

Marleine Chedraoui - ['sə:vɪs] Present · Perfect · Continuous

IKOB – Museum of Contemporary Art
29.05.–01.07.2018

Text on the exhibition by Frank-Thorsten Moll

In her projects, the artist Marleine Chedraoui investigates the art system, frequently in a conceptual manner. She sheds light on processes, functional modes and laws that usually remain unquestioned beneath the protection of the customary – that which is deemed to be normal. For this purpose, she invents situations and events that quote, repeat and thus ultimately deconstruct the procedures practised internationally throughout the art world. In her exhibition ‘['sə:vɪs] Present · Perfect · Continuous’ at the IKOB, she makes use of what is probably the best-known event of the art scene: the exhibition opening. In two separate spaces of the IKOB, the artist stages the exhibition in one room and the opening speech in the adjoining room. Museum benches and a lectern define the former room; the latter is characterised by a pedestal and a ready-made in the form of a commercially available sink plunger. The attribution of the respective functions of the exhibited objects occurs through the quotation of current museum codes such as the lectern that is set up for the opening and used to give certain persons the opportunity to explain the exhibition. Does this mean that art, which requires mediation, can apparently not do without a mediation divorced from the work of art and expressed in the form of a speech? Most often it is museum directors who have the chance to speak. They are the ones who address the visitors, hold the key to the oeuvre on display and share it with their listeners in the form of a lecture.

In order to do more than simply hint at this aspect of shared communication, Chedraoui has invited several directors of other museums to come to the IKOB and actually give a speech at the aforementioned lectern – a speech entitled ‘The Opening’, which was collaged by the artist out of text fragments from Wikipedia after entering the search word ‘opening’. What becomes apparent is that the word can be used in another sense. In chess, the opening has an important strategic function that can already determine the entire course of the game. Sentences from the speech such as ‘the goal of the opening is to set up a network, to initiate a development and to establish a secure position’ are read quite differently when one thinks of art and not of chess.

Chedraouis’ manoeuvre of exhibiting the exhibition itself, of setting it upon the dissecting table and taking delight in analysing it, as it were, is extremely effective, because it is impossible to avoid the question as to why an exhibition opening always proceeds in the same way, follows the same patterns. The theme of the exhibition focuses on issues of power that arise in the relationship between art and words, between artists and directors: this is the great achievement of the artist, who views the art system as if she did not belong to it. This step into the rows of viewers, however, is not at all chill and judgemental in her case. Just as in chess, the opening of the artist is a strategy for liberating art from the stranglehold of contextualization. This means that in many senses,

Chedraoui is an emancipatory artist.

The exhibition will take place on six successive days. At the opening on 29.05 at 7:30 p.m., Dr. Andreas Beitin, director of the Ludwig Forum Aachen, will read the text collage "Die Eröffnung" (The Opening).

Further dates:

Friday, June 1st, at 5 p.m.: Carmen Genten, Curator at the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Liège

Saturday, June 2nd, at 3 p.m.: Lene ter Haar, Artistic Director at SCHUNCK*, Heerlen

Sunday, June 3rd, at 3 p.m.: Arie Hartog, Director Gerhard-Marcks-Haus, Bremen

Wednesday, June 13, at 5 p.m.: Frank-Thorsten Moll, Director, IKOB, Eupen

Tuesday, June 19, at 5 p.m.: Frank-Thorsten Moll, Director, IKOB, Eupen

Sunday, July 1st, at 3 p.m.: Frank-Thorsten Moll, Director, IKOB, Eupen

The readings will be made in German.