

YIN Xiuzhen

15 December 2012 to 10 March 2013

The Kunsthalle Düsseldorf, in collaboration with the Groninger Museum, is presenting the first major solo exhibition in Europe devoted to the work of one of China's most important artists, YIN Xiuzhen (born 1963 in Beijing, lives and works there). The show consists of a comprehensive survey of her artistic oeuvre.

The exhibition begins with Yin's early installations that are often presented in uninhabited, untouched landscapes and now exist solely in the shape of photographic documentations. The show focuses however on the expansive installations as well as the recent monumental accessible textile installations that represent a watershed in Yin's oeuvre.

Yin's works from the 1990s, for example "Washing River" (1995), are strongly motivated by politics when she broaches the theme of the consequences of industry and technology on nature and the people: a performance is documented in photographs in which Chinese citizens "wash" dirty water that has been frozen into a rectangular block of ice with sponges until the ice melts. Other photographs, for instance "The Tree of Parting" (1994), reference a separate reduced aesthetic by means of the motif and its pictorial composition that makes it appear like an autonomous work, despite the fact that it was not conceived as such.

Yin has produced large-scale sculptural and installative works since the late 1990s from old clothing, shoes, furniture and simple construction material like cement and stone, often in public spaces. A distinctive turning point in Yin's work is evident after 2000: second-hand clothing has become a rich source of ideas and subsequent pieces that often revolve around state-of-the-art technology and urban growth. By selecting airplanes, automobiles and highways as the motifs for her large sculptures, the artist calls attention to the seemingly limitlessness of mobility and the fast-moving pace of today's globalised world. With their richness in detail and the revelation of the individual parts that are attached to each other, for example welded sheets of metal or sewn-together pieces of cloth, Yin's works simultaneously reference artistic handicrafts themselves that require skill, patience and above all time.

Expansive pieces such as "Collective Subconscious" (2007) and "Engine" (2008) exemplify this ambiguity in her installations: on the one hand it is the overstimulation and rapid rhythms of everyday big city life that affects the collective subconscious as well as the heart, the "motor" of the individual. But on the other hand these works in particular also invite the viewer to take time, to sit in the automobile and to listen to the music that accompanies the installation.

In doing so, the visitor becomes a central part of the installations to the extent that he is confronted with the artist's personal recollections as well as with collective memory landscapes situated between the familiar, the local and the global. The suitcase series "Portable Cities" (2000-2012), for example, derives from Yin's travels, during which she collected pieces of old clothing from the inhabitants of the respective city she was visiting with the intent of later patching them up into an urban landscape that takes the shape of a suitcase, oriented on the map of each town. In this way she broaches the theme of her own experiences in a globalised world where the idea of "home" has to be rethought. Focus is moreover placed on further questions concerning the construction of history and memory as well as on individual life in everyday big-city life.

Despite their poetic formal vocabulary, her pieces can also be read as critical commentaries scrutinising the desires and fears of the individual in a global world that is oriented on mobility and efficiency. Especially in Asia, cities are rapidly growing into enormous sizes. One speaks in the most populated country in the world of high-speed urbanisation, and Peking now has over 16 million inhabitants. Yin not least references China's significant role as a dominant textile producer for the world market and hence the associated working conditions in the textile industry when she reduces technological megalomania and its mass production to

absurdity by means of individual manual labour in enormous textile installations.

YIN Xiuzhen's works have already attracted much attention at the 2007 Venice Biennale and at the project space of the Museum of Modern Art, New York, in 2010.

A comprehensive and profusely illustrated English-language catalogue with a German supplement will be published on the occasion of the exhibition. It features essays by Huo Hanru, Gregor Jansen, Leng Lin, Mark Wilson and Sue-an van der Zijpp, among others, as well as an interview with the artist. Price in the museum shop: 40 Euros; in bookstores: 49.99 Euros. ISBN 978-988-15064-8-1.

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