

David Douard
Bat-Breath. Battery

September 5 - October 10, 2015

While visiting David Douard's studio, I remembered a book about the lettrist, François Dufrêne. In particular, I recalled a passage in the introduction that mentions Cesare Lombroso's theories on the concordance of modern poetry, mental alienation, and public disturbances. Sadly famous for his theory of degeneration and criminal heredity anatomically identifiable in traits, Lombroso was wary of avant-gardes. He was worried about the harms that modern poetry's contagious character represented for late 19th-century society. The Turinese psychiatrist set out to analyze the phenomena of disassociation of words by comparing the brains of the insane and certain poets to a "factory that lacks its foremen while workers certainly manage to work, but in a such utter disorder and lack of coordination that the firm's production is worthless." Lombroso offers a disconcerting, almost Foucault-like intuition: the adversaries of a form, a gesture, or a thought are sometimes the most lucid exegetes.

David Douard's unhinged factory is also fueled by a poetic flow that contaminates the forms that it recycles, and then spits it out into the exhibition space. Deeply interested in lettrism, David Douard knows the disruptive potential within a semantic deconstruction. Language pervades his sculptor work, considering the poetry principle as a corrupted code, a computer virus which potential for change would reconfigure the material acting as if it were a glitch, an accidental clash of sounds or pictures for a computer malfunction.

The sculpting practice – reformulated under the angle of communication engineering – now becomes a field of hybridization, a universe in the center of which biology and communication sciences are subject to the same viruses, where any heterogeneity may get dismantled, reassembled, invested, or traded away. With this program, David Douard reveals and hijacks the transfusion processes that connect the biological, technological, political, mythological, and identity-seeking categories within advanced capitalism – as if there were an implicit cousinhood between the pieces that come out of his studio and the theoretical hybrid figure of cyborgs as Donna Haraway described it in the 1980s to shore up her cyberfeminism. In this exhibition, entitled *Bat-Breath. Battery*, laboratory test tubes become water bong, scowling mouths spit out cables and wires, texture effects intermingle, hair undulates under the synthetic surfaces. Between organism and machine, living and artifact, body and spirit, nature and culture, subject and object, or even masculine and feminine, the entire exhibition is filled with shifted meanings and transfers that go beyond these outdated dualities of modernism.

The very core of the exhibition is out of alignment since the gallery space constitutes an Internet radio receiver. It broadcasts poems read and mangled by the singer Pricilla Ay Avah whose mouth is fettered by an odd piece of jewelry, half-horse bit, half-dentures. The broadcasted live poetic flow then becomes a breath, smoke, saliva, waves, frequencies, aiding a practice of propagation and decentering. As photographs of spiritualists exhaling whitish substances in vogue in the 19th century, David Douard produces an ectoplasmic art, true to its etymology (ektos: outside / plasma: form), since it allows us to perceive the fluids that course through us and transform us.

Gallien Déjean

David Douard is born in Perpignan, France. He lives and works in Aubervilliers, France.

Bat-Breath. Battery is David Douard's first personal exhibition at Galerie Chantal Crousel.

His work has been featured in several international institutions and art centers, in particular: Fridericianum, Kassel (2015) ; Palais de Tokyo, Paris (2014) ; Biennale de Taipei (2014) ; Sculpture Center, New York, (2014) ; Astrup Fearnley Museet, Oslo (2014) ; Fondation d'entreprise Ricard, Paris (2012).