

Artwork Information



Title
Year
Medium
Dimensions

Stamp Collecting
2020

Wall-mounted stainless steel and acrylic structure with LED light and objects made from polyamide and polypropylene tag pins and nickel-plated brass tubes
H94 x W73 x D16 cm

About the Artworks

In this body of new works, Tan presents various schemes of arrangement, exploring the intrinsic relationship between the displayed objects and the display structures. She investigates how objects can come together to form a meaningful collection and how the format of the collection shapes the way the objects are perceived.

These works are extensions of an earlier work, *n. 355 – natural progression* that was commissioned for the exhibition, *Raffles In Southeast Asia: Revisiting The Scholar and The Statesman* at the Asian Civilisations Museum where Tan examined the concepts of order and progression and the blurring between the natural and artifice in the context of colonial botanical science.

The removal of materials from their original or “natural” environments inevitably transforms them into cultural artefacts. In the case of these works, the banal, mould-made tag pins and cable ties are transformed into individual unique objects. And when organised into a collection, these discrete entities come together to form relationships with one another that lead to the creation of a new autonomous “cosmos”. While these works reference various aspects associated with scientific collecting, they suggest the process and system of collecting as a reflection of the culture (and the individual) that produced them. The collecting and curating of the objects for display is itself a tool to construct.

The title references an infamous line by physicist Ernest Rutherford (1871-1937), “All science is either physics... or stamp collecting.” It was meant to mock scientists who only collected specimens, a hobby-like preoccupation to him. But the process of collecting and classifying is critical in the discovering and correctly identifying new species or theories that are crucial to biology. The work is presented in a grid-like arrangement where all cells are of equal importance. There is no particular order or hierarchy in the arrangement of objects. Each cell presents one or more objects of the same type – by sharing the same material or having a similar construction method or form. The grid-like format also brings to mind the *Wunderkammern* or cabinets of curiosities, the precursors to museums.

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Artwork Information



Title
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Mechanism of Change

2020

Wall-mounted stainless steel and acrylic structure with LED light and objects made from green polyamide ties

H105 x W41 x D12.5 cm

About the Artworks

In this body of new works, Tan presents various schemes of arrangement, exploring the intrinsic relationship between the displayed objects and the display structures. She investigates how objects can come together to form a meaningful collection and how the format of the collection shapes the way the objects are perceived.

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This work explores the concept of mutation in the evolution of organisms. It questions the mechanism of change contributed by various processes and factors, both internally and externally. The display structure with six tiers that increases in height from bottom up suggest a progression in scale with the smallest objects displayed at the bottom and the largest objects at the top.

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Artwork Information



Title
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Exotic Trophies
2020

Free-standing stainless steel and acrylic stacked structure with LED light and objects made from polyamide and polypropylene tag pins and nickel-plated brass tubes
H54 x W40 x D40 cm

About the Artworks

In this body of new works, Tan presents various schemes of arrangement, exploring the intrinsic relationship between the displayed objects and the display structures. She investigates how objects can come together to form a meaningful collection and how the format of the collection shapes the way the objects are perceived.

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The artwork title references how specimens or objects collected are often regarded as “exotic trophies”. Scientific expeditions and voyages formed a crucial aspect of natural history collection making, take for example Captain James Cook’s pioneering journeys across the Pacific in the 18th century that changed the course of science. The work is presented in a vertical, stacked format. Objects progress in complexity and dimension, with the most complex and largest works at the bottom tier and the simpler and smallest works at the top tier.

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Title
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Diversity and Variation
2020

Wall-mounted stainless steel and acrylic structure with LED light and objects made from polyamide and polypropylene tag pins and nickel-plated brass tubes
H81 x W132 x D8.5 cm

About the Artworks

In this body of new works, Tan presents various schemes of arrangement, exploring the intrinsic relationship between the displayed objects and the display structures. She investigates how objects can come together to form a meaningful collection and how the format of the collection shapes the way the objects are perceived.

These works are extensions of an earlier work, *n. 355 – natural progression* that was commissioned for the exhibition, *Raffles In Southeast Asia: Revisiting The Scholar and The Statesman* at the Asian Civilisations Museum where Tan examined the concepts of order and progression and the blurring between the natural and artifice in the context of colonial botanical science.

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Diversity and variation are two of the most important basis for collecting biological specimens to be collected and classified. The practice of collecting and taxonomy plays a vital role in understanding our natural world because the specimens are able to provide physical information on a species at a particular time and space. The display structure comprises of five tiers of the same height. Each tier presents a type or family of objects that are arranged without any specific order or sequence.

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