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I N T E R N A T I O N A L

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STRASBOURG, FRANCE

Haegue Yang

AUBETTE 1928/MUSÉE D'ART MODERNE ET CONTEMPORAIN STRASBOURG

An unusually close observer of mundane objects, Haegue Yang throws into relief the warp and woof of their form and function, sometimes even weaving in a sort of cognitive Walden Pond by which to contemplate them. With new sculptural works at Aubette 1928—in the only three rooms preserved of the 1928 four-story nightlife complex conceived as an avant-garde *Gesamtkunstwerk* by Jean Arp, Sophie Taeuber-Arp, and Theo van Doesburg—and an overview of two-dimensional works from 1999 to 2013 at the Department of Prints and Drawings of the Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain Strasbourg (MAMCS), Yang's two-part exhibition "Family of Equivocations" showed how her long-standing use of collage, industrially produced elements, and handiwork has been wedded to an increasingly psychedelic aesthetic. At MAMCS, for instance, *Trustworthies #183* and *#184*, both 2012–13, respectively set forth twenty-three and eleven large geometric collages made from security envelopes. Turning up an unfathomable array of colors and graphics produced to safeguard bills, balances, and passwords, Yang employs graph paper as a support to line up the patterned papers in square and centripetal chromatic progressions that carry a resonant, hypnotic effect.

The exhibition was devoid of thematic titles, but in the catalogue, Yang places other works under the heading "Material World and Inner Eyes." Through imagery meticulously cut from home-improvement catalogues and glued onto Chromolux paper, with each piece containing a single category of object such as water faucets or light-bulbs, "Hardware Store Collages," 2012–, most magically demonstrate this odd union between everyday things and perception beyond ordinary sight: Keyholes become spaceships and circular saw blades, plum flowers.

At Aubette 1928, Van Doesburg's interior design for the reception room is a Neo-Plasticist composition with color blocks framed by a raised white grid. Yang's *Dress Vehicle—Yin Yang* and *Dress Vehicle—Zig Zag*, both 2012, consist of modular aluminum frames supporting

Haegue Yang, *Blind Curtain—Flesh Behind Tricolore*, 2013, aluminum venetian blinds and frame, 15 x 23 x 5'.



colorful screens made of venetian blinds, crochet work, and macramé, the latter two elements integrating small bells, whose jingle, jester-like, interrupts conversation. On caster wheels, the whole kaleidoscopically unfolds from an eight-point-star base and can be moved around the space if you go inside it. Once within, you are locked up, on display, and slowed by the works' bulkiness. But being inside them also gives you the feeling of peering out from a childhood fort, and offers wondrous perspectives onto Van Doesburg's ceiling and walls.

In the cinema-dance hall with Van Doesburg's bold Elementarist relief on the ceiling and walls, Yang pulled twelve tables into the middle of the room, squarely staggering them to display *Sonicwears*, 2013: ponchos, handcuffs, and anklets made of brass- and nickel-plated bells, to be donned by viewers. They have the allure of luxurious jewelry, yet their basic forms are essentially those of shackles. Their considerable weight lends a heightened consciousness of your movement through the space and the jangle that results.

Incarnation of Wind and Condensation, 2013, was in the foyer-bar designed by Taeuber-Arp, orthogonally composed from floor to ceiling in red, gray, and white. At the center of the room, Yang set up an unassuming counter containing a bar freezer of small bottles of mineral water. An oscillating fan stands atop the counter, flanked by two metal trays embedded in the counter's surface, each a resting place for a bottle from the freezer. With just the condensation accumulated on two small bottles of frozen water, Yang makes visible the humidity and temperature in the room, the evaporation and condensation creating a gentle air-conditioning. A transitional area between Van Doesburg's two rooms, Taeuber-Arp's low-ceilinged space had less immediate impact. But as Yang's cool air encouraged you to linger here on a hot summer day, you couldn't help but take in the strength of Taeuber-Arp's design and how effectively it visually and intellectually reframed Van Doesburg's horizontal and vertical motif, visible through the door at one end, and his diagonal motif at the other.

—Jian-Xing Too