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# Philipp von Rosen Galerie

**Cody Choi**

*Instant Satisfaction*

Exhibition from June 24 through September 2, 2017

Opening on June 23, 2017 at 7 pm, the artist will be present.

We are proud to announce *Instant Satisfaction*, our first exhibition with Cody Choi (\*1961, lives and works in Seoul, Korea).

It is, however, not Cody Choi's first exhibition in Germany and not even in the Rhineland. He has been shown in 2015 in the Kunsthalle Dusseldorf with the large solo-exhibition *Culture Cuts* that provided an overview on his oeuvre since the mid-1990s. In that show one could get an understanding of the cultural differences between East and West that were and are concerning Cody Choi in his life. After Dusseldorf, the exhibition travelled to Marseille's Musée d'Art Contemporain (2016), to Malaga's University Museum (2017), and to the Kunstsammlungen Chemnitz (through June 2017).

Since mid-May (through November 2017) Cody Choi is representing Korea (together with Lee Wan) at the 57th Venice Biennial (the pavilion has been curated by Daehyung Lee). Choi's contribution to the pavilion can be understood as a critical analysis of the bling-bling of the art-scene and -market that is described by Choi as a form of casino-capitalism.

For the exhibition in the gallery Choi is reducing the multiplicity of his oeuvre to two groups of paintings: works from the series *Episteme Sabotage* and *Color Painting (CHEESEKHWA): Frustration is Beautiful* on the upper level of the gallery as well as to *Color Haze*, a sound and light installation and Korean neon signs on the lower level.

The title of the show, that is to be understood ironically, is already pretty telling. Supposedly, we get an instant satisfaction through the show and its exhibits:

We see – for instance in the series *Episteme Sabotage* – classic pieces of European paintings and are enjoying them. However only for so long as we have not yet recognized that they have been thwarted by scruffy stripes of cloth and that they have been thus drawn onto a more critical level. We cannot truly enjoy Henry Matisse' *La Danse*, because we know that it must be a copy. Also, we read on the cloth the phrase "SALE FOR WHITE ONLY" and must ask ourselves why other ethnic groups shall not have the right to acquire the piece.

The series *Color Paintings (CHEESEKHWA)* zeros in on a construction created for Lee Ufan – according to Choi –, that Korean painting mainly is monochrome. This myth shall be revealed as a marketing strategy and thus he creates multicolored (=CHEESEKHWA – contrasting TANSEKHWA = monochrome) paintings. He is thus not referring to the conceptual game with perception (we read the text "RED" in white color, painted on a

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greyish ground and in front of other words that are either showing a comparable discrepancy between the association the word produced and the letters painted or cannot be read at all). Choi is rather intending to trick us and to create obstacles. Here it is furthermore important to him to work painterly and not necessarily as a conceptual artist (in contrast to how he has been usually read).

Whereas, without doubt, the works deploying neon signs are indeed conceptual. For these Choi has worked with epigrams and wisdoms from traditional Taoist Chinese philosophy. He translated what he had condensed from elongated texts to English. And he transferred the resulting English texts in Korean signs that allow Korean people to read them out loud and create a sequence of sounds that can be understood as an English text – the translated epigram. Korean people in Seoul experience this mechanism regularly when their signs are misused to describe Anglo-Saxon brands. That is: Choi organizes a multiple transfer that asks from the viewer meandering ways of understanding. In order to do so, knowledge of Chinese philosophy and the Korean signs is necessary. Without this knowledge there is a certain type of instant satisfaction by experiencing the shining light. But Choi creates also a kind of frustration due to the fact that we experience our missing knowledge that makes the signs – for the most of us – unreadable, -understandable. No *Instant Satisfaction* at all!

Contrary to that *Color Haze* can be seen as an attempt to cater for instant satisfaction by playing canned music: colorful lights and the pop music of the 1980s create an emotional experience that can certainly not be considered "conceptual". For this effect Cody Choi, who has been understood mainly as an intellectual thinker, uses mechanisms of films like *La Boum* and its legendary song *Dreams Are My Reality* or Anita Ward's song *Ring My Bell*. Korean boys were fascinated by the paradisaical Sophie Marceau in *La Boum* and by the Uber-sexualization and the rhythm of *Ring My Bell*. In the art space we are caught tapping our feet – a movement that is normally not allowed in this context.

Cody Choi studied art at the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California. Since the early 1990s he has been working mainly in New York and became a globally connected artist through the exhibition *The Thinker* at Deitch Projects in New York in 1996.

For more information and / or images please contact the gallery.