

GALERIE KRINZINGER · SEILERSTÄTTE 16 · 1010 WIEN

TEL +43 1 513 30 06 FAX +43 1 513 30 06 33

galeriekrinzinger@chello.at

SUDARSHAN SHETTY „the pieces earth took away“

curated by Katya García-Antón in cooperation with curated by_vienna 2012

Opening: 20. September 2012, 18 – 22 Uhr

Exhibition duration : 21. September - 20. Oktober 2012

The artist is present

The underlying artifice of putting on a show of art is at the root of the work that will be exhibited. The artist is performing a role; work is produced and displayed. The role of a mourner is being assumed in order to act out various rituals and ceremonies, either literally or at a poetic distance as an exploration into the efficacy and futility of objects as signifiers for an imagined death.

In assuming this role a way is opened to invoke (or perhaps simply borrow) the seriousness and sincerity of a formal gesture. Through the mere performance of religious death rituals and the aesthetic appropriation of memorial architecture and the material symbolism of both, the artist asks whether a subject as cumbersome and subjective as death can be legitimately introduced into a practice, or indeed whether a knowingly illegitimate introduction of the subject can be harnessed by the perceived role of the artist, the eccentric mediator between fact and fiction.

The theatricality of death and the subsequent rites are brought into focus. Objects have been removed from their ceremonial context, have been potentially emptied (partially, completely, not at all?) of symbolic meaning and are now re-used simply as props in a performance. Cenotaphs are being built from scratch with no one in mind and no distinct life to commemorate. Something echoing a film or stage set is being created; a site of theatrical mourning where the surfaces of things speak their symbolic truth (this is a memorial) but the structure is artificial.

What is being brought into question is the very act of presenting work in a space devoted to contemporary art: What is carried into the space by the artist, and what is ultimately taken away? The awareness of futility in the making of a show is present in the making of the work. What is essential, however, is the decision to assume the role of an artist for the necessary period of time in order for a show to be produced; what is essential is a willingness to move between the two positions.

The Unattached One will not awaken
if you have no devotion.

- Kabir

Only by engaging fully in the present tense of an act that is known to be futile (here, the making of art), with full attention and engagement, can a position be established whereby afterwards, when the work is completed, a distance can be drawn between the two sensibilities present in the artist, that of the engaged craftsman, believing fully in the act, and that of the conscious, discerning observer, seeing the act from afar, seeing its position in a vacuum. The two positions are not mutually exclusive. Only with full engagement will a fuller understanding of detachment become available. If everything is meaningless then the only option left to us is to ascribe meaning.

GALERIE KRINZINGER · SEILERSTÄTTE 16 · 1010 WIEN

TEL +43 1 513 30 06 FAX +43 1 513 30 06 33

galeriekrinzinger@chello.at

The show features five works. An attempt, as well as a description of the futility of an attempt, to revive something that is lost is present in each work, to make a presence in the room signifying or resurrecting symbolically something that has passed on. The futility is described through various materials, ritual symbolism and metaphors.

A series of three photographs of the action of an earthen pot being dropped shown alongside its recovered and restored physical remains displayed in a vitrine.

A four-pillared wooden cenotaph on top of which sits a pile of rice. The rice gradually, over the course of the exhibition, falls through a small opening in the roof of the monument, onto the base of the monument itself and onto the gallery floor.

A twenty-pillared wooden cenotaph in the centre of which a thin, constant stream of water falls from a hole in the ceiling into a hole in the base of the monument.

Thirteen reclaimed doors and pieces of wood, lined up against the wall, bear a single, unpunctuated sentence in acrylic letters. A slow motion film showing a juggler juggling with three earthen pots, his face turned away. The works all surround a fictional death. The doors describe a liminal boundary, a possible way to somewhere other. The text in the show offers a single moment in time, a subjective, contemplative account. Elemental materials appear in the life-giving properties and vitality of food: the rice and the water of the two cenotaphs. The earthen pot of the photographs and in the vitrine, serves as something of an over-arching symbol throughout show. Used in domestic situations such as in food preparation and water storage, as well as in the funeral rituals, the versatility of the pot, passing between states of practical, everyday use and sacred, ritual symbolism, is brought into focus by the film of the three pots being juggled; at once meaningless entertainment and sincere poetic gesture.

Joseph Fuller