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Carrier

Mella Jaarsma

Dates: October 22–November 30, 2016

Opening Reception: Saturday, October 22, 6-8pm

Baik Art presents *Carrier*, a solo exhibition by Dutch-Indonesian (Yogyakarta based) artist Mella Jaarsma, whose handmade garments (“flexible housings”), drawings, and photographs explore the hairline links between the stability of tradition and the exploration of new worlds.

Carrier addresses some of the central questions that arise when one assigns cultural identity to objects such as costumes and cloaks or when one assumes authority over others by creating division between one thing and another—one style and the next. For the purpose of this exhibition, the self-personality is observed by a different delegated ‘other’ self, sometimes resembling a (refugee) tent in attendance as decision maker.

Jaarsma’s constructions of war, work, and ruling class costume relics operate in a way that facilitates the study of power by positing new social and ethnic associations which challenge traditional ones. She sews together textile elements that leave us feeling vulnerable to the flimsiness of human existence and its reality as possible illusion. She hunts the male/female/human psyche through costume/uniform fashion which outwardly expresses the complexities and fleeting insecurities core to being human and seeking shelter in a screwed-up society. Through clothing constructions, her work also reveals hidden features of colonization and oppression. Jaarsma’s art illuminates the slippage between the accumulated fates that confine both the colonizer and those that have been assimilated or de-colonized. The artist’s method of materializing the synchronicities between one thing and another also helps viewers to visualize the invisible connective tissue linking each symbol she provides. Jaarsma’s emotively charged costumes map out internal fields of memory where the ambiguities of feeling, significant, unimportant, or empty, are recorded as moments in time.

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