Flash Art
The World's Leading Art Magazine · International Edition · Vol. XLIV · No. 277 · March - April 2011 · €8.00 Italy only · $ 14.95

ÉTIENNE CHAMBAUD

BUGADA & CARGNEL - PARIS



It is quite easy to understand from Étienne Chambaud's installation at Bugada & Cargnel that its author is very smart. Entitled "Objet Rédimés," it plays ironically with Duchamp's concept of the readymade.

Glass reproductions of everyday objects fall on the ground in a regular pattern. The items are produced in a limited series and, after they have all been broken, the glass fragments are melted down to form a new unified object. The artwork is of course constituted of the whole process itself.

Obviously, in the title and in the process of production lies ambiguity. "Objet Rédimés" alludes to the concept of redemption, and it provokes a series of questions. Is it in the destruction that their redemption will occur? Is Duchamp, who George Steiner famously called "the artist programmer of the 20th century," a new Christ for the cult of contemporary art? Is art a new religion? And if destruction is the condition for redemption, wouldn't the concept of redemption be questionable in itself? In that case, the redemption of art through the concept of "readymade" would not function either. As a consequence, the exhibition would be a sign of Chambaud's creative process looking back into the past to find the possibility to move forward. By integrating a reflection on the readymade inside of the artwork, he makes it a token of his thoughts. Indeed, at the end, the objects that are part of his installation are not readymades; they are designed objects used for the occasion of destruction. By playing with these ambiguities, Chambaud presents an artwork that is intellectually suggestive and visually efficient.

Donatien Grau



Above: ÉTIENNE CHAMBAUD, Objets Rédimés 2010. Installation view at Bugada & Cargnel, Paris. Left: ÉTIENNE CHAMBAUD, Objet Rédimé (The Books), 2010 (detail). Fragments of glass, wire cable, pulley, variable dimensions. Courtesy Bugada & Cargnel, Paris. ©Aurélien Mole.