



The magazines were sold as material for artists to study the human body or as “Art Photography,” but functioned as erotica. It captures a very specific moment in Chinese contemporary development. Towards the end of 2007 I started working with these magazines for my series of origami flowers.

Do you often work with the image of the female body?

Every woman and man today is still obliged to other women in less fortunate situations to be a feminist. It is interesting to think about the strengths of woman and keeping seduction and play in this picture.

I am a woman and look in the mirror. I use images of other woman to be able to consider and describe my relation to the world with some distance, but with intimate familiarity at the same time. Asian woman appear in my work, as they represent the shift in global power in contemporary and future societies.

What are you working on at the moment?

I just finished the series “Shoot & Sprout,” a series of black and white photos that resemble ethnographical images of primitive sculptures and totems. Upon closer look one sees they are small sculptures made of toothpicks.

The skin of the potatoes is shriveled and dry, but show signs of new life in their shoots. I was thinking about our current position in a historical context. How our ancestors continue to influence today and how we are trying to be civilized men.

I am also preparing “Stars & Constellations,” a piece that will be shown in Brussels next month.

Heidi Voet was born in Belgium and studied Sculpture in the Royal Academy of Fine Art in Ghent and Installation in The Higher St. Lukas Institute in Brussels. For the last six years she has lived and worked between Shanghai and Brussels.

Heidi Voet

Interview by Zsuzsanna Toth

What is the concept behind the “Fruit & Vegetables” series?

What was first - the pictures of the women or the idea of the fruits?

In 2008 I sculpted a series of cinderblock vases and used Chinese erotic magazines to fold origami flowers. The nudity of the women that was exposed in the magazines was, by folding the pages, again obscured. It resulted in objects with a domestic character; vases with flowers that raised questions about the position of woman, cultural histories, and the construction of images.

The leftovers cuts from the magazines were lying around in my studio and then used for “Fruit & Vegetables.” By placing the fresh vegetables next to the girls their youthfulness becomes accentuated. The vegetables that complete the contours of the bodies, only have a slightly shorter lifespan. Of course there is also the relation between the depicted body and the consumption of vegetables and fruit, both delicious, both temporary. Similar to the Japanese tradition of the *Ukiyo-e*, the woodblock prints where the floating world is depicted. In “Fruit & Vegetables” both a reference to the temporality of pleasure and decay is portrayed.

Do you have a special relation to food/nutrition?

I obviously like playing with food and love entertaining the idea that eating is, in essence, a “sculptural” act. You take the food, the material, and bite it, chew it, and change its form. Eating as a way to react and act within ones environment. You take a foreign object, an apple for example, and then place it in your body by eating it. From the moment you swallow it, you refer to the apple as “me.” I love entertaining these ideas. That’s also how the photo series “Granny Smith” with the green apple came along. Eating, playing, sculpting. The main idea explored in that series is the vanitas motive.

Where did you find the photographs used in “Fruit & Vegetables”?

In 2006 I moved to Shanghai and was very sensitive to my new environment where I was confronted daily with scenes that questioned my convictions and habits. To explore the city I would go for walks and I found erotic magazines hidden in the back of a newspaper kiosk on Fuxing Road. Seeing pictures of naked flesh and pubic hair was quiet exceptional in a society where nudity is censored and the press is highly controlled.