

# CABARET VOLTAIRE

## The Day Teaches The Day

### Does dies diem docet mean anything?

**Answer: yes. or no.**

#### *Sophie Jung's Performative Installation in Cabaret Voltaire*

16.03.2019 – 19.01.2020

Opening 15.03.2019 19:00 – 21:00

Curated by Vlada Maria Tcharyeva (CH) and Adrian Notz (CH)

We are delighted to present Sophie Jung in the Cabaret Voltaire – an exceptional performer who has returned to work with us, 10 years after our first collaboration. Jung skilfully interweaves the object into words and the verbal into objects. Thus, her great interest in the fleeting, multiple nature of objects, making them seem and shine without letting them become a static metaphor for particular meaning, places her perfectly in line with the Dadaists and their Readymades.

Just as Dada Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven took the readymade further than Marcel Duchamp (she most likely came up with its concept) said of herself "I am art!" – so Sophie continues along this trajectory. For her, it is too confining to simply isolate an object in a museum with its claim of high art. Rather, Jung arranges objects into constellations that no longer merely address a soliloquy to the visitor, but enter into a collaged dialogue among themselves, whose flexible manifestations we can witness.

The work that Jung creates with her objects is – contrary to Duchamp – not an assertion, but results from the aesthetic composition: a supposedly loose coincidence of evanescent foundness – "... like the chance coincidence of a sewing machine and an umbrella on a dissecting table!"

Like the Baroness of Freytag-Loringhoven, Jung is also a poet. She constructs her assemblages as seemingly autonomous subjects who speak for themselves, releasing their imagination and beginning to muse and indeed to "unmuse" on all levels of their being, be it the material, tones and colours, the onomatopoeia of the name, associations, densities, or lifespans. These fragments of reading do not remain outside of the objects, but, through the performances of Jung, become a unity in their, in her person. She is somewhat of a medium that gives them a continuously, prodigiously rearranged, polyvocal voice. As might be expected in the context of the Cabaret Voltaire, Sophie Jung concurs with Hugo Ball, who noted in the first months of his activities at Dada's birthplace: "Nowhere as much as in an public lecture does the weaknesses of a poetry arise. [...] The loud recitation has become the touchstone of the goodness of a poem, and I have learned (from the podium) to what extent today's literature has problematically been contrived at the desk, wrought for the collector's glasses, instead of for the ears of living people." (Hugo Ball: *The Flight from Time*, Munich, Leipzig 1927, pp. 81 f.)

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This "podium test" marks one of the first moments in the history of performance. For the avant-garde, the podium was again and again the yardstick of their manifestos and ideas. For post-World-War-II art in which the term performance was first adopted from speech act theory, the interaction with the audience was just as essential. Whether in video, written performances, or live, the act of speech is the moment in which the attendant unadulterated body presents itself to the audience, the touchstone of the podium.

In her work for the Cabaret Voltaire, Sophie Jung now takes two steps further, while asking her audience to do the same. On the walls of her largest object to date – the innards of the Cabaret – she withdraws as the body of the speech act and hands over composition and reading mode to the discretion of her audience. Jung thus carries on the idea of the sculptural monument and the Gesamtkunstwerk: She gives the public responsibility for the assemblage of word and place. In this way, Jung's intervention not only stimulates performance but turns the "installation", i.e. the Cabaret Voltaire itself into a never-concluding body: She creates a performative installation in the best sense of the term.

It is the body of the visitor, the one who walks, turns, goes up and down who forges a specific yet never conclusive text, in a communal *wreading* of the never-ending "social" Gesamtkunstwerk.

## Cabaret Voltaire

The Cabaret Voltaire – birthplace of Dada – is a monument. It commemorates the artistic revolution of the avant-garde and calls out to the ears of the future to continue in its spirit. It is this monumental past and presence that marks the house as a Gesamtkunstwerk, bringing together various disciplines into a unified body. Harald Szeemann's (1984) succinct proclamation: "The Gesamtkunstwerk is the fiction of the individual with a view of the whole, which they as a singular subject imagine." can be traced back to many Dada greats, most prominently to Kurt Schwitters' seminal *Merz Gesamtkunstwerk*.

We want to approach this idea through a performative installation by handing over the architecture of the Cabaret Voltaire to an individual artist. Initiated by Carlos Amorales' *Learn To Fuck Yourself*, we continue this year with Sophie Jung, who will address the Dada Monument through a fragmentary textual intervention, instigating a perpetual reading in a never-ending now.

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