



Press Release

Eva Grubinger

Five Problems

1st April – 28th May 2016
Mondays to Saturdays, 11am – 6pm
Private view: 31st March, 6-8pm
Admission Free

Bloomberg SPACE

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Five Problems is a series of sculptures that relate formally to Vexier (or disentanglement) puzzles, thought to originate in the 'wisdom games' of the Song Dynasty-era China. These conundrums, involving freeing and attaching puzzle parts, come in a variety of materials including string, metal and wood, with their appeal deriving from their apparent insolvability. In *Five Problems*, Eva Grubinger enlarges and reworks such brainteasers, locating them on the floor, walls and ceiling. Being too heavy to manipulate, the 'problems' become mental ones; callisthenics for the brain.

The sculptures refer to objects of Chinese, African and American origin. They encode mathematics, topological knot theory, logic and history, aspects that Grubinger's sculptures both emphasise and reconfigure. Where the original knots and string are substituted with rope, the works convey an ocean-going feel, reflecting Grubinger's long-standing interest in the maritime as metaphor, particularly as a focus for competition and imperial conquest. Other works have bodily overtones, suggesting that one intractable 'problem' being reflected here is gender relations. These highly technical, beautifully machined objects might also suggest luxury items in a showroom, though they are made grotesque by their size. Echoing commonplace objects such as the harnesses and safety materials that work in part as psychological security blankets during perilous sports, the sculptures also imply an aspect of the human psyche that desires risk, but on safe terms.

For centuries, disentanglement puzzles have been used as a kind of intelligence training. Elsewhere, purely mental techniques such as the 'memory palace' have been employed, where objects are distributed around an imagined space in order to aid recall. The near-abstract forms of *Five Problems* conflate both techniques to suggest a variety of knotty cultural problems across different scales and registers – with the implication that, despite their appearing unsolvable, we can at least try to think them through.

For further information, images and interview requests please contact Natalie Harland, Bloomberg on nharland1@bloomberg.net or +44(0)7881 250570.

Eva Grubinger

Eva Grubinger lives and works in Berlin. She has had solo shows at Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma, Helsinki (2001); BALTIC Centre for Contemporary Art, Gateshead (2003); Berlinische Galerie, Berlin (2004); Schirn Kunsthalle, Frankfurt am Main (2007); Museum der Moderne, Salzburg (2009), Belvedere Palace and Museum, Vienna (2012); and Institute of Contemporary Arts, London (2015), among others. She has participated in group shows at Deichtorhallen, Hamburg (2002), Taipei Fine Arts Museum (2008), Krannert Art Museum, Illinois (2009), Marrakech Biennale (2012); Galeria Vermelho, São Paulo (2013); Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam (2014); and Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna (2015), among others. She is currently a guest professor at Kunstakademie Dusseldorf.

Physical Information

Grubinger's exhibition for Bloomberg SPACE is the first show in *Physical Information*, a new programme of five exhibitions co-curated by Henry Coleman and Rupert Norfolk, exploring how physical objects can generate alternative experiences in an increasingly abstract world. Three solo commissions and two curated shows investigate the potential of sculpture to activate public imagination, orientate social space, and engage viewers both physically and psychologically.

About Bloomberg's commissioning programme

The Bloomberg SPACE commissioning programme reflects Bloomberg's philanthropic passion to support exciting talent and to commission new works. Since 2002, Bloomberg SPACE has worked with more than 470 artists and has commissioned over 120 new works.

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