

# THE ARTIST AS EQUILIBRIST

## On the Work of Ha Cha Youn

### [Extracts]

1.

Ha Cha Youn's exhibition in Göttingen in 2026 takes place at two venues: first, in the White Hall of the Künstlerhaus on Gotmarstraße, whose rooms could hardly be more venerable, for it was in this very building that the great physicist, natural scientist, and philosopher of the German Enlightenment, Georg Christoph Lichtenberg (1742–1799), once lectured. Second, in the magnificent hall of the St. John's Church, located near the Künstlerhaus, which, although it lost its sacred consecration in the course of its secularization, was thereby made available for cultural purposes. At both locations, the South Korean artist, who lives in France, presents her works in such a way that visitors gain an overview of her oeuvre and its distinctive character.

2.

She has given her exhibition the title "Zum Gleichgewicht" –or in French, "À propos de l'équilibre." The search for balance determines not only the aesthetics of Ha Cha Youn's artistic practice but also the way she has shaped her life. In 1983, at a young age, she left her homeland to study in France, in Poitiers and Nîmes. Later, she continued her studies in Braunschweig and then spent several years in Hannover in the mid-1990s before returning to France in 2002, where she still lives and works today.

For her, all these years have meant nothing less than continually confronting—up to the present—the challenge of navigating between different languages, countries, and cultures, and of finding equilibrium among them. This is no easy task, even if it can certainly be enriching, for life practices, mentalities, and value systems in these countries differ in many respects. Ha Cha Youn has met this situation brilliantly to this day and has thus become a mediator between the culture of her homeland and that of France and Germany –a fact readily confirmed by all who have had the privilege and pleasure of getting to know the artist more closely.

3.

Balance also plays a decisive role in her art. Each day anew, she must negotiate between ideal and reality, poetry and politics, freedom and necessity, and find equilibrium between opposing perspectives. Among other things, this means not only conceiving and imagining ambitious artistic projects but also realizing them.

Oscar Wilde formulated the beautiful maxim: "Only he is a realist who knows how to dream." Yet the art lies in giving these dreams form –not merely imagining art, but putting it into practice. Bertolt Brecht once criticized the pallor of artists' thoughts when he wrote:

"They praise to us the life of great minds,  
Who live on a book and an empty stomach,  
In a hut where rats are gnawing.  
Keep that sentimental crap away from me."

A lack of resolve or insufficient awareness of the social conditions and realities of the societies in which she lives cannot be attributed to Ha Cha Youn. In this respect as well, she is an equilibrist.