

Anna Godzina

Horology

The exhibition *Horology* at Art Partout comes at a special moment in time. Anna Godzina (Chisinau, Moldova, 1990) is an artist who does not shy away from addressing both strongly personal and major societal themes in her work. In the exhibition, Godzina reflects on the present, looks back and points forward. As generously as her works address her own experiences, they bear witness to the times in which we live. As a starting point for her strongly existential and committed work, abstracted or sublimated autobiographical elements serve on the one hand; on the other, the countless observations she makes during daily walks of the convergence of urban situations or objects in time and space.

Godzina's work is animistic in nature, conceiving of matter as an active substance. The found objects and materials, mostly appropriated from urban and domestic settings, which Godzina uses in her work, become carriers and witnesses of layered stories, beyond their original contexts, purposes and functionalities. Created in Greece, where Godzina resides parts of the year, these works employ contemporary archaeology, and form a reflection of material cultures at the start of the twenty-first century. The vagabond, migratory objects Godzina is incorporating in her work bring with them inherent discourses about value systems, cultural diversity, class hierarchies, and socio-political divides - about abandonment and belonging, about transience and longevity. There is a potential for healing and consolation in the way Godzina is restoring and transforming these 'material witnesses' in her work with extreme dedication and painstaking care.

In the eventual works Godzina presents, the interactions and continuities between the different media she has been employing play an important role - the fluidity between objects, time, space, sound and movement. Similarly, rites of passage, pulse, rhythm, cycles in time, breathing and heartbeat have been defining features in the vitalist works she creates.

Each new exhibition by Anna Godzina represents a small event and a milestone. Godzina is a thoughtful artist with a sparse body of meticulously conceived and produced works that relate to the in situ qualities of the exhibition space. Her exhibition at Art Partout can be understood as a personal cosmology - as a positioning in time and space within the artist's life, as much as of the world in which we find ourselves. Each work forms a planet or cog within the meticulously constructed universe or timepiece that constitutes the exhibition. Numerous works embody notions of passing time and our inadequate attempts to objectify it: ranging from clocks and watches to pendulums, hourglasses, references to the geological concept of Deep Time, and even clocks pointing to distant pasts and futures.

One of the main works in the exhibition constitutes a monumental wall relief in wire metal - a diagram of existential coordinates that forms the backbone and compass for all the works in the exhibition. This drawing in space depicts a series of circles of different sizes, partially overlapping each other and imaginary interconnected by clocks. The turnover rate of the clocks does not follow the concept of time as we know it - they run forward at an accelerated rate. Anyone who goes on a search for what the psychoanalyst Alice Miller called "the true self," must find that past, present and future are intertwined in a continuous, tenuous and painful process. The largest circle, going back to a key experience of the artist's childhood, lends the exhibition a repetitive pulse. The hand of the

clock that forms part of the work makes a discontinuous movement and in doing so fills the exhibition space with a piercing sound.

Each work in the exhibition can be thought of as a monument or memorial, commemorating defining moments and memories. This is manifested in several works that have the character of an archive, in the form of boxes, drawers and small cabinets. They recall the objects the artist collected during her childhood from the central market in Chisinau, Moldova. She then archived them at home in small boxes, which she labeled with the date and time of the find. A work which includes a package of desiccated leaves of the Aloe Vera marks a key childhood experience in this regard.

One of the works in the exhibition revives a ritual from Godzina's childhood. "Time and clocks were my obsession from when I can remember. I used to buy very cheap watches, wear them on my wrist and 'stop the time' the moment something exciting happened. Then I was placing them in a box, to remember," the artist recalls. The most tender and moving works in the exhibition are the assemblages Godzina made in matchboxes and former butterfly boxes. Time, as fleeting as a butterfly's wing beats, is frozen and anatomically dissected in these works. Clock hands, second hands, and cogs from countless clocks and watches were lovingly and with angelic patience arranged in these assemblages, as if they were rare entomological specimens.

Other works in the exhibition embody blissful moments and hope for the future. On a beach near Athens, Godzina collected washed-up pieces of weathered bamboo, which she filled with fine pebbles and mechanized to transform them into rotating "hourglasses". Reminiscent of the Shishi odosi bamboo fountains in Japan, they emulate the murmur of the sea: a soothing, peaceful and healing sound.

Roel Arkesteijn