

Jeanine Hofland
Contemporary Art

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Rumiko Hagiwara

In Praise of Shadows

17 December 2011 - 11 February 2012

Jeanine Hofland Contemporary Art proudly presents the first solo exhibition of Japanese artist Rumiko Hagiwara (1979, JP) in the gallery entitled 'In Praise of Shadows'. The title of the exhibition refers to the title of a book by the Japanese author Jun'ichiro Tanizaki (1886-1965) that discusses the traditional Japanese aesthetics opposed to the western, wherein he concludes that oriental art and literature represent a specific appreciation of shadow and subtlety.

The work of Rumiko Hagiwara focuses on the subtle and ordinary things from our daily life, like a small hole in the wall that solely extracts a 'H' tram stop sign from the public space outside of the gallery. Or a title plate that casts a shadow on the wall via the light of a little lamp. These minimal interventions do not add, but rather address and point out the memories that these spaces contain as a result of human action and behaviour. Memories that usually pass by unnoticed as our attention is distracted by elements that occupy our daily life. By making these subtle and tiny adjustments Hagiwara intends to return the viewers attention to these seemingly daily situations. An act which is in line with the theories of the philosopher Merleau-Ponty ('Phenomenology of perception') who attempts to describe the real meaning of facts of everyday life, by stating that we first have to forget about or ignore the familiar, before we can fully understand what this familiarity actually is.

The familiarity of lamppost in an urban green strip with four trees for example, which cast a crossed shadow on the ground, juxtaposed by a copper title plate stating as caption 'X'(2011), 105 x 68 cm, inkjet print.

The title plate, a reoccurring element within the exhibition, instructs the viewer's gaze via the title to focus on a single detail within the documented scene in the photographs or on a single detail within a site specific arrangement of ordinary objects. This importance of subtleties, and sometimes almost ephemeral details, is archetypical within traditional Japanese aesthetics, which is besides by Tanizaki also emphasized by Roland Barthes in his book 'Empire of Signs'. Though simultaneously the literal and sometimes banal descriptions of the medium: 'inkjet print'; '2 tennis balls'; '5m2 of shadow, lamp and title plate' and the use of site specific interventions - being either in situ or documented within film or photography- demonstrate an appropriation of western conceptual art of the sixties and seventies. In this sense Hagiwara's practice fuses the traditional assumptions of oriental aesthetics with the western preoccupations of conceptual art.

As part of this exhibition Rumiko Hagiwara will also present a site specific project during the forthcoming edition of Art Rotterdam (8 - 12 February 2012) that will point out the shadow of one single object within a fair booth.

Rumiko Hagiwara (1979) was born in Tomioka (Japan) and studied at the Tokyo Zokei University in Tokyo (2000-2004). She was an artist in residence at the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten in Amsterdam (2008-2009), at DCR in The Hague (2010) and at Meet Factory in Praha (2010). She has participated in group and solo exhibitions including: 'Almost Nothing', Duplex, Sarajevo (2010); 'Somewhere Else', Nogueras Blanchard, Barcelona (2011); 'Cinetactics', Meet factory, Praha (2010); 'Ola Vasiljeva and Rumiko Hagiwara', Heden Hier, The Hague (2010).

From 29 December until 21 January Hagiwara's work will be on view in the group exhibition 'Shadow Performers - Prologue-' at Galerie de Expeditie| Zsa-Zsa Eyck in Amsterdam, including works by 10 Japanese artists. The exhibition deals with the questions that arose after the recent earthquake in Japan and how the artists can relate to and reflect on their home country within their practice after this disaster.