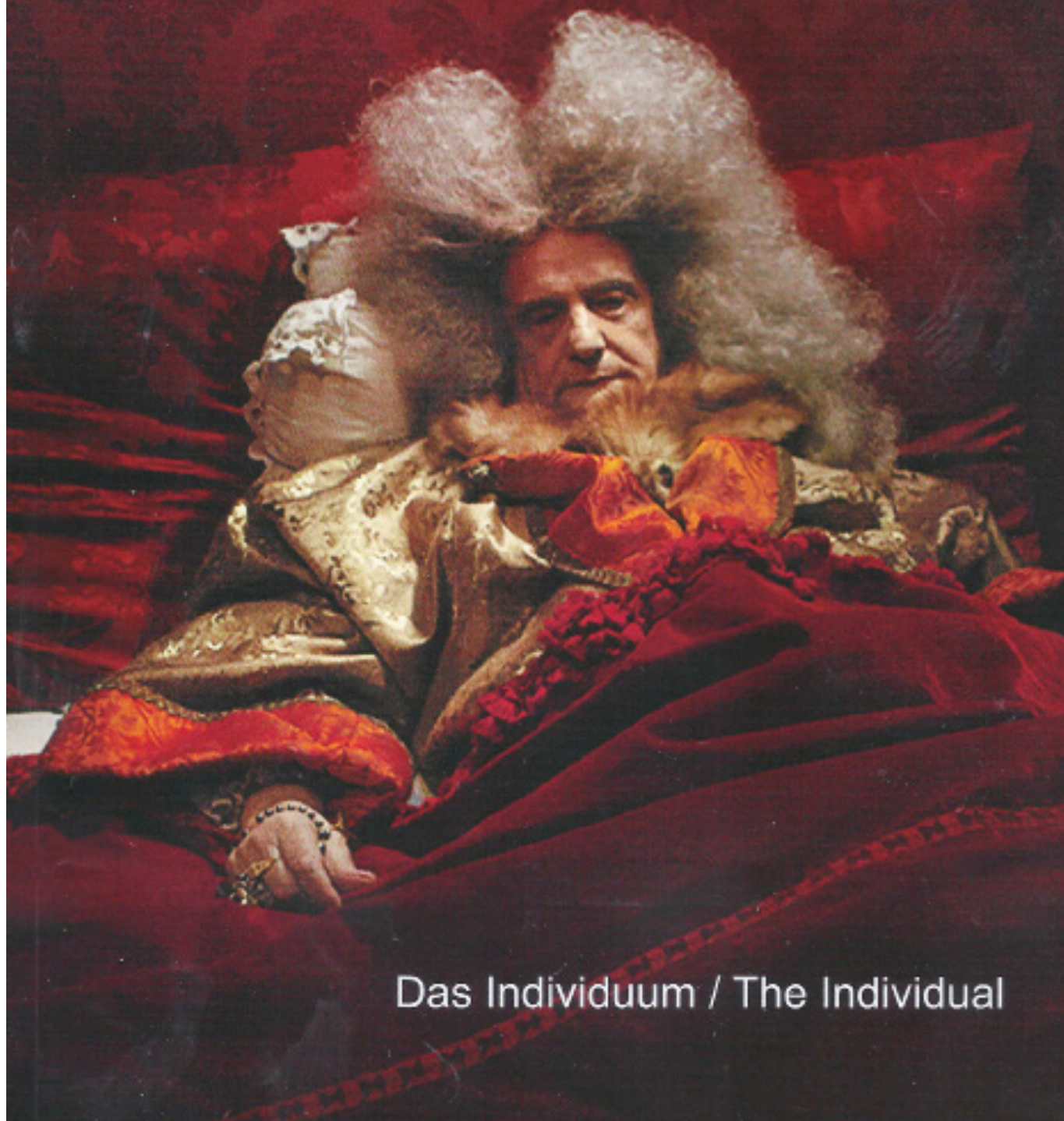


JACK HANLEY GALLERY

TEXTE ZUR KUNST

Dezember 2016 26. Jahrgang Heft 104
€ 16,50 (D) / \$ 25,-

25 Jahre
TEXTE ZUR KUNST



Das Individuum / The Individual

327 Broome Street
New York 10002
(646) 918 6824



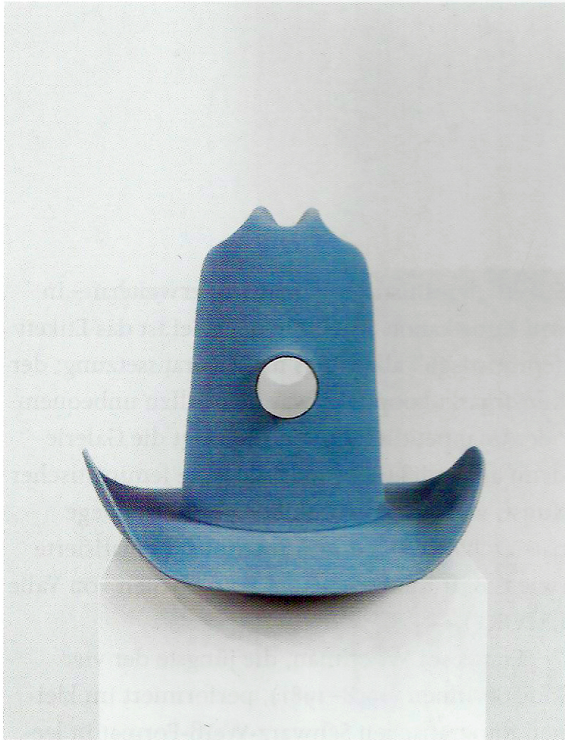
"Margaret Lee: Its not that I'm not taking (this) seriously," Jack Hanley Gallery, New York, 2016, installation view

To return, then, to New York and the tin-ceilinged room of Hanley's renovated Lower East Side storefront, Lee undertook a somewhat dubious task with a different modernist trope: the decorum of the theory-minded, subjectivity-loaded artist, full-stop. That is to say, the artist as mythical, non-hyphenate cowboy, who operates within a valorized framework, apparently constrained only by the limits of his own talent and, perhaps, wit. Eschewing the domestic forms and Dalmatian-like dots common to her earlier work, Lee transformed the "flattening" image-filter of allover spots into a series of cartoonish chutes or portals, poking veritable holes into the structure of each sculpture on display; a shift from cute (compliant) pattern to perceptibly empty void.

In "Fountain (this is how it goes)" (2016), a cement moat containing a delicately stepped configuration of miscellaneous items from Lee's studio featured a bucket, a ladder, chrome-plated paint cans, a tray, and a handful of brushes – all bathing in beautifully clear water pumped gently through a looped garden hose. Polished steel

spigots cut crosswise through two successive cans directed the falling water's flow. As a play on the lingering hangover of studio practice post-Duchamp, the cleanliness of the artist's tools, in this piece, suggested a stylistic pose: little engagement with any contaminant, let alone paint.

Atop a standalone pedestal, a work titled "10 Gallon Hat (and the hole)" (2016) traced an imaginary bullet hole won in some loony OK Corral through Beaver felt, dyed baby blue. The hat's actual volume measures far less than its name says; so the imagined sharpshooter's dead-on aim scans as a sly wink at masculine braggadocio. At the same time, the possibility that its etymology may in fact be derived from further south (rather than any legendary capacity to water horses) – from *tan galán*, or gallant, hat – reiterates the complexity of (white) cultural misappropriation in the lonely ranger drama of the all-American spaghetti western, wherein difference and alterity are background actors to the central male protagonist, among other narratives.³



Margaret Lee, „10 Gallon Hat (and the hole),“ 2016

For “12 Bananas (strung up)” (2016), Lee traded the hole as pipe/tube for a set of a dozen simple metal loops that linked each perfectly yellow “banana” to a single strand of rope, the loose end of which was carefully tossed up and over a temporary divider or modular wall. The hooked phalluses seemed as though they might have been cast aside after Josephine Baker’s “Danse Sauvage”; a notorious costume, or indeed, inverse chastity belt. On the other side of the wall, Lee’s rope formed a small and sinister noose.

In their playful non-specificity, or pent-up timidity, Lee’s sculptures, here, worked towards deferral – of habituated meanings, genres, and protocols. Their form is non-heroic, even cartoon-like, kind of funny. But what could be more serious than seeing the system for what it is – holes and all? The real problem is operating despite the fact, and not only because of it.

“Margaret Lee: It’s not that I’m not taking (this) seriously,” Jack Hanley Gallery, New York, October 13–November 13, 2016.

Notes

- 1 Margaret Lee is a New York-based artist and the co-founder, with Oliver Newton, of 47 Canal gallery. Seldom have reviews of Lee’s work not fixated on this dual activity. See Alice Gregory, “One Woman Show,” in: *T: The New York Times Style Magazine*, August 20, 2013, pp. 172–74.
- 2 See for example, Isabelle Graw, “Artworks and Luxury Goods: Close Relatives or Distant Acquaintances?” in: *High Price: Art Between the Market and Celebrity Culture*, Berlin 2010; and Daniel Spaulding/Nicole Demby, “Art, Value, and the Freedom Fetish,” *metamute.org*, May 28, 2015, <http://www.metamute.org/editorial/articles/art-value-and-freedom-fetish-o>.
- 3 Clint Eastwood cut his teeth in Sergio Leone’s “The Man with No Name” trilogy, smoking cigars from a Beverly Hills shop in “A Fistful of Dollars” (1964), an unofficial remake of Akira Kurosawa’s “Yojimbo” (1961). Leone later described his anti-hero: “Eastwood, at that time, only had two expressions: with hat and no hat.” See: <http://www.cinemadelsilenzio.it/index.php?mod=interview&id=17>.