HELGA MARIA KLOSTERFELDE

Rirkrit Tiravanija
"HOW TO COOK A WOLF"
September 18 to November 23, 2013
Helga Maria Klosterfelde Edition Berlin

Throughout his artistic work—especially in his famous cooking interventions—Rirkrit Tiravanija creates social situations that, in his words, attempt to "bridge the chasm between subject and object in Western thought." He often uses his work to deconstruct the dichotomy between production and consumption, at once playful and analytical in his reflection on the history and purpose of art.

Untitled (HOW TO COOK A WOLF), 2013

The cookbook "How to Cook a Wolf" (1942) by American writer M. F. K. Fisher (1908–1991) is the basis of this edition. Fisher's volume is a collection of recipes for simple and inexpensive meals, e.g., potato soup, omelette, or onion soup, published during the Second World War. Now, amid the ongoing financial crisis, Tiravanija presents twenty dishes from the cookbook that pose little burden for households affected by the crisis. For each recipe, a copy of Fisher's book (still available in stores) lies on a reflective, stainless steel stencil spelling out the inviting words, "How to Cook a Wolf." Also included are photographs of the artist cooking each dish. The books themselves often show signs of use, flecks and spatters left over from cooking. These ensembles lie in twenty drawers built to replicate the drawers of the 19th-century cabinet walls lining two sides of the Gallery Helga Maria Klosterfelde Edition, which was once a stationary shop. Thus, the edition also represents a spatial link between the past and the present.

Untitled (THE STATE OF THINGS), 2013 / Untitled (NO THING), 2013

Two traditional Thai kites lean on the wall; the larger represents the "male," the smaller the "female" kite. In Thailand, these kites are used in royal contests in which two opposing teams try to force each other's kite to the ground. In front of the two Thai kites lies a Persian rug, its woven pattern suggesting a landscape and houses, evoking the "kite's perspective" of the world below. On top of the carpet, the kite strings spell out "the state of things," a phrase that disappears as soon as the kites ascend into the air. This installation touches on a recurring motif in Tiravanija's work: namely, collective movement and travel. With its dualism of floating and groundedness, as well as the simultaneity of multiple cultures, "Untitled (THE STATE OF THINGS)" is a concrete metaphor for our postmodern lives—a state of existence, according to Nikolas Bourriaud, embodied in the "wanderer among cultures," who is no longer "rooted" in one particular place.

The installation "Untitled (NO THING)," 2013, is a variation on "Untitled (THE STATE OF THINGS), 2013; in place of the rug, stones are set in front of the two kites and spell out the words "NO THING." The stones make reference to the ground on which the kites will always land. At the same time, through the semantics of the phrase "No Thing," they paradoxically deny their own being as things. This paradox is typical of East Asian thought, which tends to focus "not on substance but rather on relationships" (Byung-Chul Han). The string is attached to the stones in one place, preventing the kites from flying away.