

GALERIE ANDREA CARATSCH

PRESS RELEASE

NOT VITAL

"Let One Hundred Flowers Bloom"

JULY 22 – SEPTEMBER 14, 2019

This summer, Galerie Andrea Caratsch is pleased to present "Let One Hundred Flowers Bloom", an installation of one hundred steel sculptures of lotus flowers from 2008. Presented for the first time in Beijing in 2008, the work has been shown at the Kunstraum Dornbirn in Austria, and at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park in Great Britain, among other places; it is now shown for the first time in Switzerland and in the artist's native Engadine.

Installed by the artist himself, the monumental-sized flowers lie stem by stem, in staggered rows, filling the entire exhibition space. The lotus flower, simultaneously metaphor for Chinese culture and eternal hope, has meanwhile become part of Not Vital's iconographic repertoire. However, in the present installation, the number and size of the flowers heighten their sculptural quality and symbolic meaning exceptionally, intriguing and overwhelming at the same time.

Indeed, a key observation here is what the Romantic artists were striving for in the second half of the 18th Century, or the concept of the Sublime that Edmund Burke wrote upon. Nature is elevated to an awesome status in "Let One Hundred Flowers Bloom", where one is subjected to an immersive experience encompassing something much bigger than us humans, and our existence.

There are many different ways to approach "Let One Hundred Flowers Bloom", from the philosophical to the formal. One aspect of the work that illustrates this richness of interpretation is the significance of Vital's use of closed flower buds rather than open ones. This choice, which is certainly not accidental, conveys a sense of reservation, of oppression and isolation. The flowers lie side by side but appear as self-contained units, close in proximity but distanced by their self-enclosed form. The viewer might await a moment when these buds will burst, defying their bound forms. This sense of potential movement, an explosion, lends tension and dynamism to the enigmatic installation. The installation plays with the idea of microcosm and macrocosm. One hundred individual lotuses find themselves placed together to create this huge mass; the effect appears metaphorical and politically fraught.

Not Vital, an artist and modern-day nomad with roots in the village of Sent in the Lower Engadine Valley, creates his sculptures in studios scattered across the globe. Fascinated and inspired by life in China, Vital has maintained his own studio in Beijing for the past ten years.

The gallery is open from Monday to Saturday from 2 to 7 PM.