

dépendance

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Press Release

In old places like this, you should be able to find some small hidden corners where you can do all kinds of unlikely things, maybe unseen, or at least outside the big picture. Something you might not feel so good about later, but then it happened, and the niche, in a way partly responsible for the event, now protects it as a last resort. These hollowed or carved-out little spaces almost seem to be bitten into the surface of buildings, and if they have no other use than to feed the city in some cannibalistic act.

I was thinking of cannibalism again when I recently read about stone reliefs and the technique of creating the forms by extreme reduction, by carving and flattening the stone (in opposite to modeling and adding volume) to lay bare the image that is already embedded within the stone itself. Like stone eating up itself, I thought, to reveal and become its own other inside image. The half-exposed body parts of the relief are performing this new image, sometimes like a heavy, low-energy performance, but enough to push the gondola across the river, while the rest is still sleeping in the old nature. Or, as an art historian once was able to see it,

figures appear as if they are swimming in their stone, as if the whole history of the geological processes that created the marble has come to the surface of this representation—to be seen all at once.

When we talked a couple of weeks ago I told dépendance about some wax reliefs I was making. They said it's funny that the last time I had a show with them, we were collecting trash from the street, whereas now I arrive with these pre-fabricated pieces. I quickly reassured them that this hasn't really changed, and that I'm still looking out for the trash, too. But it's true that I feel more hesitant lately about using those things, or a sudden lack of energy overcomes me whenever I encounter an object on the street that I find somewhat "interesting". I feel too weak to even pick it up or shlep it to the studio. Even the interest itself makes me weak. And if I overcome this weakness and do take them, they often reveal a different truth about them than I initially assumed to see. For example, I first thought of those two bent plexiglass sheets that were found on the street as possible niches, stand-ins for contacts, or for real glass, but they are far more proactive than that. In fact they are always ready for a spontaneous, unpredicted deed, good or bad. Put them into any kind of situation and they will see something, do something.

In an email with the subject "Deconstruction Website", dépendance sent me a link to RotorDC, a company that sells left-over materials from building deconstruction, such as ceiling mounts, tiles, flooring, doors, etc. The website is quite special. For example, they provide a sense of size not by adding a measuring tape next to the item in the picture, but by holding it with their hands or placing parts of their bodies next to the object in the photograph. It's amazing how the sense of touch exceeds the calculated sense of externalization, how you understand the feel and weight of the object so much better by seeing its relation to a body.

If you check the website now, you'll find under the headline "Incomings", Rotor's announcement of the arrival of a "large batch of wooden moulds from Durobor Factory".

There is actually an exhibition not far from here about the Durobor glass factory right now, which opened exactly one day before my exhibition. In the accompanying text you can read that ...

"From 1928 to 2019, Soignies lived the rhythm of Gobeleterie Durobor, from its origins in a flourishing period, when the company was the European leader in the booming sector of glass production and at the forefront of technology, to the filing for bankruptcy, including the patents and innovations that made it famous."

Rotor's announcement reads further: *"We acquired the content of the former wood workshop at the bankrupt Durobor plant in Soignies. In it we found thousands of moulds presumably used for the fabrication of machine parts for the glass factory. The pieces are made almost entirely in solid wood and were fabricated with great precision and skill. We do not yet understand how some of the objects were used but plan to find out. In the meanwhile we have started unpacking and a few hundred pieces are already on sale in our shop. Prices start from just a few euros (for small and simple pieces) to hundred euro or more for the most complex and largest pieces. Unfortunately, we do not take*

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remote orders for these materials at the moment. Each piece is different and selling them online would require thousands of pictures.”

I was thinking I could get some of these moulds to create my own private glass machine, out of an incomplete set of tools, to maybe only produce certain aspects of glass, instead of the whole material. The outcome would include aspects like tilted transparency, breakability, slow fluidity, or sound resonance.

But when we went to RotorDC, the same sudden weakness overcame me again. Seeing these moulds, like orphans, deprived of their parents, factory and machine, and any hopes for a future in which they still could all make sense together, I wondered: is it a good deed, to save at least a few of them from Rotor’s aggressive individual pricing, protect a small group of them and give them a new future in the arts? Or am I not in fact complicit with Rotor, or even worse, instrumentalizing each piece for my particular interest, only to enrich myself? Rotor at least says that they don’t know how the pieces were used. In an artwork instead, does the lack of knowledge, or the lack of sense of belonging, even matter for the building of a new and special glass machine? In this energy-killing ambivalence the only option I saw was to choose only the most boring pieces, simple forms, and to leave all the more complex interesting moulds there. How to choose even what would be interesting, among thousands of them, most still in crates? Maybe some other customer could still acquire the whole set and only a few simple pieces would have to be redone. Thinking practically, respecting the thing as a tool, before dreaming it into an artwork... Or a practical cowardice, stealing the more interesting pieces in pictures, which again can mean stealing their soul. At least, I thought, my machine could be a place where the fish and the fished can coexist with each other, in the same mechanism, side-by-side.

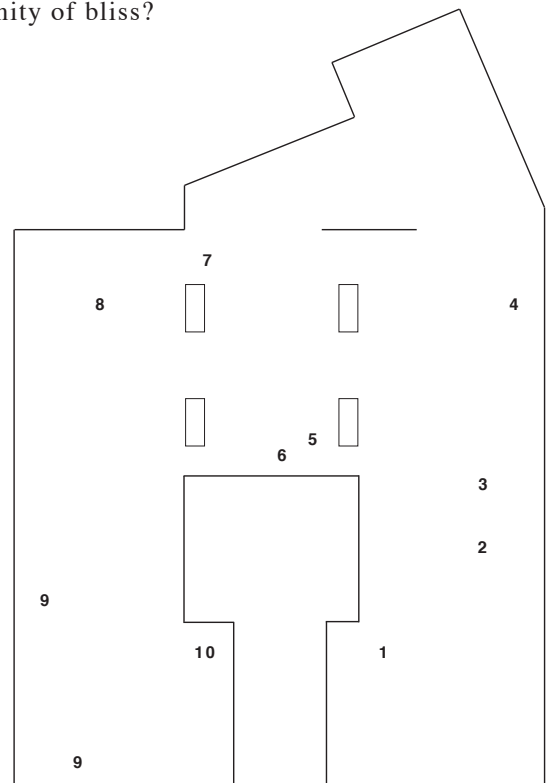
During the installation of this show, Michael brought up a text by Baudelaire about a glass maker. It starts off by asking how someone who is hardly able to push himself to any kind of action is then capable of a sudden act of hatred or of a risky, unreasonable, bad deed. Already by the sound of his voice from the street through his window, the narrator develops a strong antipathy about the glass seller, then makes a plan to let him suffer by calling him up to his 6th floor, only to scorn him when finally he showed up. I examined his glasses with interest and said to him: “What, you don’t have colored glasses, pink, red, blue glasses, magic glasses, paradise glasses?” You insolent man, you dare to walk through

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the slums and don’t you even have glasses through which to look at life in beauty?’ And I pushed him hard towards the stairs, where he stumbled grumbling. I went to the balcony and grabbed a flowerpot, and when the man appeared at the gate entrance I tombé dropped my rocket vertically on the rear edge of its mount. Terrified, he fell to the ground and smashed the thin fortune of his wanderings on his back, which erupted with a clatter as if lightning had shattered a crystal palace.

These hysterical jokes are not without danger, and they often cost dearly. But what cares the eternity of damnation who tasted for a second the infinity of bliss?



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- 2 **Contact Lens with Tile Relief**, 2023
- 3 **Niche**, 2022
- 4 **Draft Proposal for Yellow Glass**, 2023
- 5 **Niche**, 2022
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- 8 **Lens-Eating-Glass-Making-Machine**, 2023
- 9 **Sound Resonant Yellow Glass**, 2023
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