

Balancing on Trembling Ground, Marianne Lammersen at Judy Straten Gallery, until April 14, 2013

April 6, 2013 at 9:00pm

by Nanne Op't Ende

A workperiod at the Chinese European Art Centre in Xiamen, China, inspired Marianne Lammersen to make an installation and a series of collages that are presently on show together at Judy Straten Gallery in Horst. China obviously cannot be described easily – ‘opposites’ might be the most appropriate word – but Lammersen certainly absorbed everything she saw around her and reproduced the impressions in works that do full justice to the country’s fascinating diversity.

Central to the exhibition is the beautiful piece *Balancing on Trembling Ground* that is made out of a rusty old transport bicycle stacked with boxes, plaster moulds and porcelain sculptures suggesting the shapes of skyscrapers, intertwined with bamboo scaffolding. The work touches upon many themes, like original versus copy, inside versus outside, mundane versus spiritual but most of all, it speaks of a society that moves at different speeds. The explosive economic development that made China the largest manufacturing country in the world still passes by a substantial part of the immense population. Small detail: the bicycle is locked.

The collages repeat this theme of rapid development versus slower pace of change – the skyscrapers and primitive means of transportation recur several times – but interweave it with personal observations, humour, melancholy and poetic interpretations. New layers of meaning are derived from cutting out parts of photos or making paper silhouettes, from embroidering patterns on the work or reusing the cut-out material. The collages have a wonderful quality of estrangement and yet they make perfect sense; they can easily hold their own but together they form a world apart. Mixing different techniques and image sources almost seamlessly, Lammersen creates commendable visual and conceptual depth with no apparent effort. She is really good.