

Shannon Bool

The Fourth Wall Through The Third Eye

18/1–23/2/2013

In the gallery's first exhibition in Düsseldorf, Shannon Bool (*1972, CN) presents her new group of works, "The Fourth Wall Through The Third Eye", a continuation of the preceding presentation at the Sprengel Museum, "Made in Germany". In her sculptures, photograms and paintings on silk, she conceptually falls back on existing paradigms drawn from the history of culture and society and re-contextualizes their visual codes. The process-based change of the view of things, the transformation and shift of forms and values permeate this new group of works.

The current show is based on Shannon Bool's project initiative in the Berliner women's prison Pankow, the building of which was constructed at the end of the 19th century in the Wilhelmine Jugendstil. The architecture's ornamental outer appearance stands in contrast to the de-individualised interior spaces. The limited view of the world "outside", the reversal of this limitation to a freedom "inside" and the corresponding formation of the perception of reality "take place" in the new work as a choreography of opposites.

For the women's prison in Pankow, Shannon Bool conceived an expansive wall painting that she realised with the voluntary assistance of female inmates in almost two year's of work. With documentary precision and calm tracking shots, and without sound, the film titled "The Fourth Wall through the Third Eye" shows an at first sterile corridor. Its anonymity is contrasted by the colourful and ornamental elements of a wall painting. It cites, among others, patterns by Josef Hoffmann, a member of the "Wiener Werkstätte" founded around 1903, and the French designer Paul Poiret, who in 1912 founded "Atelier Martine". Accompanied by the flickering of the neon lights, the camera's eye slowly "scans" the architectural and painted reality, comparable to John Cassavetes' tracking shot of the house of Mable Longhetti in Woman under Influence (1974). In a similar way, the interior architecture becomes the frame determining the activities of everyday life. But slow cross-fades between different rooms make it hard to clearly grasp the filmed architecture, so

that its fictional structure is assembled only in the perception of the individual viewer. The journey between values of high culture and everyday banalities continues in the twenty-part series of painted photographs. Via eBay, Shannon Bool bought the most various photographs with views of deserted beaches and painted them over in the style of Man Ray's painting "A l'heure de l'Observatoire – les amoureux" (1933). In Man Ray's painting it was the lips of his lover Lee Miller, and with Shannon Bool they are not arbitrary lips either, but the pouts of "public desire" like those of Rihanna, Angelina Jolie, Cameron Diaz, Dita van Teese or Penélope Cruz. Longing and freedom "collaborate" in these images to simultaneously open up the fictive horizon of infinite opportunities to act.



Maenad, 2012
silkscreen and oil on silk,
170 x 112 cm

In the actual exhibition space, the new bronze bar sculptures become a physical turning point between being "in front of" or "behind", "outside" or "inside". The sculpture connects ceiling and floor, it is a dividing element and focuses one's view in the space. In its stringency, linearity and presence, it is reminiscent of the aesthetics of Minimal Art. The surface, however, shows the rough, gestural

print of Shannon Bool's own hands as a sort of indexical reference to the subjective constructing of and acting in space. The new paintings on silk create "collages" of motifs drawn from different ages and combine fragments of black-and-white screen prints with painting. Found patterns of fashion designs from the 1980s encounter elements of the avant-garde from Art Déco and Modernism as well as the Greek mythology of the maenads. The maenads counted as unpredictable huntresses living in the forest. But they could also be companions of Dionysus. Through several superimposed layers, the viewer takes an image-archaeological journey to values of high culture and everyday banalities. The silk works are mounted on special frames stabilised by Perspex panes. The silk's transparency turns the paintings into windows, appearing plane at first, but then including the surroundings and thus becoming intersections between inside and outside. The game of deception engendered by different perspectives on a reality is continued by the two photograms "The Mirror" and "The Analyst". The large-format photograms are produced by means of an elaborate collage of positive and negative transparent foils that are placed directly on the photo paper to create the actual picture through direct exposure. In the case of "The Analyst", this "drawing or painting with light" takes place as a collage of design, architecture and a human figure. The latter is the depiction of the famous mannequin of the French firm Siegel, which in the 1920s conquered the haute couture fashion world and is clad here in a textile design from the 1980s. Positioned elegantly and object-like in Shannon Bool's collage of an architectural interior, she awaits the projection of the viewer in the stance of a psychoanalyst. In "The Mirror", the viewer's gaze becomes entangled in the "picture-in-the-picture" collage of the ornamental surface of an art déco wall tapestry from the 1920s with the figurine of a Lanvin model. The points of view of the beholder and the beheld figure collaborate. It appears as if one merely sees the reflection of the figure and is faced with the question of who is looking at whom here, who is "inside" and who is "outside".



The Analyst, 2012
Photogram, 178 x 104 cm

Biographical notice:

Shannon Bool's (*1972 CN) works are included in institutional collections such as the Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus Munich, Museum für Moderne Kunst Frankfurt am Main, Bundeskunstsammlung, and the Berlinische Galerie. She recently has shown at Sprengel Museum Hannover („Made in Germany ZWEI“ 2012). In occasion of her institutional solo exhibitions at Bonner Kunstverein (2011), GAK – Gesellschaft für Aktuelle Kunst Bremen (2010/11) and CRAC d'Alsace Musée d'Art Moderne, Altkirch/ France her monographic catalogue has been published at DISTANZ Berlin in 2012.

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