

Interview with Jochen Volz

Sao Paulo Biennale, 2006

Jochen Volz: *You just completed a trilogy of videos, which examine in a contemplative way upon your environment, cities such as Seoul, London, Berlin and São Paulo, while voice-over narratives reflect along a series of occasions about the socialisation of the individual and alienation. How does a city effect your production?*

Haegue Yang: The trilogy of video essays includes “Unfolding Places” and “Restrained Courage”, both 2004, and “Squandering Negative Spaces”, completed in 2006. I was strongly motivated by a specific kind of narrative beyond today’s ordinary ‘issue-addressing-rhetoric’. Even if most of my work is led by a voice of silence, it is engaging the ‘act of speech’ with a potential addressee. It is a dialogue between ‘singularities’, whose location is rather vague whereas his or her identity of “homeless” is definite, remembering Bataille’s concept of the “community of absence”.

Even if the footage of my videos derives from various places, the work does not submit any travel experiences. The voice-over is contemplating about being lost, constantly losing oneself, negating distinctive territories, lacking courage, while various minor informal urban scenarios as well as staged elements are unfolding.

For “Squandering Negative Spaces” I decided to take a trip to Brazil. My subjective was to find a to me unknown place with blind but strong respect. The absence of knowledge prevents me from weariness, while my blind respect reinforce my keenness on environments and enable me to share things without insisting on commonness.

Jochen Volz: *“Storage Piece” is a critical and personal, exhibitionistic and potential sculpture, uniting a large amount of your earlier artistic production wrapped and stacked on palettes. With minimal precision you present a pile of conceptual thought. Although one could describe a certain cynicism, I would refuse to think “Storage Piece” as humorous?*

Haegue Yang: “Storage Piece” has been stem from my personal circumstance of being without a space to store my own works and so I used the gallery space as a makeshift of ‘urgency’. This piece is based on urgent reality and it is not a satire. I understand that a sense of humour creates smart and reliable distance to reality, and again one has to figure out this distance to reality first in order to be able to operate a sense of humour. But that distance is currently not detectable in my very personal and urgent relation to art. Instead I am more interested in the embarrassingly vulnerable state of mind and ‘weak thoughts’, through which I believe that out of the alienation one can mobilise the unusual strength to sympathise with the others.