

Sunah Choi

17.06. - 27.08.2011

Eröffnung am Freitag, dem 17.06.2011
19.00 - 21.30 Uhr

In her second solo exhibition at Galerie Cinzia Friedlaender, Sunah Choi embarks on a spatial exploration of everyday matter. She subverts her gaze to the urban street as a site of communication and operates in the narrow gap between art and life. The work "Wall Piece" shows a cluster of eight metal fences - the kind used to section-off small construction sites and hazardous passages around the city - set in an installation that redefines the gallery space.

Everyday experiences expose fences to be singularly obstructive: they're sturdy enough to cordon something off and make a given space inaccessible, but otherwise remain largely unobtrusive. The metal fencing isn't opaque and doesn't keep the guarded area out of view - instead, it keeps it visibly out of reach.

With their thin rails, these fences can often go unnoticed in urban settings, until their obstructive function becomes personal: you're kept out, but want to get in; you want to pass through but are sent on a detour. In this sense, the fences create an environment by their mere presence. They have a social effect, and as such, become a medium the same way that Marshall McLuhan asserted the light bulb was a medium: by affecting change on their environs. Belonging to McLuhan's category of "cold media," the fences provide little involvement but their stimulus is substantial. Through them, we become aware of our patterns of movement when impeded and habitudes of seeing when obfuscated.

Choi, however, is interested in the moment where the fences are manipulated and alienated from their original protective function. Instead, public interventions make use of the fences as walls by sticking posters on them. These are subsequently torn off, either to make room for more posters or by passers-by or construction workers, who often leave thin, multicolored strips of paper where the glue was applied. In his theory of communication, Niklas Luhmann asserted that communication is not an "action" performed by an "actor" but rather a selection performed by a system. The strips on the fences resemble the selection that the system - comprising the fences, street and people - performed. They are messages, archiving information and traces of activity and human interaction.

For the second work in the exhibition, entitled "Abdrücke", Choi collected street imprints using the method of frottage. The act of rubbing patterns found on the street onto a sheet of paper implies a performative public action that plays on the technique's surrealist roots. Here, Choi continues her ongoing exploration of form and function, often using repetition and variations, which is at the basis of her rich body of work. The forms found on the sidewalk - grids, lines, meshes and so on - often dictated the method of frottage: swift collages or rather composed compositions were created according to the given situation. The environment was also collected and archived on paper, spotted with fluids from the foliage, insects, and bends created by wind and dirt.

Text: Hili Perlson