

Fabrice Gygi  
September 12 - October 24, 2009

In reserve

Fabrice Gygi's works do not comply with a performative scheme and are not destined for functional application. However, as both signs and technical objects, they maintain strong relations to implications of action and use. The works presented in this exhibition can thus be related to three categories: jewels, machines (*Fliessband* and *Star System*) and signs (*Strap-paints*). As elements of these three categories, the singular relation these works maintain to activity and functionality are facilitated by a subtractive method, by way of *putting* (action and function) *in reserve*. Objects, in the sense to which its full literality should be attached, are "exhibited": the machines will not work, the jewels will not be worn and the signs will remain lined up on the wall: what classifies them as works of art by giving primacy to the visual, declassifies them as everyday things.

However, one cannot gratify oneself with this commonplace – inactive art objects, animated solely by the eye of the beholder – since it is through this declassification that the objects Fabrice Gygi has devised fully achieve their function and are put into action in a potential mode. If *Fliessband* and *Star System*, machines consisting of conveyor belts and radial cutting blades mounted on rotating axes – whose fragments can be assembled, separated or combined, mounted or dismantled – do not have a real material function, it should be emphasised that they need not have one. Their virtual power, which does not fall within any tangible boundary, is related to their uses and their potential configurations. The same applies for *Strap-paints* whose rendering refers as much to the rigour of conceptual creations as to a generic signboard, and for the jewels whose shapes seem to want to constrain certain bodies but also seem able to bruise others.

The *putting into action* of these objects, by *setting them in reserve*, is at the origin of this strange state of latency and tension which distinguishes them and allows them to exchange their properties so that ultimately they might reenter into play with the categories which constrain them. The *Fliessband* and *Star System* machines certainly address a terrifying signal (carriage, grinding and cutting up of materials or bodies), but they also stand silently like bright, sparkling gems. The jewels are symbols with singular lines whose shapes refer to those of strangely fashioned technical objects (kinds of thimbles, awls and knuckle-dusters...). At the aluminium rails which draw the *Strap-paints*' signal one could hang or stow beings and things: they also trace in three parallel lines the marks of a blazon standing out against a red background...

If all the objects conceived by the artist beckon and address the visitor by combining the qualities of the technical and the symbolic (even allegorical), the hand-crafted and the industrial, the concrete and the abstract, the fetish and the trivial... in suspense of their activation and the potential of their functions, they liberate affects of seduction and threat which sow confusion in the moral categories of order and disorder. Without ambiguity, in ambivalence.

Christophe Kihm

Galerie  
Chantal Crousel