aesthetic scene that seems to embrace embarrassment itself. This installation, titled *Warrior Believer Lover* (2010), features individual clothing racks that are grouped according to their decorative materials, ranging from wigs and kitchen utensils to artificial exotic flowers. The objects are outrageous, flagrant, clownish, even; with the addition of the soundtrack of Stravinsky's *Le Sacre du Printemps*, roaring through the space at specific times, they become an archaic manifestation of creative expression. This reference to Nijinsky's ballet, featuring a young maiden who sacrifices herself for the Sun-god by dancing until she collapses, leads the installation to familiar territories of muteness, yet to muteness brought about through exhaustion. Haegue Yang shows that the artist may be vulnerable when her artistic intention is not taken into account, but stepping out and braving communication can make her just as perilously exposed.

In her ever-changing oeuvre, Haegue Yang has found a way to explore the nature of vulnerability. Her surprising choices and the unexpected directions in which they've taken her enable Yang to continue feeling exposed, and to publicly disclose the sentimental consequences of being an artist. ◊

FOOTNOTES

1. In conversation with Binna Choi, in: 'Community of Absence', ex. cat. *Unevenly*, BAK, basis voor actuele kunst, 2006, Utrecht.
2. Emily Pethick, 'Unevenly, Haegue Yang - BAK, Utrecht', *Frieze Magazine* (November), 2006, London.

AUTHOR

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