

Interview: Neža Urbiha

A large part of the spatial installation is given to your original wallpaper that you've ripped into pieces. Why did you decide to use the original wallpaper?

The wallpaper follows a specific aesthetic that I want to bring to the front. I feel close to the concept of "the uncanny" as well as to seeing an artwork as something that is in a constant tension between homeliness, i.e. the artist's private life, and their practice. The latter inevitably enters the private life and it is difficult to keep them apart. The wallpaper was first exhibited in the studio and in this sense, too, it was a gesture of creating homeliness within one's working environment.

What does an intervention in the wallpaper represent to you?

Tearing the wallpaper is related to my understanding of this project as a kind of 'coming of age'. It is a response to the pressure I feel or impose on myself. The pressure to be at once a daughter, a friend, a partner, and a professional artist. I was living in three different places while I was creating this piece and I constantly felt like I was in transition. I understand the pasting and then immediate tearing of the wallpaper as a kind of trace of this instability. It is an implicit performance we are talking about.

You made 72 rag dolls for this installation. They are substitutes for you when you are away from your loved ones. What did the process of producing those dolls look like? I can imagine that it was a long, rigorous process.

Yes, the dolls serve as a way for me to document my absence from my loved ones. The process of making them was one of isolation. That was a period when I was for the first time ever alone for large chunks of time, and I filled that time with 'mass-producing' the dolls.

The doll motif is constantly present in your artwork...

Dolls strike me as a kind of figure that is just abstract enough to call it abstruse – as something both excessive and insufficient to be an actual substitute for whatever. I have always been fond of its 'uncanny' character. A doll is also fascinating because it connotes a toy that can soothe a child.

Part of the installation is also a box that deals with obsessive attachment to material things. The box is likewise something you made yourself. When we talked about this piece, you mentioned that you are fascinated by the phenomenon of accumulation. What drew you to it?

It's perhaps not accumulation itself that interests me but the fact that any material has its history and that creating something new adds refinement to the material. I got the materials for the dolls from my grandma, her friend, my aunt, her friend. We are speaking about a reused material that was lying forgotten in this or that basement. I love to know that the materials I use have their own story.

What are you currently most driven by in your art and will be seen in your future work?

I am currently very much into an approach in which I set myself a rigorous process of acquiring images, thus becoming merely a machine in my system. I am developing a series of

diptychs and generating imagery based on self-imposed rules. I am planning a few such projects.

The interview was conducted by Maja Todič.