

OCCULT GEOMETRY

2014

Signal – Center for Contemporary Art, Malmö

Intricate and almost impossible ceramics, hand-knitted crystalline floor pieces, swirling and balancing wooden bows reminiscent of bones, electromagnetic waves and other invisible currents. The work of Jennifer Tee, comprised of sculpture, installation, performance, photography and collages, is the exploration of a continuous dialogue between material experimentation and philosophical contemplation.

In *Occult Geometry* elaborate titles like *Primordial Chaos~Selfhood Meltdown* and *The movement of the triangle / Talisman to vitalize the lungs* are paired with Tee's visual and sculptural language that captures and re-activates occurring themes within western art history imbued with eastern philosophy. For companionship throughout this particular exploration, Tee has turned towards the work and thinking of artists Hilma af Klint and Wassily Kandinsky, as well as the practice of Tao Magic – a secret language of diagrams, talismans and charms in Chinese art dating from the Tao-tsang, the early Ming dynasty. Rather than referencing these overtly rich and complex sources, Tee has chosen the bold endeavor of internalizing them. With this strategy, getting slightly too close to the source is a risk at stake. But on the other hand it opens up for the possibility of an intimate dialogue and a process of translation that invites us into an understanding that is personal, intuitive and subjective. A parallel contribution to the existing knowledge so far.

Jennifer Tee translates her points of inspiration - the visual and intellectual investigation of spiritual dimensions present in the practice of af Klint, Kandinsky and the Tao - and while these influences are clearly recognized in the composition and geometrical arrangement of her objects and imagery, Tee simultaneously transforms them into an organic study of the notion of sculpture. The importance of Tao Magic, for example, lies in the dual aspect of being both an artistic carrier of spiritual truths that embody the concepts of Tao philosophy, and a means of communication with the spirits geared towards everyday needs such as building, planting, and harvesting or curing sickness, blessing marriage, and guarding against calamities. Tee's objects and drawings take on this duality and hover between their concrete form and their loaded potential as carriers of an anticipated action, ritual, animation. This possible fluidity between different states of being transforms the reading of a knitted rug into a kaleidoscopic crystal and a space for meditation, the ceramic cones into intricate totems and magical vessels that hold charged matter, the balancing bamboos into elegant bones and electrical currents.

The transparency of a solid surface is paired with the possibility of concealing something mystical inside it. The transitional quality and the shifting function of a sculpture, that can become a stage for a choreography of future actions and movements, energizes the room.

These simultaneously formal and intellectual concerns amalgamate in the challenging attempt to visualize the fragile relationship between mind, body, and spirit.

The exhibition is curated and produced by Signal – Center for Contemporary Art. With support from the Mondriaan Fund, the Swedish Arts Council (Kulturrådet), the Culture Administration of Region Skåne (Kultur Skåne), and the Culture Department of Malmö (Malmö Kulturstöd).