



FOR RELEASE:

NOT VITAL IN BEIJING - April 22nd, 2008 – June 22nd, 2008

NOT VITAL hails from Sent, Switzerland, population 1000 to the capital of the most populous country in the world, Beijing, China. A singular artist shows his new work...

APRIL 22ND OPENING

1. CURRENTS – ART AND MUSIC, Huantie, at 4:00 pm
Let One Hundred Flowers Bloom, a painting
17 x 19 meters, 100 sculptures in stainless steel
2. GALERIE URS MEILE, Caochangdi, at 5:00 pm
Tongue
7.7 meters high, in stainless steel
3. ULLENS CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY ART, 798, at 2:00 pm
Artist's talk
Not Vital discusses works created in Italy and Africa

ARTIST BACKGROUND

NOT VITAL lives in the tiny village of Sent where he was born, creating sculptures within his park. Whereas most sculpture parks display works in an open area, where they can be seen from a distance, Not embeds them in the forest. As visitors stroll the paths, they happen upon the sculptures. There is a wooden, torqued pyramid built around a tree, a bridge where each step is an aluminium donkey's head 10 meters above a stream. Another sculpture becomes an inviting reclusive place of repose. Made of heated copper coil that melts snow and is surprisingly comfortable to sit or recline on, it is the only visible object in its snow-covered surroundings.

The most recent work in progress is a house which moves vertically, completely disappearing below ground, then re-surfacing again, like a submarine in the forest, meshing poetry with James Bond.

In addition to his actual homes in Sent and Ardez in the Engadin, Switzerland, Lucca and New York, he delves into regions of the globe – making Agadez, Niger, an immersion into a way of life. Obsessed with creating houses, Not created a complex of mud houses, a sculpture containing a school for children, a house as an ode to the moon, and a 13-meter high “House from which to watch the sunset.” Not’s relationships with local individuals, community and many installations incorporating salt tael and entire camels dried in the sun, exemplify how Not embraces the culture and community.

Gore Vidal writes:

*In his latest work, Not has blurred the ever darkening lines between reality and fantasy, history and present and future with functional works of art which in his world are also known as artful works of function. His structures in Agadez, Niger are the most obvious and clever examples of this; he uses local materials, some of which would have otherwise gone to waste (see: cattle horns!) to build ultra modern structures that diverge from the traditional buildings of Agadez, yet blend seamlessly into the city’s aesthetic and are tailored to his and his neighbors’ needs.*¹

Not embodies the spirit of global culture, not as an observer or as a businessman who exploits opportunities, but as a participant in each community’s way of life. His perspective is that of an observant alien with a constantly racing intellect, absorbing and incorporating sounds, smells, visual stimulation, and expressing oblique, incongruous interpretations. Thus, an entire camel in Agadez is contained in 16 to 24 spheres made of mud or silver. Hundreds of pillars of salt which locals transport on mules to market become an installation.

A cow’s tongue in Italy is cast in plaster, carved in black marble, and in Beijing, becomes a monumental 7.7-meter high stainless steel sculpture.

Not, as a guest of Sarina Tang, founder-director of “Currents – Art and Music”, had access to an inside view to the explosive art and music world of Beijing, including in-depth discussions with artists, musicians, and literati.

¹ excerpt from introduction by Gore Vidal for catalog published by Skira Editions on the occasion of exhibition at Sperone Westwater, NYC, September-October, 2007.

Not's creation and production of this installation and monumental sculpture in Beijing is the beginning of an involvement with China and its culture. Plans to increase his creative time in Beijing, bringing international artists to share his wondrous passion for Chinese culture, and to create a large-scale stand-alone destination "house" are already under way.

Monumental sculpture in each continent of the world takes Not to Chile, where he is acquiring an island for a destination sculpture. Europe can no longer contain this artist's experiential roaming vigor.

Not views the entire world as his "studio."

Sarina Tang

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