

Museion opens its 2014 programme with a solo exhibition by Ceal Floyer. The British artist, class of '68, who has made Berlin her home, has been exhibiting in museums, shows and galleries all over the world since the mid 1990s. Highlights include the Venice Biennale (2009), the Singapore Biennale in 2011, and dOCUMENTA (13) in 2012. In 2009 she was awarded the Nam June Paik Art Center Prize, while in 2007 she received the Preis der Nationalgalerie für junge Kunst, Berlin.

With their characteristic simplicity, wry irony and keen sense of the absurd, Ceal Floyer's works destabilise our perception of apparently familiar objects and situations. Her precise interventions on simple everyday items and situations subvert our initial expectations and highlight the unexpected interstices between sight, reality, language and perception. The artist, who took part in the exhibition "Light Lab" in Museion's previous venue in 2005, now tackles the vast area on the fourth floor of the new building with a solo show. On show are twelve works, including video, installation and photography, from public and private collections, and a new site-specific piece, "Blick".

The vast transparent architecture of the museum and the breathtaking landscapes that surround it are an imposing presence that might appear to invite artistic projects of great impact, as other artists have presented in the past. Not Ceal Floyer. Floyer tackles this grandiose space with the imperceptibly light touch and ironic approach that her work is known for, playing with the apparent clarity and directness of visual perception.

The artist responds to the impressive landscape on the other side of the glass with a subtle, imperceptible, almost secret intervention in the shape of the paradoxical new work "Blick", 2014, (view). For the work she has applied self-adhesive photo corners— the kind you might find in any photo album - to every corner of each pane of Museion's giant windows: a simple gesture that actually, ironically hijacks the very act of viewing itself.

"A narrative tug of war between the works of art and the space", is how Sergio Edelsztejn puts it in his essay in the exhibition catalogue. Floyer also challenges the natural light that floods the space on the fourth floor, in the installation Overhead Projection (2006) from the Museion collection: the illuminated image of the light bulb, which lies on the surface of the overhead projector, is thrown into its rightful overhead position in the exhibition space.

The projected image does not add any additional light to the setting, but effectively conveys the issue of the abundance of light in an exhibition venue, where powerful lighting can make it difficult to preserve some kinds of works and can even prevent us from seeing other works properly.

Floyer's works explore the interstices between sight, reality and language, and from this point of view the titles are key to understanding and appreciating her creations. The objects she picks out, like Duchamp's ready mades, take on a life of their own thanks to the titles she gives them. This is the case of the installation

"Scale" (2007) a place-specific piece that adapts to the setting where it is exhibited. This original "staircase" made of speakers emits a rhythmic sound scaling the 'steps', giving rise to a sort of 'audiovisual onomatopoeia', in which the shape of the work and the sounds produced invite us to imagine the repeated movement up and down a staircase. In parallel to that, this succession of sounds also suggests not only a 'musical' scale, but a sense of the 'epic'.

Floyer's works demand the visitor's attention and concentration, and sometimes a good dose of patience too. This is the case in "Drop" (2013), being exhibited for the first time in Museion. The video shows a series of drops of water against landscape at dusk, which appear to be about to fall – the fact that this event seems imminent invites visitors to pause before the work: the 'drop' alluded to in the title may or may not manifest itself as action.

Sometimes Floyer's works seem to be playing a game of hide and seek with visitors, presenting meanings and images, thwarted expectations and denied certainties, which open up new ways of perceiving everyday objects and situations. The visitor is invited to play a part in attributing meaning to the works and how they behave in the setting – as Floyer observes: "There's no need to create other works when it's more interesting to make new exhibitions with the existing ones".

The inattentive visitor might miss "Exit" 2006, a customary emergency exit sign applied by the door, or "Meeting Point", 2013. The latter, like those in busy public buildings like stations and airports, might seem out of place in a contemporary art gallery, where crowding is not a great risk. The exhibition explores that indefinable mental space between sight, reality and perception, as exemplified by the "diptych" "Half Full" and "Half Empty", 1999. The photographs, taken from two negatives of the same object, show the same glass in two separate works, which are displayed together but apart, creating a sort of ironic sense of déjà vu.

"In the transparent space of Museion, Ceal Floyer presents various pieces that add even more light to the setting, playing with one of her favourite elements as a metaphor for "shedding light" on how we perceive our everyday surroundings. The invitation to embrace an alternative approach to comprehension and perception is extended to all those visiting the exhibition, along with the opportunity to partake of the subtle aesthetic pleasures of the works of Ceal Floyer", comments

Letizia Ragaglia, director of Museion and curator of the exhibition.

Floyer (1968, lives and works in Berlin) has had solo exhibitions in museums all around the world, and has taken part in events including the Venice Biennale (2009) and dOCUMENTA (13) in 2012. In 2009 she was awarded the Nam June Paik Award, while in 2007 she won the Preis der Nationalgalerie für junge Kunst, Berlin.

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