

LUMEN TRAVO presents

TIONG ANG

Art Amsterdam (May 13th – 17th) :
Models for (the) People

LUMEN TRAVO gallery
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Lumen Travo gallery (April 25th – May 23rd) :
(The) Unforgotten

Internationally exhibited artist Tiong Ang reinforces his connections with Asia, Europe, Africa and America, with key exhibitions such as the Shanghai Biennale in 2008 or the recent travelling exhibition 'Between the Light and the Dark' with the artists Ni Haifeng and Wang Jianwei. In the light of his recent projects, Tiong Ang presents an installation called 'Models for (the) People' at Art Amsterdam (May 13th – 17th) in conjunction with a solo show titled '(The) Unforgotten' at Lumen Travo gallery.

'Models for (the) People'

'Models for (the) People' was originally realised for the Shanghai Biennale in 2008, where it was displayed under the Chinese slogan 'Buy African Goods!'. In the context of Art Amsterdam, the installation is presented as a kind of shop of African artefacts, which assembles horse paintings, traditional African objects related to colonial history and an extravagant video that Tiong Ang produced in Shanghai with the Senegalese improvised actor Atone Niane. The video 'Models for (the) People' draws various stereotypes of the foreigner/other. The black man evolves as an anachronistic figure in a Chinese urban landscape, in which different cultural and historical references melt, in such a way that it continuously presents new reproductions of the same patterns, images or references. As a de-contextualized element, the 'foreigner' seems to be a figure holding the mask of the 'original' - what is not reproduced and thus still unknown - and subject to every kind of interpretation or manipulation.

(A statement from the artist is available.)

(The) Unforgotten

On stereotypes, role models, heroines, derangement, beauty, boredom, loneliness, detachment, memory, nostalgia, enactment, distance, pride and prejudice.

For his solo show at Lumen Travo, Tiong Ang proposes a thought upon the life and death of collective memory, which is moved by different forces, such as categorization, reproduction, projection, distortion... The exhibition particularly underlines the influence of media on the making of knowledge, considering that media are given stereotyped / codified roles, such as painting as historical painting, photography as ethnological photography, video as documentary filmmaking. The exhibition thus proposes a juxtaposition of media - painting, photography and video - in which visual and intellectual knowledge are transferred and exchanged. This assemblage allows the artist to engage in a thought in which the fixed roles of media in the field of documentalization is confronted with mutual porosity and the random crossover effects of time.

Tiong Ang's dark paintings, for example, are immersed in mass media culture. They depict found images of iconic women (some of them from a forgotten era) from magazines or the internet, and look like pixelized objects thanks to a black veil that the artist superimposes on the painterly surfaces. The series of photographs 'Actor with Yellow Paper' which, at first sight, are seemingly ethnological documents, actually depict an experimental performance by the 'Black man' who tries to aesthetically integrate - getting the yellow skin - into the Chinese context in which he is portrayed (see 'Models for (the) People', 2008). Finally, the seemingly documentary videos of Tiong Ang, which capture selective moments of rural life in China, are actually non-factual for they always present a missing piece, like an unfinished story.

Through a reversal of values and roles, Tiong Ang wants to bring the viewer into a 'grey area', or as the artist states 'a contradictory space' in which the manipulation of knowledge, its versatility and dependence on interpretation are made obvious. Between simulacrum and forgetting, Tiong Ang offers a philosophical thought in which the metaphors of the mask and the ellipse play an important role. In that sense, knowledge is turned into a less serious matter, for 'that what you want to remember, is already ready to be forgotten'.

Emilie Oursel