
Universalmuseum
Joanneum

Haegue Yang: VIP's Union – Phase II, Surrender

15.02.–02.04.2018

Space02

Quick Information

Accompanying programme

Wed, 14.02., 6 pm, Space04

Introduction and conversation with Nav Haq (Curator, M HKA Antwerp), Haegue Yang (Artist), Barbara Steiner (Director Kunsthau Graz) and Katrin Bucher Trantow (Chief Curator, Kunsthau Graz)

Wed, 14.02., 7 pm, Space04

Official opening of the exhibition

Wed, 14.02., 8 pm, Needle

Union Meeting for lenders

Sun, 04.03., 11 am, Space02

Exercises in the contemplation of art works: Haegue Yang
With Barbara Steiner (Registration: 0316/8017-9200;
in German language)

Further texts can be found in the publication on the exhibition,
available for purchase in our shop.

Curated by Barbara Steiner and Katrin Bucher Trantow

Quick Information: Antonia Veitschegger

Translation: Y'Plus

Layout: Karin Buol-Wischenau

In June 2017, Haegue Yang opened the first phase of her *VIP's Union* project at Kunsthaus Graz: For nine months furnishings from 100 select individuals replaced the impersonal, uniform seating in the building. Now it is time for phase two: The furnishings that offered a rest to the visitors beforehand, will now be shown in the exhibition hall Space02, entitled 'Surrender'.

The furnishings in *VIP's Union* are not only functional items, they also reveal something about people: Scattered around Space02, some recumbent, some upright, they reflect of how fragile human relations are.

VIP's Union

Haegue Yang's project is an unusual blend of so called VIPs. But who is a 'very important person'? In this particular case, VIPs are individuals who have special relevance to the Kunsthaus: such as supporters and cooperation partners from the arts and business, or also from politics and science. They were all asked to entrust the Kunsthaus with a chair or table for a few months. The items on loan became a very diverse collection: there were office chairs and items from the fin-de-siècle, IKEA mass merchandise and also DIY homemade objects. Little cards fixed to the furnishings provided information on the names of the lenders and revealed personal stories about the item.

What happened so far: Phase I

In phase one of the project Haegue Yang arranged the VIPs' personal furnishings according to their characteristics, such as colour, type, function and material, and created new, manifold seating communities. The public institution of the Kunsthaus allowed a personal glimpse into the office and living spaces of the lenders. Visitors used these unfamiliar chairs with more or less care, but mostly with great interest in the different tastes and designs that always give away something about the owners.

... and suddenly everything changes: Phase II

The newly arranged seating communities from phase one find themselves reversed in phase two: Now there is dissipation and insecurity. The furnishings of the Styrian VIPs are scattered in the exhibition hall in Space02. Newly created relations are broken, the communities were dissolved. Was the former cohesion only a pretty delusion? Can a community last despite the high diversity of its members?

Some of the furnishings are tilted or turned around: We cannot take seat on them anymore, they have lost their practical value. The tilted furnishings are a symbol for losing ground, for tripping and stumbling. Is this the point of surrender? Or merely control relinquished? Instead of neatly groomed surfaces we see the bottom side of things. We cast a glance behind a superficially idyllic homely world and realize that it might not endure.

Do you smell this?

Various different scents surround the furnishings. Some irritate us and evoke negative feelings, others might be considered pleasant. Our perception of scents is closely related to the memories and experiences we associate with them. Scents influence how we assess things that surround us. The peculiar smells in the exhibition hall change our view of the seating furniture. Do they appeal to us? Or put us off? Do we spot details that might otherwise have gone unnoticed?

All things are relative, nothing is absolute

That which appears beautiful to us at one moment, might show an ugly face at the next. What seems stable and robust might collapse. There is no perfect, idyllic world without a downside. Haegue Yang uncovers insecurities in her art and also generates them herself. This exhibition thus allows a glimpse into a kind of archive: Installation views show Yang's earlier works, which stand in a conceptual relationship to *VIP's Union*.