

Entitled "Zugzwang", Capsule 11 presents a new work by the German/Vietnamese artist Sung Tieu (b. 1987 in Hai Duong, Vietnam). This multimedia installation investigates the psychological effects of administrative apparatus and the politics of its subsequent design aesthetics.

The interior spaces of immigration bureaus, registration offices and modern penal institutions constitute Tieu's point of departure. Dominating the exhibition space are several seating arrangements produced by a manufacturer of prison furniture in England, two large shelving units, an office table, as well as a series of framed documents displaying forms for asylum, residency and naturalization. Based on anthropological studies of administrative systems, these modified "stateless" documents emphasise the universality of their underlying logic. Much like the idea of "Zugzwang" within a game of chess the information an applicant provides can, through no fault of their own, prove to be detrimental to them; thereby revealing the contradictions, inconsistencies and randomness of the bureaucratic process.

National historiography and the transnational migration of populations lie at the heart of the sculptural installation. The abstracted image of a forest area denoting the border from the Czech Republic to Germany has been engraved into large mirrored steel elements, while various memorabilia and found objects are exhibited in two oversized shelves in the centre. The result is a clash between the personal and the formalised aesthetic so beloved by the bureaucratic apparatus.

Circulating through and around these various constellations is a multi-channel sound installation that interposes Richard Wagner's overture to "Tannhäuser" with ordinary sounds from both the public and private realm; resulting in a multi-layered soundscape in which disparate elements clash.

Curated by Damian Lentini

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