

TOOL-USE

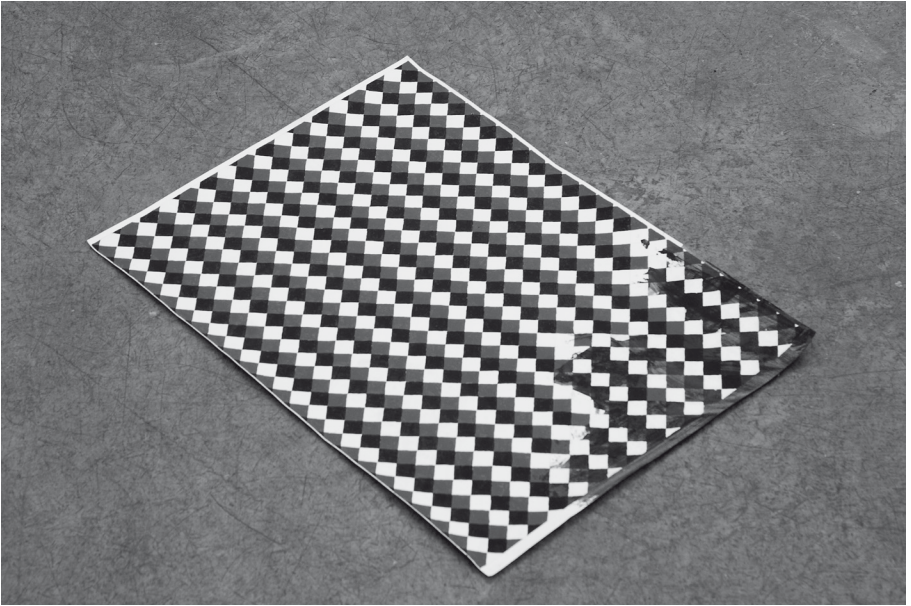
CONVERSATIONS OVERHEARD IN THE POST-READYMADE PARLOUR
CHRIS FITE- WASSILAK



(i)

A FLOOR MAT MADE OF INTERWOVEN PINK AND YELLOW CABLE TIES \ The e-mergence of niche audiences and subsumption of former subcultures make speaking of a 'contemporary neo-avant garde' seem like just another tree house club with flimsy laminated membership cards. Awkward too is talking of 'redemption' and 'rehabilitation', as if swanning about with a magic 'gallery wand', tapping hosepipes, garden pots and spades to pop them both literally and metaphorically on a pedestal. But gratefully absent from the stilted conversation are words like commonplace, mundane, humble, familiar, ordinary, workaday, discrete, banal, and lumpen. \ The den of the post-readymade (after this, 'PR') is where factory objects reacquaint themselves to manipulation and elasticity, where industrial processes are folded into a prism of subjective touches. \ The PR, necessarily, hovers unsteadily between times. It is retro, it is past it, nostalgic and yearning. It is bored. But it's also childish, excited, loaded, schizophrenic, looking towards something.

A SIAMESE EGG-SHAPED MASS OF DUST BUNNIES AND BELLY-BUTTON LINT ON THE COFFEE TABLE \ There's an odd balance achieved in what looks like a careless, taken-for-granted vacuuming up and grasping at whatever surrounds it, a promiscuity that is actually nuanced, experienced. The use of materials is a careful statement of a palette of influence, a site of comment. \ This is tired, maybe impatient, with the re-looking and re-appreciation of the object- the thing-in-itself has already been released, or at least we can't presume ourselves to try and release it, so we might as well see if another in-itself altogether can emerge somehow. Beyond sense, an unformed language and nascent critique.



(ii)



(iii)

A CURTAIN MADE OF PYRAMIDICAL USED TEA BAGS \ That isn't to say that change in the here-now is impossible, but it seems to me the importance of this work is in its contingency, in its constant asking where the actual location of subversion might be located. And it hints that it is latently present, not just in the normative weight of our 'everyday,' or the 'habitual,' however strange and irregular that may be, but in things, constantly. \ It points the way, by suggesting a methodology. The crucial point of the methodology is one of activity- not that of the artist, but the materials and the new form of the altered readymade itself. \ In this context, in this here-now, where the PR slouches casually against the wall, it holds up its model of action where the hands of the artist are almost an any-hand-whatever. The thing has a certain distanced, independent cool, a casual wave towards some old fashioned mischievousness. You can hear Rosalind Krauss saying, "...the temporality of the readymade is that of the conundrum, or riddle; as such it is speculative time;" then maybe the PR is the actual activity of trying to solve that riddle. / But it doesn't cross the threshold. This a position from which, I think, "I could do that in my garage," is one ideal response. The riddle remains, there is no permanent solution. It is the potentiality of action beyond the site proscribed as art, a mere suggestion of a moment of equilibrium, the dispersal of authority before its inevitable re-emergence.

AND SOMETHING VAGUELY LIKE AN OCTOPUS ON THE WALL MADE OF STRING \ So where does that leave us? Why now? It takes time to get used to things, I guess. Duchamp's bottle rack and snow shovel have already stood to numerous tangents and interpretations; this is only further fragments and compounds of the conversation. To get some distance, say a good 94 years since Fountain, to then re-approach it intimately, to rub it against your skin instead of just staring at it like some misshapen asteroid. To re-approach it back through the rise of the aesthetics of design and ergonomics, back through the practical. Somehow stepping back towards a sense of the personal, of a current reality but that has already been touched and bronzed by the cold, apparently unreal, hand of mass produced use objects. The ambiguously present hand, half invisible with a wry smile.



(iv)



(i) **Adam Thompson**

Untitled

2009

Reclaimed signboard, cast aluminum frame

167 x 112 cm

Courtesy of the artist

(ii) **Sean Edwards**

Painting Of A Photocopy For A Dolls House Paper (With Spill)

2009

Household matt paint on paper

42 x 29.5 cm

Courtesy the artist, Limoncello, London and Tanya Leighton, Berlin

(iii) **Matt Harle**

Untitled

1994

Cast acrylic paint, plywood, thread

35.6 x 35.6 x 41.9 cm

Courtesy of the artist. Photo: Toni Hafkenscheid

(iv) **Sam Keogh**

Head of Goliath

2010

Styrafoam, cardboard, mylar, tape

Courtesy of the artist

(v) **Amy Yao**

Not All It's Cracked Up To Be

2007

Glass, wood, newspaper, household paint

Courtesy of the artist and Jack Hanley Gallery, New York

Special thanks to all the artists for participating in this exhibition.
Also thanks to Chris Fite-Wassilak, Tanya Leighton Gallery, Limoncello,
Jack Hanley Gallery, Oonagh Young, The Arts Council of Ireland and
the British Council.

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www.david-beattie.net/tool-use

ARTISTS:

Sean Edwards (UK)

Matt Harle (US)

Sam Keogh (IRL)

Adam Thompson (UK)

Amy Yao (US)

CURATOR:

David Beattie

TEXT:

Chris Fite-Wassilak

18th June - 29th July 2011

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