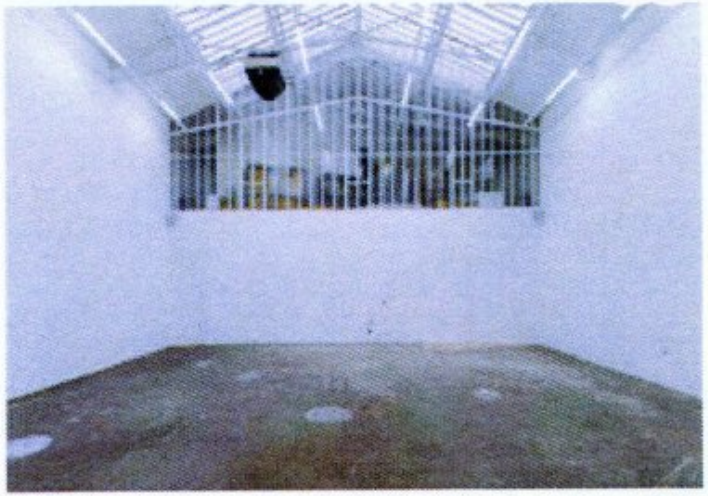
ARTFORUM

Étienne Chambaud

BUGADA & CARGNEL
7-9, rue de l'Équerre
November 19–January 22

"In this show objects fall, and break," reads a line in the text authored by artist Étienne Chambaud that accompanies his "*Objets rédimés*" (*Redeemed Objects*)––an exhibition in which, to put it more accurately, fallen, already broken objects litter the floor at Bugada & Cargnel in perfectly contained circles of debris. These forms were created through a ritual plummeting of glass reproductions of everyday objects––such as a rope, a book, and an umbrella––from the gallery's nearly thirty six-foot high ceilings. Temporary tubes were used to contain the shards upon impact but were later removed; the result is a surreally serene aftermath of an act of destruction.



View of "Objets rédimés" (Redeemed Objects), 2010

Chambaud's object executions take a number of cues from the early-twentieth-century avant-garde. They embrace, and then develop, a theme and a brand of wordplay belonging to Marcel Duchamp: "*rédimé*" and readymade are near homonyms, certainly when pronounced in French. Yet where the original readymades elevated the mundane "by the mere choice of an artist," according to Duchamp's own definition in the "Abridged Dictionary of Surrealism" (1938), Chambaud's glassworks are redeemed only by their fall. The violent process deployed in "*Objets rédimés*" likewise channels a persistently French preoccupation with the guillotine, which Georges Bataille linked to the development of the modern museum in a 1930 issue of Documents. Chambaud is very aware of these legacies. Consciously adopting a Bataillean vocabulary of use-value and sacrifice, and a dadaesque linguistic agility and playfulness, he holds up a mirror to contemporary artmaking and display, and then shatters it before us.

— Victoria Camblin