

HAEGUE YANG — ROLL COSIES

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KMD — KUNSTHALLE MARCEL DUCHAMP

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At the 53rd Venice Biennale in 2009, Haegue Yang (born in Seoul in 1971) caused quite a stir with two simultaneous, yet separate presentations. As part of the international exhibition, “Fare Mondi” by Daniel Birnbaum, in the Arsenale, Yang showed seven sculptures constituting *Series of Vulnerable Arrangements - Domesticity of Community* - an installation comprising clothing and shoe racks draped with opulent cascades of electric cables combined with various objects and light bulbs. Presented at the same time, in the Korean Pavilion in the Giardini, were three new installations under the exhibition title *Condensation*, including *Voice and Wind*, a large-scale installation consisting of Venetian blinds surrounded by eight scent emitters and six fans, which subtly set the slats of the blinds in motion at different intervals, lending the interior of the pavilion an atmosphere of sensorial abstraction.

Under the title of *Roll Cosies* at the Kunsthalle Marcel Duchamp, Yang now presents five cash register rolls, covered with neatly crocheted cosies. Everyday objects, mostly industrially fabricated items, often become a starting point for Yang to contemplate our immediate environment. However, the viewer's subjective perception of it in a specific space plays an equally important role. Making a handmade cosy for such an ordinary consumer item is an unexpectedly affectionate gesture, like the tea cosies that grandmother used to make. At the same time, it is an obscure gesture: Are the *Roll Cosies* supposed to keep the figures warm that are yet to be burned on thermal paper? Would such figures refer simply to food supplies, or would they reflect her own artistic success? But the warmly clad rolls of paper are still unused, entirely virginal, in fact. *Roll Cosies* seems, instead, to deal with rather the pure, the unspoiled ‘skin’, which protects the immaculate and the innocent against the vagaries of modern everyday life - against marking, lettering, tattooing, against scratches and scrapes, against hard knocks and dents. The cosies keep the new new and the untouched untouched. Lovingly crocheted in wool, these *Roll Cosies* represent a protective enclosure of consumeristic products, which usually have a short and non-recyclable life, but which now maintain their unusual potentiality and become profoundly inefficient.

Moreover, in the context of Marcel Duchamp - whose spirit forever pervades our institution - *Roll Cosies* is a wonderful reference to his famous *À bruit secret* (With Hidden Noise) of 1916, a work comprising a ball of twine pressed between two iron plates screwed together and containing, in the hollow space of the ball of twine, an unknown object placed there by Duchamp's friend Walter Arensberg. If one takes hold of the work, one can hear the object but not see it! Haegue Yang's *Roll Cosies* seem to enclose a similar *bruit secret*, perhaps all the possible roles the work is supposed to perform. These are curious thoughts which arise, when we gaze through the peepholes at the *Roll Cosies* in our Kunsthalle, the tiniest museum in the world, as they tower against the impressive background of the Alps.

Haegue Yang was born in Seoul in 1971 and is based in Berlin and Seoul. Within the last five years she has had solo exhibitions at, among others, Kunsthau Bregenz (2011), New Museum, New York (2010), Artsonje Center, Seoul (2010), Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (2009), Sala Rekalde, Bilbao (2008), REDCAT, Los Angeles (2008), Portikus, Frankfurt am Main (2008) and BAK, Utrecht (2006). Among her most notable group exhibitions are: dOCUMENTA (13), Kassel (2012), Gwangju Biennale, Gwangju (2010), *Intro Motion Ditch*, Art Sheffield, S1 Artspace, Sheffield (2010), *Squatting: erinnern, vergessen, besetzen*, Temporäre Kunsthalle, Berlin (2010), *The New Décor*, Hayward Gallery, London (2010), Garage CCC, Moscow (2010), Venice Biennale (2009), *Your Bright Future: 12 Contemporary Artists from Korea*, LACMA, Los Angeles and Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (2009), 2nd Turin Triennial, Turin (2008), 55th Carnegie International, Pittsburgh (2008), *Wessen Geschichte*, Kunstverein, Hamburg (2008).