

by DARR TAH LEI

Arbeit Macht Nicht Frei (Work doesn't bring freedom)

Project for an installation

4 drawings hanged on 4 walls, masses of heavy chains hanging from the ceiling. Area of room needed - minimum 40 mt²

This artwork happens with the intention to emphasize the unthankful significance of the "Work" as a task that brings meaning to life.

Using the emblematic sentence "Arbeit Macht Frei" that was placed by the Nazis at the entrance of the concentration camps during the 2WW, this art installation intends to subvert the value of "Work", taking the issue to the art field and proposing a demystification of the value of the art-work as material.

4 huge drawings with straight and geometrical lines are drawn at first by computer tools and then outlined by hand. Extremely precision is needed to avoid any human fault – as required in art techniques that struggle towards the concept of perfection through the art-object. These drawings take each one in between 1 or 3 months to be painted, meaning many hours of daily work in the name of art as a substantial exercise to give to life a sense. The working hours are accounted as value integrated in the art piece and then transformed in symbolic amount of alienation in between the artist and his art-object. The central subject of this installation is this typical capacity that the art object has over the artist in order to make him become a hostage of its material limitations. It is thus creating a discourse that overcomes the sense of pain implicit in the material density of the artwork towards the realm of immaterialism – proposing an ideal correlation in between the artist and the artwork where the anxiety of the need of achievement is neutralized due to the nonexistence of the art-object.

Like that the artist gains a confidence that brings him closer to himself as the finest art piece ever would succeed, since the material does no longer obstruct his existential freedom.

The heavy chains that fall from the ceiling of the exhibition, forming labyrinthine corridors where the public walks through, or struggles through, are metaphors of the trivial socio-cultural fictions about work as a necessary prison for mankind. These heavy chains are in fact placed in parallel, engaging nothing and therefore calling the attention for what lies beyond the illusion of appearance towards the unseen possibilities for the liberation from the artist-object or "Work".

The title of this installation is the inversion of the "original" sentence, as an induced help to glimpse the idea.