

# GALERIE ANDREA CARATSCH

SYLVIE FLEURY  
"EARLY WORK"

Galerie Andrea Caratsch, St. Moritz

This exhibition brings together a number of iconic works by Sylvie Fleury. The group includes neon works, photographs, sculptures, and important installations, offering an opportunity to grasp some of the forms of the universe of the Swiss artist.

For Sylvie Fleury, fashion is more than a mere frame of reference; it is perceived as a platform where anyone can find his or her means of expression. It is an active space in which each of us can take root. The artist is not merely interested in following codes and collecting trends, but in enjoying and inverting them. After all, when fashion is filled with our lives, it is because it is one of the ways we signal our desires, just as Art is by definition. Thus, being an artist means becoming aware of one's ability to appropriate the forms of those desires and attempting to question the spaces in which they find their expression.

For instance, the two large installations from 1991 and 1992, which include women's shoes and decorative elements, turn out to be quasi-readymades of longing, as projected by the world of luxury retail. They are filters that clearly reveal how we go astray in building our identity. The works, which are conceived as clearly defined assemblages, function through their absence as a mirror of the space that we consider our own. Viewers thus see themselves confronted with their potential as a subject. If there is a missing figure in these scenes, then perhaps it is ourselves or someone else whose longing we are meant to share. In Sylvie Fleury's work, this is how fetishism gains freedom and art transforms itself as a projection of longing into a space that is open to each of us.

In the statements taken from advertising, the signified corresponds to its significance - whether in neon (Egoïste, 2000; Pleasures, 2001) or as extensive murals (Egoïste Platinum, 1994). We have the right to seize the world, to play a game with our identity, to change it, to demand it—even if we run the risk of being confronted with our egoism. After all, as a viewer, voyeur, and audience, we perceive that art is an immediate and personal experience that is

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undeniably connected with us. The flash of its reception belongs to us, even when it is shared.

Perhaps the artist grasped this duality intuitively (and not without humor) when she reproduced the cover pages of the Italian edition of Vogue January 2000. Single or multiple, full-figure and viewed from below, or frontally in close-up, the world offers us many mirrors. However, if you freeze its reflection, a paradox in itself, another space-time structure opens up. While it is true that art, and photography all the more, places us in a chronology, it simultaneously projects us into infinity.

Perhaps the belief is futile and wrong, as is the reprehensible pleasure we feel when we think of escaping our trivial compulsions. However, Sylvie Fleury continues to proclaim that it is important to actively preserve a potential space for projection. Thus, the rocket in *First Spaceship on Venus* (1994), as fragile and light as it may be, has already landed on Venus. The world indeed also exists beyond the mirror images of the world.

Samuel Gross