

Anna Handick

Nature being the master

Only with a focused eye, the *Chayules* (2007) can be noticed as corporeal beings, fluttering around like tiny tridents. With fine, well-balanced ink strokes, Chayules are placed onto paper, springing apart and found elsewhere. Because they are so tightly pressed together they instantly become an incomprehensible entirety.

Her fascination with nature being the source of her artistic journey, Anna Handick was born in 1985 in Nürnberg. After graduating from high school in 2005 she worked as an art teacher in the children's and youth centre at Rayitos del Sol in San Carlos, Nicaragua, the sister town of Nürnberg. She studied sculpture at the Academy of Fine Arts in Nürnberg from 2005 to 2011 and was taught by Professor Claus Bury. She then became a Master's student in 2008. During her studies, the impressions of her trips to the countries of Latin America can be seen in her large-and small-scale sculptures and her finely structured drawings.

Only the focused, experienced eye recognises the Chayules, as the Nicaraguanian sugar flies that appear in huge giant swarms of mayflies out of the dawn. They can be a nuisance, but disappear as soon as they come into contact with the first light of day. Handick demonstrates the aesthetic dimension of this phenomenon through her wonderfully light drawings, without concealing the unpleasant side. As amorphous bundles the elements come together on every sheet differently.

Simultaneously, this pattern continues in the installation *Tempora mutantur* (2009). Oval shaped vessels made out of paper pulp, that look like small cups from the top, and as dozens gathered close together on the floor. As if they were satisfied with life, they look in wonder, like they were unsure if they have already arrived at their point of destination. The installation *Insulae* (2010) is not only formally but also in character closely linked to the former described art work *Tempora mutantur*. The manner in which the packaged strings join together arranges itself like a coneflower, showing off its cheekiness and confidence in this position. Both installations deal with the topic of animal nests or shelters. Handick has dedicated the same concept in several different bodies of work. Documenting is not her modus operandi but instead, she is inspired by nature and guided by her thoughts. One day she comes across a flower that is shaped like a brush and wonders what it would look like if there were seeds in it. *Die Papiernester* (2009) are made of dry straw paper and formed into tentacle-like cocoons. Arranging the cocoons next to each other and on top of one another gives them a

bunch of grape formation structure. Despite the stability of each individual cocoon the formation may appear to be fragile and brittle. Some are porous on the surface, showing cracks and holes. As if some internal force is pushed out. Just because it doesn't show the innate, it becomes more profound. Creating nests and shelters for disembodied plants and animal inhabitants, allows the viewer to imagine more. *Gelege* (2010), fragile balls, the size of ping-pong balls, made out of handmade thin paper. Then piled up, allowed to fall down and left in the scattered state they find themselves in. The transparent, translucent membrane is broken, fine pieces have come off of this graceful, poetic structure, like an egg, of which a chick has escaped. The materials used are hemp, jute and bamboo stem - preferably found in nature.

The installation *Colony* (2009) takes on the image of five teardrop nests attached to the ceiling with spread out feelers. The drop from the ceiling causes the neck to stretch, leaving a bulb at the end with an elephant trunk-like attachment to it leading to the ground. Big needles are used to crochet the heavy hemp rope into nest formations. Due to the weight of the heavy mesh it causes the rope extensions to lengthen. The materiality of hemp turns out to be a very ambiguous component. The sight of the crochet mesh creates a warm feeling of well-being but in contrast to the uneven and rough surface of the fabric is undermined. The strong smell of hemp is related to the smell of animal exhalation. Among the work series of the nests caused coming slight stroke and ink sketches. The impetus for this work was provided to the artist, by the thought of *das neue Tier*. The nests are open at the bottom. Animals with open nests might be likeable, the artist thinks. The colony stands for social community living.

During a fellowship in Guatemala, Handick got to know the archaeological sites of Mayan culture. She saw old maps of Mayan settlements, which she then remembers through drawings. The *Lost Cities* (2011/2012) reminiscent from far are swarms of Chayules. When you then take a closer look you begin to see a floor plan of streets and buildings. The more recent *Lost Cities* drawn on block lined paper deepens this impression and still, they are free compositions of hieroglyphic-like characters.

Meanwhile Handick continues taking the way to the world's flora and fauna and at the same time developing the airy-earth sculpture *Wildwuchs* (2011). Long stems made out of wire, fixed with sticky tape, stretch their little mushroom-like heads together into the air.

In Days to come (2012) the stems overcome - as thick as rhubarb - dark shining out from their surroundings, as if they had escaped the damp mud. Flowers of secret-filled aura, of

appearance and scale comparable with the blade opened beak of a pelican, keeping its upper part open as a lid. As if they wanted to snap their beaks shut. "Nature is my master" says Handick.

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