

ANICKA YI

47 CANAL STREET - NEW YORK



“What shapes does conformity make? Globular? Holographic?” Such are the many questions posed in the press release for Anicka Yi’s “Sous-Vide,” the artist’s first solo show in New York.

Sous-vide is French for “under-vacuum” and is the process of slowly cooking food sealed in an airtight plastic bag, submerged in temperature-specific water. First utilized in France in 1799, it once again has regained popularity among top chefs after being used in the preparation of meals for Hurricane Katrina evacuees in 2005. *Sous-vide* comes into play within the exhibition through various sculptural elements, including pearl necklaces and peanuts, which have been sealed in airtight plastic bags that delicately wait to be plunged into a prepared pot of water and cooked.

It is within the anticipation of consumption that the viewer may find himself stranded. Anicka Yi combines human presence by way of its organic components. In *Auras, Orgasms and Nervous Peaches* (2011), three round holes punctured on the outer wall of a cubed, tiled structure produce a constant stream of

yellow olive oil, dripping silently along the surface. Installed on the opposite side is *Sister* (2011), a bright red cotton turtleneck sweater and tempura-fried flowers. The remnants of a faint odor derived from the olive oil, flowers and essential oils used in *Oak-Raged* (2010) tap into our olfactory sense and allow for individual moments of conjured memory.

It is in these subtle yet psychological combinations of materials that we are able to compose a conceptual portrait of the artist, through the imaginary fingerprints of her presence. Another question posed by Yi: “What color is Wednesday?” After seeing “Sous-Vide” we still might not know. Perhaps the question was never meant to have a definitive answer.

Katy Diamond Hamer

ANICKA YI, *Sister*, 2011. Tempura-fried flowers, cotton turtleneck, dimensions variable. Courtesy 47 Canal, New York. Photo: Jürg Lohse.

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Anicka Yi: *Sous-Vide*
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Anicka Yi's first New York solo exhibition is, unsurprisingly, titled after a cooking process. Thus far in her career she's pictorialised tofu and offered witty readymade combinations of tripe and hair gel, among many other foodstuff derivatives. *Sous-vide* translates from the French as 'under vacuum' and describes how food in airtight plastic bags is cooked underwater, in low heat, often for days at a time. Such low-temperature cooking was first invented in the eighteenth-century, but it wasn't popularised until 1974, when French chef Georges Pralus discovered that it was perfect for keeping foie gras from shrinking when cooked. Prized for keeping meat fork-tender, it became both gourmand and utilitarian, suitable for *prix fixe* dinners and for hurricane shelters, as it rendered food spoil-proof for months with its tidy hydrovac seals.

Thus, there is a bit of the apocalypse in the way Yi analogises food with consumer goods, perversely altering both. Vacuum-sealing peanuts and pearls for *I'm Every Woman I Ever Met* (2011), she folds the flattened plastic over a Plexiglas disc protruding from the wall; or with *Table for One (At the Sad Café)* (2011), it's draped like a coat over a translucent Philippe Starck chair. Such humorous confluences underscore grossly misplaced priorities: good design for aesthetic survival; in an emergency, eat the peanuts, don't the pearls.

Or with *Sister* (2011), one could start with the tempura then move on to the turtleneck sweater, its neck a perch for a bouquet of pungent fried flowers. The piece imparts a delicious, gluttonous odour, as does the large, obtrusive room by the window, *Auras, Orgasms and Nervous Peaches* (2011). White drywall on the outside, tiled bathroom-cum-modernist grid on the empty inside, its exterior is pockmarked with holes obscenely dribbling cheap olive oil into shallow troughs.

While the olfactory delights of *Sous-Vide* can pique a crass hunger, Alison Knowles won't be serving any tasty salads. Rather, this is good food gone bad, subsumed by a nightmare 'everyday' dictated by cheap sweaters and even cheaper takeout - the end of the world at Olive Garden or, maybe, Alain Ducasse. If the avant-garde aimed to conjoin art and life, *Sous-Vide* is its dystopian endgame, as evinced by two older works in the office, *That Fork Feels Good Sliding in My Mouth* and *Oak-Raged* (both 2010), which recapitulate monochrome painting as fragrant soap blocks over stretcher bars. While I like soap that smells good, in this case I'll take my stretchers with canvas and paint, thank you.

DAVID EVERITT HOWE



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Goings On About Town: Art

Anicka Yi

The title of the artist's intriguing solo début, "Sous-Vide," refers to a method of slow-cooking food in vacuum-sealed bags—an apt metaphor for the balance of carnal and cool in her hermetic sculptures. Two surfboard fins jut with sharklike menace from the floor, near classified video footage from WikiLeaks, projected inside a plastic cylinder intended for use as an oil-drum liner. In this context, a red turtleneck sweater on the wall, sporting a bouquet of tempura-fried flowers instead of a head (the oil stains the garment), assumes elegiac proportions. In the show's most ambitious work, oil oozes from three apertures in the exterior wall of a white ceramic-lined room—equal parts bathhouse and torture chamber. Through Oct. 23.