

CONVENT Space for Contemporary Art  
Tennisbaanstraat 74, 9000 Ghent  
Fridays and Sundays from 2-5 pm, or by appointment

Egon Van Herreweghe – Discounts  
10.12 2021 – 30.01 2022

What is the value of things that are put on sale? Often it is about goods that do not sell and are seen as a burden by the seller. Merchandise whose unpopularity is reinforced by ostentatiously drawing attention to it. The phenomenon has its own iconography and we, consumers, are conditioned in such a way that we recognize it immediately.

*Discounts* consists of a series of six shaped canvases presented on a two-meter high red band, painted continuously on the walls of the exhibition space. The bright color, which regularly appears in the communications of price-fighting retail chains, is seen in color psychology as a color that creates urgency and incites action. Hence the red fire hose cabinets and stop signs.

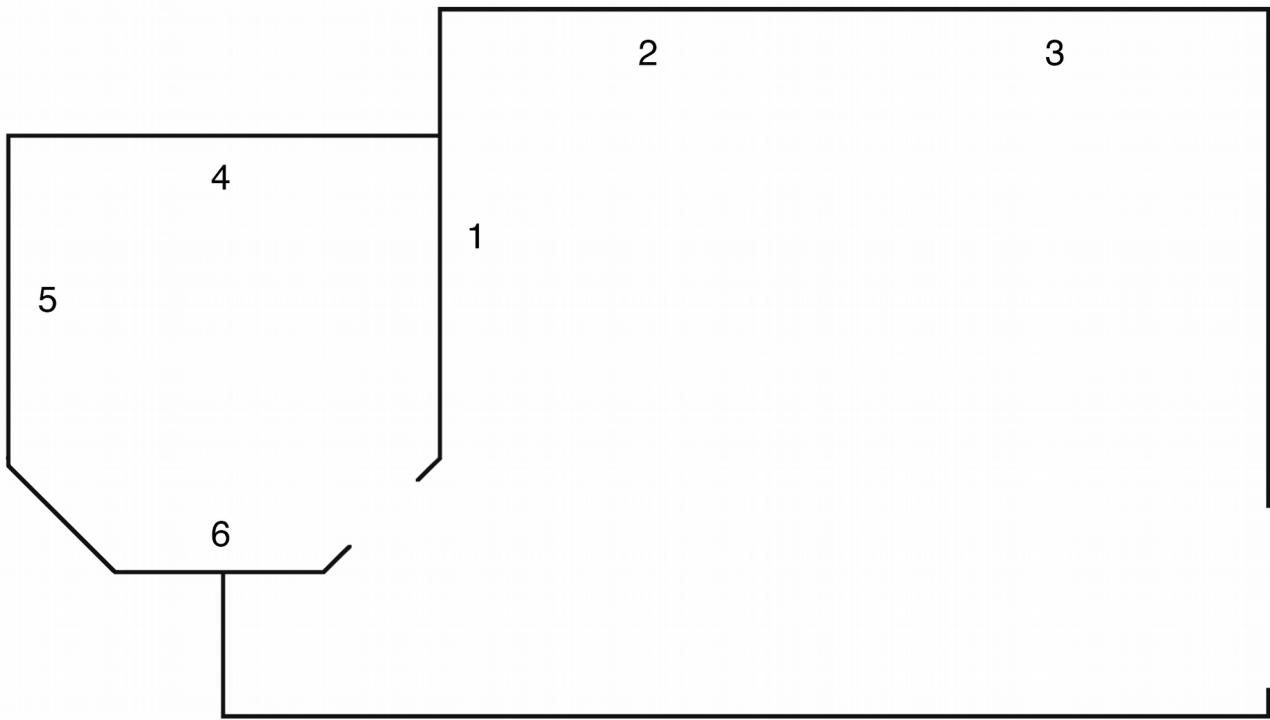
The raw linen canvas was delivered on a 10 x 2 meter roll by Claessens Canvas from Waregem. The modeling, stretching and preparation of the canvas with gesso was done by the artist. Assuming that 2 meters of height represents a value of 100%, the height of the six works is each proportional to the discount percentage they represent. For example, 20% is 160 cm, and 70% is only 60 centimeters high.

By isolating the percentages from the natural habitat of shopping streets and advertising leaflets, a deconstructivist game emerges, referencing both pop art and abstract painting. In the late 1950s, within the latter movement, the 'shaped canvas' emerged as a hybrid between sculpture and painting, breaking with the tradition of seeing the rectangular, almost sacred canvas as a window on reality.

Advertisements are by definition performative, designed to manipulate and influence our behavior. Where they normally try to entice consumers to make a purchase, here the discounts refer to themselves. There is no merchandise that they represent, no signifier. There is only the symbiosis with the substrate. Without the wall paint, the prepared canvases are unreadable and without the shaped canvas there is only a red painted wall.

While art is usually discussed on the basis of artistic values, *Discounts* highlights the market mechanisms behind it. A buyer chooses his own discount, and gets a work that is in proportion to the price. In other words: 'you get what you pay for', and thus no discounts in this show after all.

Maarten Dings



1. 40%, 2021  
plywood, mdf, linen, pva, gesso
2. 60%, 2021  
plywood, mdf, linen, pva, gesso
3. 20%, 2021  
plywood, mdf, linen, pva, gesso
4. 30%, 2021  
plywood, mdf, linen, pva, gesso
5. 50%, 2021  
plywood, mdf, linen, pva, gesso
6. 70%, 2021  
plywood, mdf, linen, pva, gesso

Egon Van Herreweghe (Ghent, 1985) investigates the role of brands and products in our consumer culture. With playful works, he explores the concept of 'lifestyle' in a broad sense. Sometimes he focuses on the visual representation of merchandise (as in the series *High Fidelity*, 2019 or *Apartment For Sale*, 2018), then again he focuses on the way goods are marketed (*Grand Cru*, 2020, *Who Else?*, 2018 or *Heidi's Delight*, 2017).