

Art in America INTERNATIONAL REVIEW

KRISTA BUECKING

4/26/10

SUSAN HOBBS

By E.C. Woodley



TORONTO “LOVE SONG FOR A FUTURE GENERATION,” Krista Buecking’s first solo, featured a series of graphite diptychs that were luminous and compelling, and signaled the emergence of a surprisingly well formed young artist. Buecking’s subject matter is as socio-historically nuanced as her graphic sense is direct. Her fascination with Isamu Noguchi’s gardens and landscapes subtly influenced works in which she memorably pairs images of worn or broken bricks with lyrics from 1950s and ’60s popular ballads.

Whereas Noguchi transposed the realm of the traditional Japanese garden to his modernist sculptural language, producing spaces positioned between the historical East and the modern West, Buecking transports the recent past into the present. Displaced in time but as persistent as brick or stone, these once ubiquitous lyrics still haunt the soundscapes of daily life. Texts such as HURT ME NOW GET IT OVER, TOMORROW WILL BE TOO LATE or YOU DON’T HAVE TO STAY FOREVER are borrowed from the songbooks of Patsy Cline, Elvis Presley and Dusty Springfield. To render the lyrics, Buecking incisively appropriates the Avant Garde typeface, designed in 1969, another persistent relic of the recent past.

Each diptych is composed of two fragments: one brick image and one lyric. Buecking finds the bricks at demolition sites. She photographs them in dramatically raking light, enlarges the images and creates drawings of them, building up layers with hard graphite. The theatrical lighting seems to transform the brick fragments, as if they were revered objects from antiquity. The layered graphite gives them a once-removed quality not unlike a photocopy, but with a paradoxically intense aura. The lyrics are as heavily and meticulously worked as the bricks, but the bricks seem to float in space, while the sentimental lyrics, arranged vertically, assume an architectural weight to match the enormity of the pain they express. In *LOVE SONG FOR A FUTURE GENERATION #2*, the paper undulates under the weight of the graphite, pushing into three dimensions. Like Richard Serra’s massively inked etchings, although much more subtly, Buecking’s drawings begin to achieve a genuine sculptural presence.

Photo: Krista Buecking: Love Songs for a Future Generation #1, 2009, graphite on paper, 32 1/4 by 22 1/4 and 22 1/4 by 32 1/4 inches; at Susan Hobbs.

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