

Jovana Reisinger David Polzin

30.08.20–14.02.21

OSNABRÜCK

DIE | FRIEDENSSTADT

Rosalie Schweiker



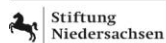
Niedersächsisches Ministerium  
für Wissenschaft und Kultur

Mickey Yang



30.08.20–14.02.21

Bis zum 14.02.2021



Aleksandra Domanović



Ausstellungs- und  
Vermittlungsprogramm/  
Exhibition and Art  
Mediation Programme  
2020/21

Bis zum 14.02.2021

# Spot TAUSCHUNG



Mickey Yang, installation view *Upaya*, Kunsthalle Osnabrück, 2021, Photo: Lucie Marzmann

Kunsthalle

Di / Tue–So / Sun 11:00–18:00

Disappointment  
[www.kunsthalle.osnabrueck.de](http://www.kunsthalle.osnabrueck.de)

Hasemauer 1  
49074 Osnabrück

Osnabrück

**Mickey Yang**  
**Upaya**  
until February 14, 2021

Mickey Yang creates installations, objects and videos. Her art is about people's individual perceptions. Meaning: How do people perceive different objects? Or nature? Why do different people see the world differently? Why is that? Is it because of the place they live in? Is it because of their culture? Is it because of the media? The word *Upaya* comes from buddhism. It describes the path of cognition. Meaning the way a person comes to Buddhism. What this person learns from it. What changes as a result. It is also about misunderstandings on this path. And about disappointments. They are the topic of this exhibition. Apart from that, it is about the question: How do people understand each other? How do they exchange ideas? It is about language. About hearing and feeling. And about secret codes. What do we perceive? Is that really true? All of that will be re-examined in Mickey Yang's art.

Mickey Yang (\*1988, Eindhoven, NL) lives and works in Eindhoven. She studied Fine Arts at the Royal Academy The Hague and at the ArtEZ University of Arts Arnhem. She was a scholar at Beeldenstorm/Daglicht from 2017 to 2018, at De Fabriek in 2019 and at the Jan van Eyck Academy 2020 to 2021. Mickey Yang showed her work in various solo and group exhibitions, among others at P/////AKT, Amsterdam (2019), at Art Rotterdam (2019), and in Kunstvereniging Diepenheim (2017). The Kunsthalle Osnabrück is hosting her first solo exhibition in Germany.

Please find attached a review of the exhibition by Ana Vukadin. Ana Vukadin is a freelance writer and editor based in Jesi, Italy. She writes on art, architecture and design for magazines including frieze, ArtReview and ArtAsiaPacific.

The exhibition by Mickey Yang is supported by the Niedersächsische Ministerium für Wissenschaft und Kultur, the Stiftung Niedersachsen, the Mondriaan Fund, Stroom Den Haag and the Freund:innen der Kunsthalle.

## **PRESS**

Taking in account the current restrictions, you as a journalist also have the opportunity to visit the exhibition physically or, alternatively, to speak digitally with the artist Mickey Yang or the directors of the Kunsthalle Osnabrück. Please feel free to contact our press contact for this purpose:

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Mickey Yang  
*Upaya*, 2021  
Kunsthalle Osnabrück

By Ana Vukadin

Perhaps one of the greatest lessons the pandemic has taught us is how to deal with disappointment. How we respond to a life which feels permanently on hold – all those cancelled dates, holidays, art shows, concerts, birthday parties, weddings – has come to define how well we are able to cope and, by default, our mental wellbeing. In droves, we turned to yoga, meditation and self-help as both a haven from doomscrolling and an attempt to grapple with the notion that life is beyond our control. As an innate worrier and pessimist, my own coping mechanism evolved into a refusal to make any plans at all so that I could avoid disappointment altogether. I began to look forward to things that would arrive with certainty – the first winter bulbs poking through the ground, spring blossoms, sparrows, strawberries. In an interview during the pandemic, the internationally renowned artist, activist and filmmaker Ai Weiwei describes what brings him joy during lockdown: “To watch a cat or see the sun rise every morning. You know, the bright light penetrating the shadows and the leaves – all those beautiful things around us that are too often neglected.” It’s hard to pinpoint an exact antonym for disappointment, but joy feels about right.

The multi-disciplinary artist Mickey Yang has a talent for coupling gravity with playfulness in her work, and for redirecting our gaze at things that would otherwise pass unnoticed. In an ironic twist of fate, a few months before the pandemic, Yang was invited by the Kunsthalle Osnabrück to have her first international solo show around the theme of ‘Disappointment’. Scheduled to open in the summer of 2020, it kept on being rescheduled until it was ultimately relegated to the digital realm, as things are wont to be during these pandemic times.

With *Upaya*, Yang has created a wonderful immersive installation that deftly tackles themes of language, craftsmanship, and cultural appropriation peppered with moments of humour and playfulness. Yang is the daughter of Singaporean-Chinese immigrants and this split cultural identity often informs her work. With *Upaya*, she has taken a deep dive into her Asian heritage, delving into the Western misappropriation of Asian philosophies and spiritual practices in the West’s relentless pursuit of self-optimisation and financial productivity.

Carefully choreographed kinetic sculptures are synchronised with a video projected onto a screen, whose images are reflected onto the dark water in a pond lying at its base. A soothing husky female voiceover narrates a spoken word historical overview of the West’s romanticisation with and appropriation of Eastern philosophies. At times, it is a medley of direct quotes from Eastern literature combined with contradictory texts from self-help books that misinterpret it. “The interpretations slightly twist our perspective on the east as being traditional and backward,” the voice says hypnotically. “The translation is unintentionally transformed into a magic formula. It has degenerated into an exotic type of self-help.” Against a dark backdrop, a hand rests on a plasma ball, its fluorescent tendrils dancing around like an electric storm. It looks like magic. The video scenes are invariably mesmerising. Yang is a master at making us look at things through a different, brighter lens, bestowing poetry and playfulness to them – whether they depict a lit mosquito coil, effervescent bubbles dancing in a thick, yellow substance or a naked pregnant female form covered in a gauze-like material ruffled by the wind.

Yang’s dexterity at craftsmanship is most evident in her kinetic sculptures. Various musical instruments including a singing bowl, a cymbal and a drum are placed around the space, and are automated so that they alternately provide a pause, a build-up or humour in the text. It is immensely fun to watch them as they are activated by nifty mechanical devices. Elsewhere, a series of illuminated marquees with scrolling neon text advertise adages or proverbs from the video, including “Hard work does not

necessarily amount to fortune” and “There is no eye, no ear, no nose, no tongue, no body and no spirit.”

One of the most impressive elements of the show are Yang’s forged metal sculptures: two mechanical, monumental ‘gatekeepers’ which are activated to glide forwards and backwards at specific intervals, and four metal galvanised panels in wooden frames. They feature Chinese frogwarriors, warriors on horses, the sun and the moon, amongst others. Yang collaborated with a blacksmith to forge and put together these figures, conferring a tangible, solid form to her original drawings of them. The sculptures point to the origin of Chinese characters, which were originally conceived as pictograms. By giving them a material form, Yang ingeniously succeeds in making language more visual and therefore universal.

Everything comes to a standstill as the final words on the video are spoken, the screen turns black and you hear the sound of crickets and owls in the dark of the night.

During the height of the pandemic, back in May, the New York Times posted a video by renowned psychotherapist Esther Perel, titled ‘We’re all grieving. This is how we get through it’. Perel recounts how her father, a Holocaust survivor, once told her “There is laughter in hell.” She goes on to say, “Humour...it gives you distance, it gives you perspective, it makes you feel like you are not at the mercy of something.” Yang’s work provides a welcome respite from all the despair, dullness, and disappointment and does just that – she gives us wonder and humour.

#### Exhibition documentation and Digital tours

Mickey Yang

*Upaya*

Due to the ongoing lockdown, the solo exhibition *Upaya* by Mickey Yang will unfortunately not open. For the duration of the annual theme *Disappointment* (until February 14, 2021) *Upaya* will now be made accessible digitally.

From Friday February 5, you will have the opportunity to download a detailed videographic and photographic documentation of the in the [Press Section](#) of the Kunsthalle Osnabrück website. A short version of the documentation will be published on the social media channels of the Kunsthalle Osnabrück.

Since January 31, the regular Sunday tours have been transferred to a new, digital offer. Those interested can join the group *TELE4* via the app *Telegram*. The *TELE4* format, conceptualised by the art mediation team, broadcasts photos, films and texts related to the exhibition. Every Sundays between 16:00 and 17:00, a tour through the exhibition of Mickey Yang is offered. It is free of charge and requires no prior registration. Access to the *TELE4*-group is via the following link: [t.me/tele4KH](https://t.me/tele4KH)

Last dates

Februar 14, 4–5 pm