

# Anthea Hamilton

## *Cold, Cold Heart*

kaufmann repetto is pleased to present 'Cold, Cold Heart', Anthea Hamilton's second solo show with the gallery. An immersive, site-specific installation that offers thematic environments, where architectural interventions and artworks coalesce into a kaleidoscopic, open-ended narration.

Galvanized steel walls, of imposing height and featuring a severe geometric pattern, alter the symmetric layout of the gallery spaces, create differently sized atria. The rhythmic articulation of the square-shaped openings, framed by the cold neatness of the surrounding metal, is reminiscent of a wide range of architectural vocabularies, ranging from the grilles of cloistered convents to the palisades of medieval fortresses, from tessellation in Islamic art to the hard-edged soberness of Italian rationalist architecture. These accurate, metallic gates set the tone for a highly stylized, unemotional atmosphere that - at first glance - seems to predominate the installation. Patterns and grid systems, a recurring obsession in Hamilton's practice, also return in individual artworks. A slanted version of the Hamilton tartan, referring to the artist's surname, becomes the leitmotif in the right-hand atrium. *Blasians (The Flavour of Green Tea over Rice)*, a glow-in-the-dark vinyl wallpaper, features a still from Yasujiro Ozu's cinematographic masterpiece from 1952. The inverted image, depicting four smiling women clad in kimonos, is interwoven with the tartan motif, which returns also on the carpet covering the floor also. In the same environment, the squares of circular polished stainless steel pinned to the *Metal Waves Kimono* tribute both to the grid drawings of American painter Agnes Martin and to the Japanese *seigaha* pattern, a geometric design of layered concentric circles representing ocean waves.

If the apparent neutrality of systems and pattern constitutes on the one hand a kind of contemplative *hortus conclusus* (an "enclosed garden"), its methodical, stylistic unity is at the same time open to be subverted by playful juxtapositions and unexpected cohabitations. Lit every morning, the scent of *Incense (Search My Heart)* pervades the exhibition space. The fragrance, developed in collaboration between the artist and olfactive designer Ezra-Lloyd Jackson, releases aromas of menthol and wooden ambre, which - triggering the trigeminal nerve - suggest to our nervous system the sensation of coldness offset by a gentle sweetness. The incense, fixed on curly branches protruding from the grid walls, creates an aromatic frame for the show while its smoke visually softens the sharpness of the materials and architectural elements.

By the same token, the sensual softness of botanical specimens and human bodies are interspersed throughout the exhibition. Hamilton's long-term fascination with the aesthetic qualities of vegetables translates into the hand-blown glass object *Cold Heart Squash*. Created by the artist in collaboration with LOEWE and covered in pale leather, the *Giant Pumpkin Nr. 3* is voluptuously sprawling on the floor. The immoderate, carnal shape of the ripe fruit and the tactile seductiveness

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of its soft, matt surface evokes a naked human body, overtly playing with the eroticized ambiguity of the pumpkin's stems and cavities. This is further explored in *Project for a Door (SculptureCenter)*, a piece inspired by Gaetano Pesce's proposal for an entrance to a skyscraper in Manhattan. Representing a man spreading his butt cheeks, the Italian designer's project was never realized, but Hamilton revisited it for her solo show at New York's SculptureCenter, which earned her the nomination to Britain's Turner Prize in 2016. In the current Milanese version, only some parts - a single human butt cheek, some fingers - are sticking out of the wall. In the same space, a floor mat depicting a male nude back in a black-and-white shoot, realized by Hamilton with Lewis Ronald and Jonathon Luke Baker, is imbued with the aesthetics of fashion photograph.

The tension between subjective gaze and the object is further enquired in *Sleeping Kimono*, installed on a floor of grey basalt stone. Spread out on top of synthetic rubber and a series of concrete cylinders, blurry photographs are printed on a silk satin fabric, its T-shaped cut alluding to the iconographic Japanese garment. The images are based on Leni Riefenstahl's 1973 documentation of the Nuba population, the indigenous inhabitants of central Sudan. The cylinders placed under the cloth evoke a form or a shape - maybe human ribs or the oars of a boat - hidden from our sight. This device further distorts the image - not only the print but the object itself.

Anthea Hamilton's solo exhibitions and special commissions include: *Mash Up*, M HKA, Antwerp (2022); *Primetime*, Hayward Gallery, London (2022); *The Garden*, Studio Voltaire, London (2021); *Extensions*, Institute of Contemporary Art Miami, Miami (2021); *Volcano Extravaganza 2019 - death*, Fiorucci Art Trust (2019); *The New Life*, Secession, Vienna (2018); *The Squash*, Tate Britain, London (2018); *Anthea Hamilton Reimagines Kettle's Yard*, The Hepworth Wakefield, Wakefield (2016); *Lichen! Libido! Chastity!*, SculptureCenter, New York (2015); *Sorry I'm Late*, Firstsite, Colchester (2012); *Les Modules*, Fondation Pierre Bergé-Yves Saint Laurent, Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2012). Her work has been featured in recent international group exhibitions such as *Myriad Reflector*, CA2M, Madrid (2022); *Radical Landscapes*, Tate Liverpool, Liverpool (2022); *The Paradox of Stillness: Art, Object, and Performance*, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis (2022); *May You Live in Interesting Times*, 58th Venice Biennale, Venice (2019); *Get Up, Stand Up Now*, Somerset House, London (2019); *Objects of Wonder*, Palais Populaire, Berlin (2019); *Perceptions: Burrenshat*, The National Gallery of Kosovo, Pristina (2019); *Public Fiction: The Conscientious Objector*, MAK Center for Art and Architecture, Los Angeles (2018); *Footnotes*, Whitechapel Gallery, London (2017); *Turner Prize*, Tate Britain, London (2016); *History of Nothing*, White Cube, London (2016); *Chance Encounters*, Loewe Foundation, Miami (2015) and *La vie Moderne*, 13eme Biennale de Lyon, Lyon (2015). Hamilton's work is held in the collections of Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Arts Council Collection, London; Tate Collection, London; V&A, London; Government Art Collection, London; The Hepworth Wakefield, Wakefield; Centre National des Arts Plastiques, Paris; FRAC Grand Large - Hauts-de-France, Dunkerque; Museum of Contemporary Art Antwerp, Antwerp.