

## LES CHOSES D'ICI-BAS

*Les choses d'ici-bas* is an exhibition of damaged works. They suffered after being completed, exhibited, transported, stored. Actually, it might be their status that is damaged. Various incidents stripped them of their intended order: they became something other than artworks, a follow-up. Some incidents were tougher than others. A few works fell. Others cracked or rotted. Some were vandalized, but some were not even touched. Something always happened.

*Les choses d'ici-bas* is not so much an occasion to cry for these works as it is one to rejoice, or at least to put a cheeky smile on. To paraphrase Leonard Koren on wabi-sabi aesthetics, we may wear blinders, but everything wears down in the end, even artworks and reputations. Our blinders wear down too. Let's embrace this subsiding then. For example, we might learn a couple of things about what goes on behind the scenes of each of these works. What is like to be exhibited close to a polluted, busy road? What is it like to be broken by your own maker? What is it like to travel in a dirty van, or eaten by worms? Why did you have to put me in that smelly storage room?

Archives are what we use to keep the intended order of things, among which are artworks. There is something compelling in the activity of archiving, and something even more compelling in the activity of archiving your own things. Imagine the artists of *Les choses d'ici-bas* striking the damaged artworks from their records, not to mention filling insurance reports or getting angry at vandals. What exactly are they doing there?

Recently, the Guggenheim collection in New York got us thinking. They "decommissioned" some of their artworks. Destroyed, removed from the physical or paper archive, they are no longer artworks. They used to be pieces by Donald Judd, made of--and sold as--mere instructions for fabrication of sculptures. They created such tangled legal impasse: a true fight between owners and the artist caused by unsatisfactory realizations and short tempers. The Guggenheim collection would rather make them disappear than deal with such a mess. These decommissioned works would definitely fit *Les choses d'ici-bas* now.

There is a philosophical theory according to which artworks are all the things with some aboutness. Artworks are about something. Conversely, all the non-artworks are all the things that are not about anything. *Les choses d'ici-bas* is a counterexample. The exhibition greatly harms this theory: many works in the show are no longer artworks, yet they are about many things. They have lots of aboutness after all, lots of stories. It is possible we have to trash this theory of aboutness, or at least ask a few questions about it.

Imagine a room full of hammers that are not hammers. How would they look? How would the room look? One can get an idea by strolling around the gallery DuflonRacz in the exhibition *Les choses d'ici-bas*, except there is no hammer on view. For the philosophers out there, thought experiments like this with the hammers are intuition pumps, and so should be the things of *Les choses d'ici-bas*.





Nine colourful pots with picturesque faces were presented on large pedestals. At about 9:30 pm, a drunken and turbulent individual knocked over one of the pedestals, which dragged another pedestal into its fall, which in turn dragged six others down. The sound of their combined falls was deafening. When the smoke cleared, only one pot had survived. Shocked.

*The Pots of Etablissement*, 2018  
clay pot, acrylic paint  
30 x 28 x 28 cm



The work was damaged during a duo show with Eva Jospin at the Chateau de Ratilly curated by Gregory Lang in 2012. The work, although the result of a ready-made process, was unique. I have never been able to reproduce it until now. Following the incident, an insurance procedure was put in place. This was laborious and insistent because it was necessary to explain to people outside the contemporary art world that the work in question was not reproducible.

*Condensed*, 2010  
Fresnel lens, spray paint  
26 x 26 cm

BERNARD VILLERS



In 2001, angry about some paintings i'd made with crates, I destroyed 3 or 4 by kicking them... At the last minute I saved certain carcasses that suddenly seemed worthy of a little interest. I sold one to my friend K.L, I photographed another one that appears in my recent monograph. And lets see... the last one, which was hanging on a fireplace among various knick-knacks is on display at the Rivoli.

LAURENT DUPONT



*Objets de Bruxelles (WIELS Collection, Spring-Summer 2013) original part 1/20*

*Cageot brisé, 2001*  
Wood, paint, staples  
9,5 x 39,5 x 6 cm



January 2018, Macklin Kowal makes a proposal for me to present something in his space called Sub Rosa. I've been in Athens for a week.

The date 14/02/2018 was the opening of *Moved*. Between the exhibition opening and finissage, the pieces were displaced, disordered and the ceramics damaged. Hidden between the bricks, a condom wrapper. On 06/03/2018 the closing took place with PROSECCO SUNSET, a surprise performance in my honour. The performers (Andrius and Macklin) decided, I realized rather late, to do a live dismantling of the exhibition, equipped with ice buckets containing bottles of Prosecco. The pieces were shifted in front of the crowd, the bricks thrown out of the window. With the financial support of Macklin, I decided to reproduce the damaged pieces. The replica, wrapped in cellophane, finds its place next to the original, the two form a set, a pair.

*Similimax Similimax*, 2018  
Ceramic, fur, seaweeds, bricks  
7 x 21 x 8 cm



Initially, it was only a mould for the realization of a silicone work presented in the exhibition "Do-it!" at the Maison de la Culture in Namur in 2012. But the piece ended up becoming a work of art, which was confirmed in an exhibition named "Aspen" at Art we care, a space next to an art restoration studio in Brussels. This negative thus became a tribute to Thomas Bernhard and his novel "Cutting Timber: An Irritation", written in Gothic letter, in the original language: "Holzfällen, eine Erregung". Indirectly, it is also an homage to Albrecht Dürer who defined the design of these characters whose geometry is based entirely on the figure of the square. In June 2020, about six months after its return to the studio, the work fell from a shelf that was fixed to a partition wall of this shared space. The artists studio-mates thought that the damage may have been a result of the artists anger, the culprit/s are still at large.

*Hommage à Thomas Bernhard*, 2012  
Plaster, wood  
23 x 129 x 3 cm



"Still life with open and closed forms" was a sculpture composed of several elements, laid like fruit on a tablecloth. Presented at the exhibition "Les fausses dents du prince" at the artist run space named Deborah Bowmann in 2016, it has since been taken from studio to studio, some forms have melted away, others have been given away or lost.

*Still life with open and closed forms, 2016*  
 Beeswax, pigments, Damar resin  
 4 x 36 x 23 cm



This work was created for the exhibition entitled '26.01.2018 until 05.05.2018' at the Catherine Bastide gallery in Marseille. The information inscribed on the plate indicates the dates, times and geographical coordinates at which the North Korean military observation satellite KMS-4 passed over Marseilles throughout the duration of the exhibition. The work, in the manner of a professional sign or commemorative plaque, was attached to the exterior façade of the building at 19 rue du Chevalier Roze. Like any object in a public space, it was exposed to the hazards of the street. Part of its content has been erased by the removal of a sticker from which traces of glue can be still distinguished.

*Une menace mineure, 2018*  
 Print on Bronze  
 31,5 x 41cm

## IŠTVAN IŠT HUZJAN



These two "Qeleshe", felt hats, traditionally worn by Albanian mountain people, are remaining elements of the work *Unnamed figure* by the artist Ištvan Išt Huzjan. However, there is one missing element that has been destroyed or abandoned four times. It is a tree branch on which the two hats were resting, the branch acting as a base. Conceived in 2015 during a residency in Prishtina, the work has since been presented in Ljubljana, at Art Brussels and at the Liste art fair in Basel. However, the branch could never be preserved, either because of a lack of logistical means or because it was considered replaceable and thus discarded.

*Unnamed figure*, 2015  
Woolen hats and tree branch  
Variable sizes

## FLORENCE CATS



In the summer of 2011 I hitchhiked for five weeks in Iceland. I kept a diary, punctuating my personal notes with excerpts from *The Waves* by Virginia Woolf. On my way back from the trip, while I was at the water's edge on a beach, a wave suddenly swept away my notebook.

*Carnet d'Islande*, 2011  
Pencil, ballpoint, felt-tip pen, pastel on paper  
21 x 15 cm



The bowl is an essential form of object in our practice, and generally in our lives, because of its function, scale and formal autonomy. This bowl in particular is very important because it corresponds to a fundamental stage in our relationship. Designed by one, enamelled by the other, it is the only bowl we have ever made with four hands, surprisingly. After having lived together for 7 years, the bowl fell and fractured the moment we decided to dysfunction. A few months later, we decided to have the bowl repaired by Catherine Algoet, in the Japanese tradition, using only Urushi natural lacquer in order to heal the shape, leave visible marks of the fractures, and to affirm the transformation of our relationship which has been modified but consolidated, enriched, liberated. The work goes on, the bowl still exists. In 2018, it was shown in the SPOLIA exhibition at the Grand Café in Saint-Nazaire, holding a place almost necessary in our eyes. As the affirmation of a practice renewed and repaired.

*Objet Incomplet (SPOLIA), 2018*  
 Glazed stoneware, kintsugi repair  
 ( urushi lacquer only, no gold leaf )  
 13 x 15 x 10 cm



This pocket jewel is also an object to read and touch. Made up of two elements and two engraved inscriptions, it is made to circulate from hand to hand, to oxidize and sheen. In 2019, on return from an exhibition the artist was unable to attend, the oxidation of the upper element had disappeared, giving way to scratches showing a voluntary intervention. The theory is that the oxidation, fully chosen by the artist, was perhaps considered a mistake by the exhibitors. However, the artist could not consent to these scratches, which are incompatible with the integrity of the work.

*re-&, 2019*  
 Silver, gold  
 3 x 7 x 7 cm

## BENJAMIN HUSSON



This sculpture was presented in Brussels in 2016. It was then packed and stored in several layers of bubble wrap. My studio was located at the time in a squat in Anderlecht, spacious but humid. It would seem that the beef fat used in the production of the soap provided a delicacy for rodents preparing for winter, even if it was mixed with caustic soda. The ingredients created a fusion of a friterie and a public toilet, the "Grande Bouffe" or the culmination of human passions.

*Human passions* - Fontainas, 2016  
Soap cast from tallow beef fat  
33 x 58 x 8 cm

## FLORENCE CATS



I worked on the storm phenomenon using news items printed on fragile papers that I flooded with water. For the question of reconstruction I glued other fragments of current events on fragments of stone from the floor of the house of my grandmother who had just died. The element with the title "The fight to build following the storm" fell and broke violently, mirroring the racial tensions evoked in the article from which it came:

*The toughest questions are how to rebuild, or whether to rebuild, amid the threat of evermore powerful storms. This has led to a debate less about economics and more about politics, class, culture and race, pitting the local majority-black population against the French state. The top French official on the island says she wants more restrictions on construction in the areas most at risk to storms. But residents fear they could be forced off property that has been in their families for generations.*

( *The fight after the storm*, The New-York Times, tuesday, october 22, 2019 )

*The fight after the storm*, 2020  
Stone, paper, inkjet print  
3 x (6 x 6 x 2 cm)



The residence in Tournai where I had set up my studio in 2013 lacked furniture. It was certainly at that time that I got into the habit of working and spreading out the work on the floor. A folder of drawings and printed pictures was also laid on the floor, against a wall. After the winter holidays I found in this folder a mouldy stack of drawings and pictures, half glued together. There had been water infiltration due to snowfall.

Sans titre, 2011  
Drawing on paper  
30 x 21 cm



This banner was exhibited in the Square Saintelette, opposite the Kaaitheater, between October 2019 and May 2020 as part of the project "A Temporary Monument for Brussels. After being exposed to light, wind, traffic and the rainy climate of the Brussels winters, its colour changed from white to grey and the textile finally tore. Thomas Caron, who invited Jacqueline Mesmaeker to carry out this project in the public space, wrote that this work seeks to make visible that which threatens to disappear. "J'ai vu que tu n'as pas vu (I saw what you did not see)", a recurring title in Mesmaeker's work, finds another resonance in this exhibition where the artist wished this flag to be folded.

*J'ai vu que tu n'as pas vu, (Gravures), 2019*  
Print on textile  
215 x 440 cm

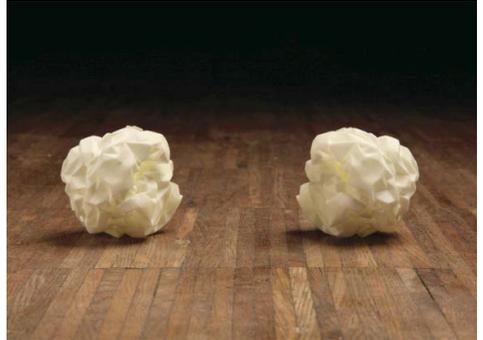
BAS VAN DEN HOUT



I see my studio and my practice as a kinda machine and want to be surrounded by objects and works to make this machine run as hard as possible. No distortion, only things that could trigger the mind. In the case of this work it seemed not to be such a good idea. Since I was working on another work and got a bit too excited, some dirt got onto the fabric and I was not able to get rid of the stain.

Boy in the corner, 2017  
Wood, clay, silicone, paint, fabric  
61 x 49 cm

ROKKO MIYOSHI



The paper balls came about the frustration of trying to make two A4 paper balls, one in each hand and at the same time, so that one ball would look exactly symmetrical to the other ball if placed next to each other, one being the mirror object of the other. After many tries, the only way to properly make them look exactly the same, was by 3D printing them. To my surprise, a few months after its production, the white polymer turned yellow, oily and translucent. At one of the numerous studio moves, one of the balls got a fracture.

Twice (Paper Balls), 2009  
Polymer, oil  
2 x (6 x 6 x 6 cm)



*V. No. 35* was made in 2016 from a white ceramic vase found at the Marolles market and cast in concrete to leave only the functional part visible, like a vacuum sealed in a solid. The following year, the piece was sold to a collector but after a few months it cracked, probably due to thermal shock. From my point of view this did not alter the purpose of the work but it was considered a defect by the buyer. We therefore agreed to exchange this piece for another that was immaculate. The status of *V. No. 35* is yet to be determined...

*V. N°35*, 2016  
Concrete, vase  
20 x 27 x 14,5 cm



The work was intended to be part of a series exploring sensuality and devotion in relation to public architecture. My usual process takes rare postcards of unloved or defamed buildings, systematically hand embroidered until legibility is severely obscured. It's simultaneously an act of caretaking and destruction. On this occasion I was frustrated by the sloppiness of my stitching and in a moment of rage, I ripped the image apart. Afterwards, I regretted the destruction of the image because the postcard was a very rare exemplar commemorating an extension to the passenger terminal at Dublin Airport in 1972. I reassembled the item as best I could and dispatched it (unwrapped) to be archived safely at the Office for Joint Administrative Intelligence O.J.A.I. in Berlin.

*Dispatch 2017049 (Dublin Airport)*, 2017  
Embroidery on commemorative postcard  
10,5 x 15 cm

ZINAÏDA TCHELIDZE



*Not another world* was shown for the first time in 2018 as part of a collaboration with Rachel Koolen for the exhibition *Pink Cloud* at Kantine . Since then, this "cloud" has had to move several times, it ended up temporarily on the 10th floor of tower no.2 of the World Trade Center in Brussels and ended up in the basement containers. However, I couldn't get rid of it completely, so I kept a few fragments of it in garbage bags. Like a cloud constantly tossed around, it is an entity in constant transformation.

*Cloud*, 2018  
Foam, wadding, glue  
Variable dimensions

SPECIAL THANKS TO

Piero Bisello  
Thomas Caron  
Daniel Dariel  
Giulio Erasmus  
Jot Fau  
Abigaël Huyard  
Luce Marmier  
Romain Poussin  
Henri Racz  
Francis Schmetz

EXHIBITION ORGANIZED BY

Florin Filleul  
Fabrice Schneider



LES CHOSES D'ICI-BAS  
17.07.2020 - 30.08.2020

Bernard Villers  
Bas van den Hout  
Zinaïda Tchelidze  
Olivier Stévenart  
Margaux Schwarz  
Rokko Miyoshi  
Mountaintcutters  
Jacqueline Mesmaeker  
Pierre-Pol Lecouturier  
Claire Lavendhomme  
Ištvan Išt Huzjan  
Benjamin Husson  
Valérian Goalec  
Jot Fau  
Gary Farrelly  
Laurent Dupont  
Hugo Dinër  
Emeline Depas  
Florence Cats  
Nicolas Bourthoumieux

/DuflonRacz/  
Chaussée de Waterloo 690  
1180 Bruxelles

Friday and Saturday  
2 - 6.30 pm

+32 472 04 24 84  
bruxelles@duflon-racz.ch  
www.duflon-racz.ch