

Serralves Museum of Contemporary Art presents commission by Korean artist Haegue Yang

7 July, 2016

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▲ Projeto Sonae Serralves 2016. Haegue Yang, An Opaque Wind Park in Six Folds. Photo: Filipe Braga.

For the 2016 edition of Sonae|Serralves Commission, the Serralves Museum of Contemporary Art presents An Opaque Wind Park in Six Folds by Korean artist, Haegue Yang (Seoul, 1971) in the midst of the stunning gardens of the Serralves Park.

The newly commissioned work, An Opaque Wind Park in Six Folds is composed of five partially arched towers, of varying dimensions constructed from brick and connected via a geometric layout of paving stones. Occupying an area of almost 70 square metres in the Yew's Glade, a central location within the Park between the Museum and the Serralves Villa, this ambitious sculptural complex invites the viewer to walk around and between the hybrid landscape of its multiplying structures.

Yang's sculptural approach conventionalizes the layout of Islamic symmetric geometry, notably the form of the hexagon, which is created by a subdivision of the circle into six equal divisions or folds and which forms the basis of decorative pattern. In conceiving her An Opaque Wind Park in Six Folds, Yang employed a unit size for these subdivisions of approximately 72 x 72 cm. Each of these square units serves as the footprint for the slabs and towers of varying heights that constitute the structural architecture of the work. The towers are constructed from clay fired bricks of three different colour tones. The primary colour is yellow, supported by either a pale light grey or a darker grey tone that results in an ornamental surface or facade. Turbine vents sit at the top of the towers. Embedded into and through Yang's built complex is a bird bath and diverse types of plants and vegetation, including succulents, ivies, and grasses that are intended to grow, creep, flower and die over the twelve months of the commissioned work's presence in the gardens of Serralves.

Yang's choice of brick as the primary material reflects her interest in different histories of industrial production and associations with stability and universality. Her use of geometry derives from her interest in standard sizes and scales which first appeared in her early Grid Bloc, paper collages made from writing stationery that she

began producing in 2000. Developing her interest in the functional and aesthetic possibilities of standardized units, the Grid Bloc, with its basis in mathematics, was subsequently used by Yang as the starting point for large-scale installations using standardised materials such as the Venetian blind, which would be multiplied into impressive suspended structures as if borne by the air itself.

An Opaque Wind Park in Six Folds eschews monolithic statement in favour of living structure that merges the constructive and aesthetic application of mathematics with the organic cycles and transformations of the natural world. Sensory elements, such as the movement of air and wind that are a feature of Yang's installations, are present in the aluminium turbine vents that sit atop An Opaque Wind Park in Six Folds . Inspired by the traditional wind towers used in buildings in the Arabian and Persian Gulf, Yang first used these standard construction structures for her installation An Opaque Wind at the 12th Sharjah Biennial in 2015. Integrated into the decorative programme of the towers, they become glittering kinetic elements that serve for the artist as a metaphor for migration and transitory encounters. Their significance within the complex of towers, brick, vegetation and wildlife further reinforces the work as an expression of communities and the interrelations required for co-existence within a globalized age.

The Sonae|Serralves Commission aims to promote culture and bring art closer to the community. The Commission, which is the only one of its kind in Portugal, introduces for the first time the work of the internationally acclaimed Haegue Yang to the Portuguese public. Working closely with Serralves and a local production team comprising an architect, engineers, builders and gardeners, the artist has also carried out a series of public lectures in art schools from the Universities of Porto (with the participation of students from Évora University), Lisbon and Coimbra. Students from the Fine Art departments are participating in the realization of the final work at Serralves.

Suzanne Cotter, Director of Serralves Museum of Contemporary Art has said: 'The poetic expression of contemporary cultural states present in the work of Haegue Yang combined with her ability to create works on an ambitious scale that speak to us across time and place, makes for a compelling choice for the Sonae|Serralves Commission. The commission constitutes an important milestone in the artist's practice, and its installation in the grounds of Serralves will expand the public's experience of what and how artists can not only intervene into the everyday experience of place but also express through their work more profound and less visible realities.'

The Sonae|Serralves Commission is curated by Suzanne Cotter, Director of the Serralves Museum of Contemporary Art, assisted by curator Marta Moreira de Almeida.