KUNST HALLE KREMS

FIONA TAN. MIT DER ANDEREN HAND / WITH THE OTHER HAND 21.11.2020 – 14.02.2021 Kunsthalle Krems



Fiona Tan, Pickpockets – Marie Thiriot, 2020 [Filmstill]
Courtesy the artist, Frith Street Gallery, London, Peter Freeman Inc., New York, Wako Works of Art, Tokyo.

PRESS IMAGES: https://celum.noeku.at/pinaccess/pinaccess.do?pinCode=FionaTan

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Memory, time and history are essential elements in the artistic work of Fiona Tan that she visualises primarily in the media of photography, film and video. Tan is considered a leading protagonist of an art based on research, documentation and archival work, and informed by a scientific approach. Art is understood here as a field of production of reflection, analysis and concept. This involves researching, archiving, explaining and depicting. Tan's art can also be regarded as a critique of seeing, for instance when she uses archival footage to deconstruct the European gaze vis-à-vis other cultures.

The Museum der Moderne Salzburg and the Kunsthalle Krems present Fiona Tan's first mid-career retrospective covering her artistic work of the past twenty years in two near concurrent exhibitions. The title of the exhibition, *With the other hand*, refers to Franz Kafka's melancholic diary entry about the sensitive outsider who cannot bear life and, for this very reason, becomes a keen chronicler and memory artist of his time.

Writing and recording against forgetting is also a central theme in Tan's work. Remembering is a search process leading into the past and into the deep and presenting itself as an imaginary journey in time that is invariably rhapsodic, never systematic. In the case of Fiona Tan, remembering and travelling is often linked to literature, as texts written by others accompany the artist's filmic imagery as voiceovers. The relationships between Orient and Occident and the imagination of the foreign and faraway, as reflected in Marco Polo's travelogue or in Italo Calvino's experimental city portraits in Invisible Cities, are key themes taken up by Fiona Tan in her powerful works Disorient (2009) and Facing Forward (1999). The video installation Disorient, for example, first shown in the Dutch Pavilion at the 2009 Venice Biennale, juxtaposes the Venetian merchant's literary travel account about the wonders of the East with disenchanted imagery of massive destruction and loss. The footage used by the artist contradicts the fantastic narrative of the escapist mediaeval traveller by confronting us with the consequences of colonialism, globalization and environmental destruction. Projected opposite, Tan shows a kind of Wunderkammer of the Far East featuring jewellery, textiles, spices, lanterns and exotic animals. Desirable goods from Asian cities appear as inventory of a depot in which the distant exotic has shrunk into a museum-like microcosm showing the appropriation of the world by means of things. Promise, stereotype and confusion converge in this brilliant deconstruction of orientalism.

The thematic focus of the exhibition at the Kunsthalle Krems is on utopian and dystopian sites as well as archives and collections, presented primarily through video installations. Added to this is a work specifically reflecting on the venue's immediate proximity to Stein prison. The video installation Correction is shown in a circular arrangement in the Central Hall, confronting visitors with inmates and wardens of US prisons who have been video-recorded in monumental portrait format. A new work is Pickpockets: it is based on a photo album of more than 250 catalogued pickpockets (each offenders' personal information is written on the back) who were arrested at the 1889 Paris World's Fair. The artist has linked this archival photographic material with Franz Kafka's *The Trial*. Another series of portraits in the exhibition is Countenance, a black-and-white video installation from 2002: Tan filmed 200 individuals in Berlin, creating a sociological study closely linked to August Sander's epochal photographic encyclopaedia People of the 20th Century. Among the most recent works in the exhibition is Archive (2019), the digital animation of an archive in imaginary circular architecture based on Paul Otlet's vision of a utopian World City consisting of a system for cataloguing all human knowledge. This work is complemented by a series of photogravures titled Shadow Archive (2019). In the 2018 film Elsewhere the artist describes a utopian place in audio overlaid by footage showing the mega-city of Los Angeles. In the 2012 video Inventory, a filmic 'portrait' of a collection of ancient sculptures and architectural fragments, Tan

worked with different film formats from Super 8 to high-definition, resulting in variations of the materiality of the film imagery.

Florian Steininger, Artistic Director Kunsthalle Krems

FIONA TAN BIOGRAPHY

Fiona Tan

born 1966 in Pekan Baru, Indonesia, lives und works in Amsterdam, Netherlands

1988 – 1992 Gerrit Rietveld Academie

1996 – 1997 Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten

Recent solo exhibitions:

GAAF in Museum Ludwig in Cologne, Germany (2019)

Ascent in Museum De Pont in Tilburg, Netherlands (2017)

Geography of Time in Museum für Moderne Kunst in Frankfurt am Main, Germany (2016)

Geography of Time in Mudam in Luxembourg (2016)

Ascent in Izu Photo Museum in Nagaizumi, Japan (2016)

Depot in Baltic Centre for Contemporary Art in Gateshead,
England (2015)

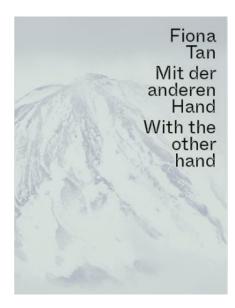
Geography of Time in Nasjonalmuseet in Oslo, Norway (2015)



Fiona Tan Portait, Foto: Marieke Wijntjes Courtesy the artist and Frith Street Gallery, London.

EXHIBITION CATALOG

available at the Kunsthalle Krems store



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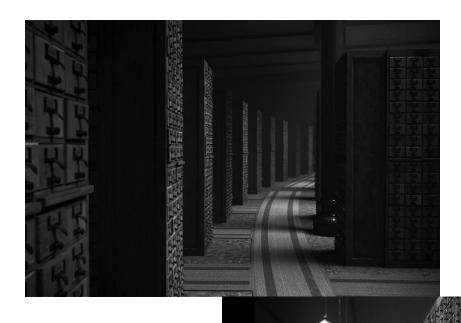
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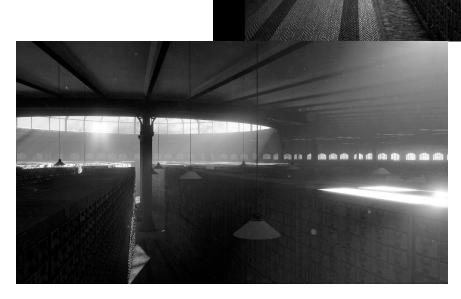
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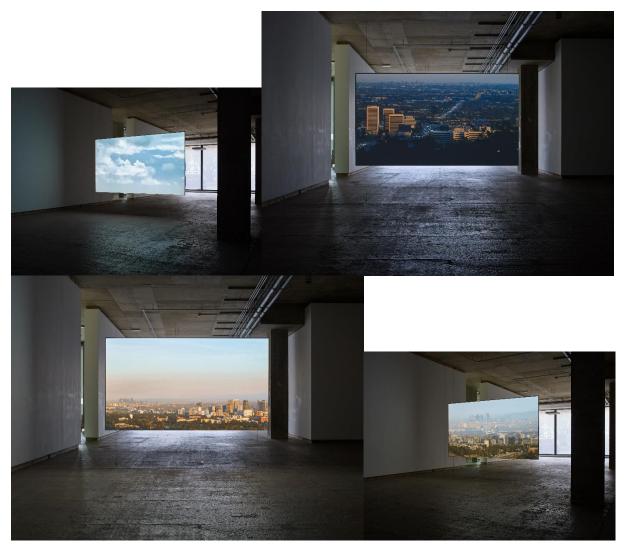
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WORKS OF THE EHIBITION (SELECTION)





Fiona Tan, Archive, 2019 (Filmstills) Courtesy the artist and Frith Street Gallery, London.



Fiona Tan, Elsewhere, 2018 Installation views at Frith Street Gallery, London. Courtesy of the artist and Frith Street Gallery, London. Photos: Steve White



Fiona Tan, Inventory, 2012 Installation views at Frith Street Gallery, London, 2015. Courtesy of the artist and Frith Street Gallery, London. Photos: Steve White

EXHIBITION DETAILS

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KUNSTHALLE KREMS

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OPENING HOURS

Tue-Sun 10 am - 5 pm (November-February) 10 am - 6 pm (March-October) Mo closed (except on public holidays)

Closed on 24.12., 31.12., 01.01.

ADMISSION

Adults € 10 reduced € 9 Family ticket € 18



