

The internationally renowned British artist Ceal Floyer (b. 1968) captivates with her ingenious and subtly ironic Conceptual Art. With verbal dexterity and a sense of the absurd she turns meanings on their head and opens up new possibilities of seeing and thinking in things that are seemingly trivial. This exhibition shows current and earlier works which refer to both the spatial and cultural context of the Aargauer Kunsthaus.

Ceal Floyer's art is conceptual and sensual, and appears unassuming and reduced. But its simplicity is deceptive. The artist, who has lived for a long time in Berlin, creates works that have a simple and at the same time a complex effect. Her works are the result of a careful and precise artistic practice in which the artist breaks through our familiar patterns of perception.

Often, with the most minimal interventions and the use of simple and sometimes old techniques, Floyer succeeds in bringing new life to the apparently unambiguous content of objects and phenomena from our everyday life, and open up unexpected spaces for interpretation. *Light Switch* (1992/2015), for example does not – as one might at first assume – show a real, commercially available Swiss light switch. Instead, the work reveals itself on closer inspection to be the slide projection of such an object. The work consists of light while at the same time referring indirectly to a light source, allowing Floyer, with a wink, to introduce a big philosophical question: which came first, the chicken or the egg? This kind of subliminal humour, which can prompt an extensive range of associations, is typical of Ceal Floyer's work.

The precise use of language revealed in the title of the work plays an important part in Floyer's installation-based sound, light, video and paper works. The meanings of nouns and verbs often intersect, as in the video work *Drop* (2013), in which the imminent dropping of a drop is the central event of the film. Such a deliberate use of the linguistic system of signs and meaning is characteristic of the artist, for whom a word must mean everything it can possibly mean. In Floyer's oeuvre titles are never just a dry description of the work, but openly represent an artistic strategy and a key moment. This is true, for example, of *Scale* (2007), a large and central work in the exhibition. Here the title of the work becomes an identifiable object and an invitation to interpret the sound that it emanates. From speakers we can vaguely hear knocking sounds going up and down. It creates the impression of being the actual recording of someone going upstairs. The speakers sound as they look – like the steps of a flight of stairs.

Repeatedly Floyer achieves illusionistic effects, following a great art historical tradition. But contrary to that tradition she reveals the foundations of the deception a moment later, so that the illusion usually lasts only a short time. If we at first perceive *Domino Effect* (2015) as a Minimalist

sculpture, from close to we can see the closely aligned dominos of which the work consists. The magic that goes beyond the initial surprise and prompts reflection lies precisely in this interplay of expectation and disappointment.

*On Occasion* was produced in collaboration with the Kunstmuseum Bonn, but was reconceived for the Aargauer Kunsthau. In her work Ceal Floyer sticks to an uncompromising site-specificity which manifests itself in the fact that the works do not only react to the spatial conditions of the Aargauer Kunsthau, but also bear in mind the cultural context. Older works can be experienced in new ways according to the place of exhibition.

Ceal Floyer was born in Pakistan in 1968. From 1991 until 1994 she studied at Goldsmiths, University of London. She lives and works in Berlin. Her biography includes many solo exhibitions, most recently in the Kunstmuseum Bonn (2015), Museion, Bozen/Bolzano (2014), Kölnischer Kunstverein (2013) and Kunst-Werke, Berlin (2009). In 2007 she won the Preis der Nationalgalerie für junge Kunst in Berlin as well as the Nam June Paik Art Center Prize (2009), and was represented at the Venice Biennale (2009) in Singapore (2011) and dOCUMENTA 13 (2012).

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