

22.05.2014

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*We went to see: Autonomy Exchange Archive @Galerie West in The Hague*

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**WE WENT TO SEE: AUTONOMY EXCHANGE ARCHIVE @GALERIE WEST IN THE HAGUE**thu, 22 may 2014 14:44:42 by [eurart](#)

Just as Marcel Duchamp's limited edition compilation set of 94 collotype reproductions, *The Green Box* of 1934, containing notes and sketches explaining details of his masterpiece *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even (The Large Glass)* of 1915-1923, such types of archival or "leftover" materials, collections, reproductions, or anthologies are often the products of obsessive documentation of the artistic process that form an integral part of the works themselves.

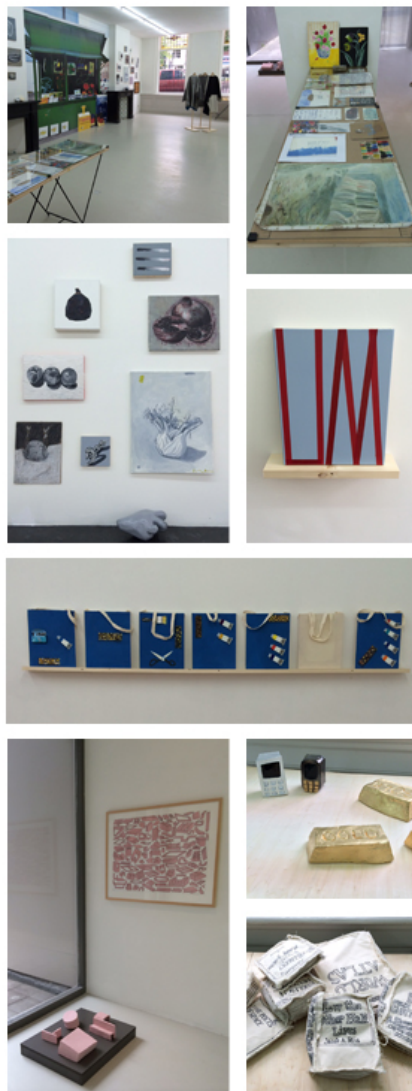
They are often even able to re-perform the artwork in alternative platforms and permutations, thereby taking on an active role not only in the interpretation but also in the existence of the piece. Such notions are put forth in the exhibition entitled [Autonomy Exchange Archive](#), presenting the works of New York-based artists Paul Branca, David Horvitz and Fawn Krieger at Galerie West in The Hague (on view through June 7, 2014). By way of restaging and representing multiple works by each artist in different ways, in the spirit of Duchamp's *Green Box*, this exhibition, too, becomes an archival collection of active ingredients, which rather than becoming the focal points of a passive retrospective, are able to channel an extension of the artists' works in alternative forms.

Through various threads, the conceptual and intimate presentation of *Autonomy Exchange Archive* sets out to challenge current economic and cultural value systems and models of accreditation and exchange, which offers a welcome blow of fresh air in the often over-commercialized contemporary art scene of today and unveils an intelligent experimental approach to defining artistic production, display and dissemination.

**Cultural Value Systems and Accreditation**

David Horvitz's (1981, Los Angeles) *Drugstore Beetle (Sitodrepa Paniceum)* of 2010, encompassing the preservation and display of an edition of 30 miniature exhibitions of works by 27 artists, takes on a comic approach to address the problems associated with the accumulation, accessibility and exchange of artworks within institutional settings. Each individual edition is housed in an archival box, which as they are donated to public libraries around the world, become subject to the different rules and regulations of the respective archives they enter.

Horvitz's work *Untitled*, an intimate display of letters, drawings and objects that have been mailed to Zanna Gilbert of the Department of Drawings at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York, evokes similar notions and questions regarding the

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Following World War II, as modern art and societies were undergoing radical transformations, artistic experiments around the world were largely characterized by a search for freedom of expression and spontaneity. New materials and techniques were developed and introduced and a return to abstraction was imminent on most artists' agenda.

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In "[Brancusi, Rosso, Man Ray - Framing Sculpture](#)," Museum Boijmans van Beuningen in Rotterdam (on view through 25 May 2014) presents the works of three markedly different artists from an original perspective. The presentation introduces the visitor to the intimate worlds of three creators who although came from different countries - Romania, Italy and the U.S. - and represented different generations both literally and artistically, had something very powerful in common in terms of their artistic sensibility, approach and working method. As it is well known, all three played an instrumental role in the development of modern sculpture (the Italian Medardo Rosso (1858-1928) was the first alongside Rodin to introduce Impressionism to sculpture, the Romanian-born Constantin Brancusi (1876-1957) is regarded as the founder of modern sculpture with his highly abstracted forms, and the American Man Ray (1890-1976) was an important contributor to the conceptual underpinnings of Dada and Surrealism) but as the show highlights, the convergence of their

role and directionality of the interrelatedness of institutional contexts, objects and artworks. One wonders whether placing a collection of letters as an archival collection within the museum in this way or subsequently presenting it as part of a gallery show qualify it as an artwork that forms part of the museum collection and in turn predispose it to certain expectations or conclusions regarding how it is viewed? In a more direct sense, these artefacts reference some of the objectives of mail art, on the notions of journey, distance, communication and intimacy and call to mind ideas of modernity and bureaucracy, censorship, a sense of being watched and regulated and passed through a system of economic, social and geographic exchange.

Three painted umbrellas in the exhibition are the products of a project conceived in a related spirit, *20% Chance of Show* (2012), organized by Paul Branca (1974, Bronx NY) as a temporary intervention/exhibition in the MoMA's lobby. Six artists were invited to contribute an artwork, rendered on the surface of an umbrella. The umbrellas were put on display in the museum's grid pattern umbrella stand and only a few visitors in the know admired them in their open form. The grid served as a reference to constructivist tendencies in Modern art, while the umbrellas symbolized social exchange through their historical role as a popular public accessory in 19th century Paris, employed as both tools of a language of flirtation and aggression. Displaying the works in a public context within the museum space was intended to challenge the way we think about public spaces.

#### Alternative Economic Models

Other "leftovers" of Branca's participation-based projects on view include three works from his painting distribution project, *Couch Crash*, presented at Golden Parachutes in Berlin in 2010, articulating an alternative economic model for artistic exchange. As part of the project, a series of text paintings (spelling out the words of the German phrase, "Hey guys, could I crash over your couch? I am really tired and can not go on.") were given away in exchange for a night's stay on the receiver's couch. The leftovers, which remained on view at the gallery were executed over time, with different layers of unused oil paint added at the project's different stages, documenting the artistic process as a whole.

Branca's *Shoplifters* (2013) are a restaging of actions performed by the artist in the past, whose implied presence renders him a self-reflexive performer. The seven compositions, each corresponding to one day of the week, are constructed using a stretched canvas tote bag, and as if transparent to the naked eye, their painted contents provide a record of a series of items lifted on the respective days. One bag stands empty – he couldn't get anything that day. Monday presents a "readymade" object, a pack of Orbit chewing gum, perhaps an invitation to include the viewer in the shoplifting, a physical entry point to the narrative, blurring the boundaries between real and represented even further. Looking at the lifted items – cereal bars and tubes of oil paint, the

significance presents an even more complex picture than that.

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#### WE WENT TO SEE: ERIC FISCHL - FRIENDS, LOVERS AND OTHER CONSTELLATIONS @ALBERTINA VIENNA

fri, 28 mar 2014 16:34:49 by [eurart](#)

Uniquely embracing the psychologically and sexually-charged content of American figurative painter Eric Fischl's (b. 1948) works, the beautiful Albertina Museum in Vienna currently showcases the artist's first major solo exhibition in nearly 30 years and the first retrospective of his works on paper, interspersed with some impressive sculptural work in [Eric Fischl - Friends, Lovers and other Constellations](#), on view through 18 May 2014.

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question arises as to whether there is a statement being implied in a broader sense here about the state of affairs in the contemporary art world at large: the basic necessities for making art, material and energy appear against the backdrop of a luxury cobalt sheen projected by the pigments of the highly-priced Cerulean blue oil paint.

Branca's works often come into existence through the participation of other artists, peers or passers-by. It was in this vein that his truly original project, [Fruit and Vegetable Stand](#) was realized as well in 2012 and then again in 2013. Branca's artist friends were invited to render various fruit and vegetable items in a medium of their choice. As part of a two-hour sale/performance, the works were placed on offer at the graffiti-clad, green, rickety produce booth in Queens, not far from MoMA PS1. The prices of the works were decided upon by the artists and they could keep all the proceeds. Branca asked the artists to make a grisaille version of their works as well, which would serve the purpose of an archival document. It is this material documentation that is left today of the project and is on view at Galerie West for the first time. Tapping into the realm of defining the worth of art, Branca's concept for the project was partially inspired by the well-known story of Edouard Manet's [Bunch of Asparagus](#) of 1880, which was 200 francs overpaid by the collector who acquired it. Manet proceeded to paint a solitary asparagus and sent it to the collector with a note saying "There was one missing from your bunch."

#### Art as Social and Economic Exchange

Fawn Krieger (1975, New York) is likewise interested in challenging the economic and cultural value of objects. Through fabricating a sculptural world, her aim is to mirror and restructure pre-existing sites of exchange.

Inspired by the Pop Art objects and objectives of Claes Oldenburg's *The Store* (1961-64) in downtown New York, which transformed commonplace items, commercial products and comestibles into sculptural renditions as a humorous commentary on the consumer society of the capitalist era, Krieger's [COMPANY](#) (2007) was created as a functioning everything shop offering objects and services by artists at Art in General in New York City some four decades later. The consumer in her shop becomes a performer and the roles of subject and object are reversed. In the intimate, ritualized setting of a commercial space as a platform of forum and exchange, the artist investigates whether it is possession we are after or company in our habits of consumption, i.e. whether the motives behind our participation in a consumerist society are economic or social.

Krieger's objects on display as part of the nomadic shop at West, rendered in ceramics, textile and other everyday materials include symbolic gold bars, pills, cell phones, and books. Some of these fake-real objects come to life in the constructed narratives of Krieger's [Dramas](#), a collection of TV-commercial length video vignettes. Similarly to [COMPANY](#), here as well, the subject and object are

reversed in the constructed intimate settings, where tactile contact plays an important role.

For more information about the artworks and for some additional exhibition views, visit our [album](#) on our [facebook page](#).

