

# Thierry De Cordier

THIERRY DE CORDIER, *LITTLE NADA*, 1652–2023,  
oil and oil stick on a historical anonymous painting on  
canvas, courtesy the artist and Xavier Hufkens, Brussels,  
photo HV-Studio



Nothingness has occupied mystics, cosmologists, magicians and painters for eons. Thierry De Cordier's site-relational solo exhibition at the Fondazione Prada in Milan is situated in three vertical, sun-lit galleries that formerly housed vats of whiskey and gin. Here, ten black paintings of varying scales, realised between 1999 and 2024, simultaneously present and represent nothingness. Much like visitors to Houston's Rothko Chapel, visitors to 'NADA' are invited to sit on a bench and contemplate nothingness, that is, wonder whether it exists and where it begins and ends. Unlike Rothko's 'black' paintings, De Cordier's paintings are strictly monochromatic, though hardly as hard-edged as Ad Reinhardt's 'black' paintings.

De Cordier's first 'NADA' painting dates from 1999, but it (fittingly) no longer exists. While Reinhardt believed his 'meaningless' paintings conveyed 'nothing' in particular, that De Cordier (1954) first arrived at this format by erasing a crucifix suggests that his do say something. In fact, De Cordier recalls wanting to 'symbolically annihilate a deeply-rooted Christian

image.' At some point, he came across the following passage, attributed to the Spanish mystic St. John of the Cross: 'No emphasis, but absolute rigor. The search for the NADA (Nothing) of the Cross; the concern for the only thing necessary...' For St. John of the Cross, 'nada' evoked the incomprehensibility of God's form, such that the intellect, memory and will undergo an emptying or darkening.

To prevent people from interpreting these vast spaces as either grey skies or dark seas, imagery associated with his oeuvre, De Cordier has rendered 'NADA' on the spot where 'INRI' appears in devotional images, a gesture that is simultaneously literal and lyrical. Given that De Cordier once led a nomadic life and later sought refuge in his garden, this exhibition evokes a desolate wilderness, where silence abounds and the sun delimits its time. (Sue Spaid)

Thierry De Cordier, 'NADA,' through 29 September 2025,  
Fondazione Prada Milan, [www.fondazioneprada.org](http://www.fondazioneprada.org)

Haus der Kunst  
Munich

# Shu Lea Cheang



Taking as its starting point the feature film *Fresh Kill* (1994), the three-decade survey 'KI\$\$ KI\$\$', curated by Sarah Johanna Theurer with Lailu Wu, features video, installation art and digital art by Paris-based Taiwanese artist Shu Lea Cheang (1954). A pioneer in digital art, Cheang was one of the first artists to create internet-based artworks. Here, she works with robots, livestreaming and dispensary machines.

'KI\$\$ KI\$\$' is comprised of five landscape formations, *Home Delivery*, *Portal Porting*, *Spoken Words*, *Kiss Kiss Kill Kill* and *Escape Artist* (all 2025). The first three occupy different galleries, while the last two occupy the stairwell. Comprised of *Drive By Dining* (2002) and *Radiotopia* (since 2022), the dystopic futuristic foodscape *Home Delivery* assembles piles of paper food containers, autonomous robots emitting food smells, a livestreamed radio transmission and a video featuring eight Mongolians eating a sheep's head together. The sci-fi trashscape *Spoken Words* features abandoned keyboards, cables and screens scattered about a community where people (us) are bred and programmed to 'retrieve memory and emotional

deposits from the net,' so they can scrape third-party data. Meanwhile, *Uttering* offers a video portrait of the artist's changing self, as a nearby machine dispenses obsolete computer keyboard keycaps.

For the digital landfill *Portal Porting*, Cheang reimagines the internet as a political community. A burnt-out car wreck, surrounded by tree trunks and branches sprouting shitake mushrooms, occupies the centre of this gallery. This mycelial network connects natural communication to the internet. *Kiss Kiss Kill Kill* is the neon sign from the local bar in her 1994 film, whereas *Escape Artist* juxtaposes a projected image of a red blood cell with *Brandon* (1998–1999), her iconic web-based project that explores a murder case via hyperlinked, interrelated narratives. Her sci-fi narratives are not only inspired by the latest technology, but they also deploy it. (Sue Spaid)

'KI\$\$ KI\$\$', through 3 August 2025, Haus der Kunst,  
Munich, [hausderkunst.de](http://hausderkunst.de)

Installation view SHU LEA CHEANG, 'KI\$\$ KI\$\$', with  
*Home Delivery*, 2025, Haus der Kunst Munich, photo  
Milena Wojhan