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NEW YORK – ANICKA YI: “YOU CAN CALL ME F” AT THE KITCHEN
THROUGH APRIL 11TH, 2015

April 4th, 2015

Five vinyl tents populate the darkened upstairs gallery at The Kitchen. There are two constants in this room, a steady hum of rotating motor helmets and an indiscernible smell. Through these minimal elements, Anicka Yi brings us encapsulated ecologies, and a single lively billboard with the words “You Can Call me F” to the Kitchen, an exhibition layered with materials, time-scales, and most of all, infusions of body matter.



Anicka Yi, You Can Call Me F (Installation View), via Art Observed

Inside each rectangular space, a medley of objects, gels and liquids provide an ample environment for bacterial growth, presenting what can be playfully understood as a glacial deposit of human debris. Geometric shapes printed on the vinyl obscure their contents: steel pipes, glass containers, teas, beads, hanging parchment and refuse, challenging us to step closer to inspect her environments...

The tented atmosphere of these objects indicates these objects are not for general handling. Inside the helmets are scent diffusers, subtly odorizing the room with the artist's conceptual perfume, a recipe of scent extracts from the Gagosian Gallery, mixed with bacteria cultures culled from the saliva samples of 100 different women. In this aroma, Yi indexes the microbiological life forms from women she knows, and infuses these invisible signifiers with her own industrial and biological set-up: bacteria and the female coincide under the guise of a spatial quarantine. It is by deliberately marking and containing fermenting matter that Yi highlights a Western cultural preference to control bacteria and to perceive bacteria as generalized threats to the human body, paralleling this with its cultural restraint of the feminine.

As a counterpoint to Yi's clinical treatment, her work underlines humanity's precarious interactions through, microscopic imprints. One of bacteria's primary characteristics is contagion, and Yi's bacterial samples combine as a micro network of intimate bacteria within their collegial petri dish. What does it mean to introduce a group of people by their own extracts? When the saliva samples are anonymous except under microscopic comparisons, it is plausible that the artist indicates a mass of female cultures as a verso image of how female artists are drawn away from the visible art world. The developing formations in a 100 molecular seed pool can be observed through the changing spots on the billboard and the changes in scent.



Anicka Yi, *You Can Call Me F* (Installation View), via Art Observed

While the viewer can understand time as something that ticks forward, Anicka Yi prepares miniature ecologies of different, gradual time scales. Microbiological materials gradually change composition throughout the day. When attending, the viewer is placed among living cultures, and The Kitchen must maintain the objects inside the tents by refilling the teas and waters, among other art-keeping tasks, replenishing the materials for Anicka's micro-ecologies daily. Her "You Can Call me F" billboard is the sole autonomous bacterial platform – it will remain untouched, unmaintained from the opening date through to the exhibition's close.

The exhibition runs through April 11th.

— B. Cole