

FlashArt

Anicka Yi

Lars Friederich / Berlin

The three largest works in Anicka Yi's exhibition "DENIAL" at Lars Friedrich in Berlin are sculptural accumulations of prefab hardware, vinyl tubing and translucent casts of glycerin soap. They are carefully arranged — one could say styled — and compositionally harmonious. In *It Only Takes 20 Minutes to Shift the Blame* (all works 2013), a polished chrome ball is placed a few inches from a brass ring suggestively encircling a plexiglass rod. Set on low pedestals and inset within a purpose-built display wall, the sculptural tableaux are backlit in a diffuse fluorescent glow. Rather than passively offering themselves up for scrutiny, the sculptures in Yi's exhibition possess a self-determining agency distinctly similar to the way we maintain our own figurative images through literal ones.

Yi's works dictate their own representation.

Paradoxically, the artist's previous bodies of work sought to pry the experience of art away from the strictly visual and place it into a (much more nauseating) sensory realm — an effort that has frequently led Yi to the materials of the kitchen, as a bodily stand-in and metaphor for temporality. At Lars Friedrich, Yi swings back across the aisle. The bulk of the exhibition, a sculptural collaboration with Mari Ouchi (one half of the jewelry design team Faux/Real), is indeed displayed in a manner much more familiar to jewelry than contemporary art.

This embrace of posturing is mused over in the exhibition's three-page press release, co-authored by Yi with artist and writer Jordan Lord. Is carefully kept affectlessness a positive form of denial, allowing us to control our likeness rather than risk exposure by it? The soul-searching missive pits disassociation against nostalgia, wondering if either are productive methods of understanding past experience or heartbreak. Of course, there is a limit to anyone's stoicism (or any-thing's for that matter), and there are reassuring moments of betrayed vulnerability scattered throughout the exhibition. The personality to be found in "DENIAL" is reticent, but Yi rewards those viewers who look long enough to find cracks in the facade.

by Patrick Armstrong



Anicka Yi
It Only Takes 20 Minutes To Shift The Blame, 2013
Courtesy of the Artist and Lars Friedrich, Berlin