

During Antwerp Art Week-end: LLS Paleis aan 't water
Vlaamsekaai 47, 2000 Antwerp

Stephanie Rizaj - *Silent Polyglot*

A metal sculpture with four swivel wheels functions as a rack for rolled-up strips of industrially manufactured floor textile; the labels hang from the chains.

Since 2021, Stephanie Rizaj (1989, Eisenstadt, AT) has been collecting clothing labels: initially those with the materials and washing instructions, and later also the labels of the brands (which are often proper names). Upon repeated viewing, however, Rizaj realised that it was the reverse side that appealed to her most.

Contrary to the clear information on the front, the reverse side is more a multicoloured mixture of threads with unclear recollections from language and text. On this side the labels resemble almost a watercolour-like, nonfigurative painting. Her interest in words and text is translated into a more abstract form.

Today, the collection of labels numbers almost 200, roughly divided into three categories: the group with the 'care instructions', those with interesting names (the front) and, finally, the third group, where the artist finds the backside as an unclear memory the most interesting.

The labels on display here were scanned in their entirety, enlarged and printed on aluminium using UV technology. The textile strips rest on a manufactured copy of an industrial rack for building materials.

The Colour of Serendipity/A Critique of Everyday Life

The serendipitist finds valuable things without looking for them. This notion beautifully captures an important dimension of Stephanie Rizaj's work. Fragments of personal lives, elements from the everyday, found objects and fabrics, places... These are not just presented as readymades but carefully worked on, with a great sensitivity to colour and texture, combined with a sharp, critical eye. Engaging in this kind of exploration requires curiosity, an open mind, a willingness to embrace chance, and intuition. It takes time and patience, thus promoting a slower and more spontaneous practice — a breath of fresh air in this fast society where planning, decision-making and self-affirmation are the norm. This further results in a surprising variety of outputs. While Rizaj primarily focuses on installations, she has also created videos and performances, and has presented what we could call 'made objects' — objects that may appear ordinary but are distinct from found objects, given that the artist fabricates them. Through her works, Rizaj brings mystery to the commonalities of the everyday and interrogates them. They are stills of a multifaceted process combining coincidence and deliberation, like signs hinting at complex, problematic realities that usually remain hidden.

Excerpt from a text by Julie Van der Wielen

Full version on our website: www.llspaleis.be.

For more information on the artist: www.stephanierizaj.com.

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