

Saâdane Afif

In his work, Saâdane Afif takes up strategies from the fields of art and music, for example the method of appropriation, in order to subtly play on and develop terms such as interpretation and repetition. In his room installations he combines song texts and music, amongst other elements, with objects that have been prefabricated or already exist. Something of the everyday and a “melancholic beat” remain existent within the conceptual. Afif uses unspectacular objects and composes them in new sequences in order to create an abstract feeling. He has used light signs, guitars and books. He has often incorporated objects already at hand at the venue such as exhibition equipment. Rhythm, dialogue and association play important roles. In this way he explores the inherent imaginative and sculptural nature of spaces. On a secondary level, he thus reflects the functioning of the art system, exhibition formats and artistic authorship. The concept artist André Cadere is and remains for him an important figure of reference.

With *Black Chords plays Lyrics*, the installation he created at Documenta 12 (2007), Afif has installed quite a new version of *Power Chords* (2005). Thirteen black guitars and amps are arranged in a room. His passion for music is given an acoustic space. There are no musicians in sight. The chords ring clear, yet at times also impure. The guitars are orchestrated from afar by a computer and also altered conceptually. This is where André Cadere enters the scene. Mathematically he laid down certain colour sequences and inserted a mistake in the row. He transferred them to a staff made of round wooden segments – and Afif then transferred them to a score of abstract chords. Their tune is as dark as the guitars themselves.

And then 36 song texts gradually emerge. They intervene discretely in the relationship between the work, exhibition and audience. One might almost think that the chords are the sounds to all these *Lyrics* (2004-2007). Yet each individual text reflects a work. Afif has been asking writer friends to write *Lyrics* to one of his works since 2004. Musicians then set them to music in free improvisation. These are personal comments and moods. A poem may be an expression of how romantic and at the same time formalistic his work can be. The *Lyrics* are placed like a wall text to the work of which they bear the title. They are not, however, didactic, but lyrical and begin to take on a life of their own. Interpretation finds no end, it becomes an extension of the work, something new is created; other things are changed, get lost, remain unrealised. If musicians were to play their erstwhile interpretations of the *Lyrics* on display, the texts would take them back to their original experience.

Xavier Hufkens

Sint-Jorisstraat 6–8 rue Saint-Georges
Brussel 1050 Bruxelles
T 32 (0)2 639 67 30
F 32 (0)2 639 67 38
info@xavierhufkens.com
www.xavierhufkens.com