

Hans Theys

A Lively Presence

A conversation with Anna Godzina to tie in with two solo shows

Artist Anna Godzina (b. 1990) currently has two solo shows in Antwerp, at Pizza Gallery and at Inbox M HKA. Each show consists of a modest sculptural installation whose presence inhabits the whole space with its structure, texture, colour, movement and sound.

Three years ago, I introduced the artist as follows: "Anna Godzina creates minimalistic, kinetic sculptures and installations that sprinkle tiny sounds through space. They consist of found objects such as electric engines, parts of musical instruments, tubes and pipes, tiny pebbles, wood, metal, bolts, string, cogwheels, belts, glass bulbs, water, sawblades, etcetera. Slowly they move, almost imperceptibly adding flowery elements to the space, reshaping, energizing or unfolding it." Today, I invited the artist to speak.

Conversatio

- Could you tell us something about the works in these exhibitions without my asking a direct question?

Anna Godzina: The two works have one thing in common. They build up tension, which is then released. At Pizza Gallery a compressor first compresses air and then blows it violently through short, thin red tubes that move like serpents. At Inbox a slowly turning, soft electric motor winds up a bunch of red tubes until their combined tension sets off a second wheel at the other end of the space, so that it starts unwinding them. The works are about two different kinds of release. At Pizza Gallery the result is an almost hysterical movement or action, at Inbox we witness an agreeable relaxation.

- Like breathing out?

Godzina: Perhaps. Because what is really important to me is that when I leave the room I am still there. I want the work to have its own presence. It has to feel like someone inhabits the space.

- I know you don't like people to describe your work as 'kinetic'. Why does this bother you?

Godzina: What does the word mean? Why is it used to describe a work of art?

- *Do you think the term is reductive?*

Godzina: I do.

- *Because it's too general?*

Godzina: Also because it seems to imply that I set out to make things that move. But that is not the case. Very often my work starts from found objects: engines, wheels, iron pipes, plastic tubes, lamps, musical instruments, snares and so on. When I start living with these objects, I try to manipulate, incorporate or combine them in ways that are not announced by their form, sound or original function. I don't want to use a flute as a flute. In fact, I try to find something new, something that is completely unpredictable. If this unpredictable thing moves nicely or makes a great sound, fine. But I was not looking for any particular movement or sound. Actually, it's the opposite. To arrive at something new, I have to find ways of not controlling things. The new object, movement or sound is given to me as a result of my cohabitating with the objects I have gathered around me. There is no specific intention at the start of the adventure. Very often there isn't even an exact starting point because the objects arrive at different moments and assume different roles in ever-changing constellations. Walking through a city, you see tubes and pipes everywhere. When I add some kind of motion to them, they become like an organ, like something that's alive. So the movement is just a part of it, it's not the sole intention of my activity.

What I also like in both shows is that the tubes are curved. When artworks move, they often make a circular or a straight movement. I prefer my curved lines. And I prefer movements that are not completely repetitive. I also believe there's a sexual aspect to my work, but I wouldn't know what to say about that. I just wanted to mention it. Do you know what would make me happy?

- *No.*

Godzina: For my parents to see these shows. It's all for them, really. I think we all have the need to be appreciated by somebody who belongs to our tribe.

- *We all dream of having the approval of our parents. Or of making them happy and proud. Especially when they seemed to be or really were out of reach when we were children. I think a lot of artists try to **augment their existence** by creating artefacts in the hope that their parents will finally notice them. But I understand you also miss your country. And that you would like your country to be more welcoming to contemporary artists. Could you tell me something about a special place in your country, a spot you would like us to pay attention to when we pass by?*

Godzina: On Belinski Street in Chişinău where I lived as an adolescent, there is a big crossroads on the hill. It has many traffic lights. At night, when there's no traffic, the

lights still change from green to amber and red, making tiny clicking sounds. Nothing moves, apart from the changing colours, but you feel as if something is about to happen.

Montagne de Miel, 9 April 2021