



Abb. Inks oben im UZS: Tobias Kaspar / ASPN gallery, Tom Früchtl / Nusser & Baumgart München; Michael Kienzer / Foto Jorit Aust; Beate Engl; Markus Wilfling / gallery artepari graz

zeigt | presents:

ready made today

Eröffnung / Freitag 26. September 2008 / 18 Uhr
Samstag / Sonntag 27./28. September 2008
11-18 Uhr (OPEN ART)
Ausstellungsdauer bis 25. Oktober 2008

Duchamp Memorial Night /
Mittwoch, 1. Oktober 2008, ab 20 Uhr
de ou par / Thomas Girst / Olaf Nicolai / Eva Kraus

mit / with: Anonymous, Tim Bennett, Ecke Bonk, Anton Bosnjak, Beate Engl, Tom Früchtl, Matthias Hammer, Tobias Kaspar, Michael Kienzer, Alexander Laner, Bernhard Lehner, Christian Muscheid, Pravidoliub Ivanov, Ruairiadh O'Connell, Michael Schrattenthaler, Marco Schuler, Markus Wilfling, Stefan Wischnewski, Johannes Wohnseifer, Elmar Zimmermann

The first of the theme-oriented group exhibitions to be held yearly at Steinle Contemporary is devoted to the current production of the readymade. The composing, reassembling, reworking or simply the selecting of common objects and presenting them in the exhibition context is an art practice that dates back to Marcel Duchamp. Since nearly 100 years, this artistic process has repeatedly produced surprising objects, which are as humorous as they are intellectually stimulating, and which consistently question classical art production.

Öffnungszeiten: Dienstag, Mittwoch, Freitag 12-18 Uhr, Donnerstag 12-21 Uhr, Samstag 12-15 Uhr, oder nach Vereinbarung. Während der bayerischen Schulferien oder zu Messezeiten nur nach Vereinbarung.

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The act of preserving found objects is frequently the starting point for an artwork. Through the event of transformation, previously unnoticed or unknown dimensions appear and, in a mysterious way, produce a surreal net product of simple objects. These objets trouvés (found objects) possess a patina and nostalgic character. Duchamp's readymades, however, disassociate themselves from the object trouvé since they were conceived to be free of emotion. According to Duchamp, the readymade is based on "visual indifference," meaning that it should neither follow "personal taste" nor arouse "aesthetic desire". In the case of Fountain (1917), he selected a simple and, in every respect, familiar object, the pissoir or urinal, and presented it in the exhibition context. Via this simple transfer, he redefined the abiding conditions of an artwork and permanently puts the reaction of the viewer to the test. Duchamp's main concerns were the ironic gesture, the intellectual confrontation, activating perception, and giving considerable thought to art in general. Working with everyday objects has become a recurring constant of artistic works since then.

But what is the task of the readymade today and its function within art? Provoking the public with the simple coup of exhibiting everyday objects in the sacred halls of the gallery or museum no longer works. Also, through this transfer alone the mass-produced product no longer becomes immediately charged with an aura or acquires any fetish-related contents, needed by an object in order to exist in the art context. So what is it? Like in the past, does it concern the context in which art is exhibited? Will the rules of the game repeatedly undergo a reordering? Do discursive capacity, mediation and the reception of the individual object stand in the foreground? Is it the unwillingness to contribute something new to the excessive world of available goods? Is it the joy

of creating from the existing wealth of objects? Does the intellectual work dominant the individual characteristic style? Or, in the final analysis, is it still, first and foremost, about the charm of an object and its aesthetic balance.

The spectrum of the works selected for the exhibition "ready made today" ranges from the simple, found object and the readymade reflecting Duchamp's work methods to functional objects whose transformation or recycling culminates in creating consumer items of another order. A wide variety of motives and processes lead to the production of these works.

Certain works—also true in Duchamp's oeuvre—first reach a state of completion through their title. A good example of this is the unpretentious Styrofoam object by Elmar Zimmermann, a work he calls The Ice Age of Artistic Research. This title brilliantly illustrates that recognizing special qualities in mundane objects is the absolute basis of artistic creation. This hypothesis is underscored by a collection of anonymous found objects.

Interventions performed on popular products can decisively change their reading and broaden the view toward new content-related and formal qualities. Marco Schuler distorts scooter tires to point where one recognizes the semblance of (human) heads in the diverse modeling. Johannes Wohnseifer screws together, exactly where they bend, two shell-like seats from Arne Jacobsen's famous designer chair, "the ant", and the title he gives his work, Butterfly, underscores the result. Anton Bosnjak arranges in half circles, one atop the other, two commercially-available sets of bits for a screwdriver. Through this transformation act there emerges a mysterious object, which quickly inspires an association with the teeth of a skull.

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Apart from having an eye for what is genuinely special, the act of preserving is also part of the process. Christian Muscheid saves a section of the paint-stained and visibly worn-down floorboards of the classroom of Professor Jerry Zeniuk, from the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich. By declaring this a work of art, such witness bearing does more than preserve itself as a vertically-presented object; it also evolves to the projection surface for its own story, and to a fictional history in the viewer's mind.

Even the uniqueness of aging, items fallen into disuse, can serve as vital material for the artist. Bernhard Lehner's works consist of flea market merchandise, which he combines and further develops. He reworks found objects and even creates furniture from them. So the material used at the outset receives a new function.

The fetish of the simple object is celebrated. In accord with a garden pavilion's dimensions, Matthias Hammer erects the replica of a champagne bottle's cork fixture. Ecke Bonk sends from the South Pacific the instructions to place an aluminum ladder as though it was erroneously left in the gallery. Tobias Kaspar presents a pair of men's jeans spread out over the floor with a stiletto-heeled shoe on top of it. Also by him is the chocolate bar with a bite taken out of it. His work implies a performance- and process-related presence.

Two kinetic objects inscribe the readymade's otherwise static dynamics. The red banner by Beate Engl rotates without stopping in the metal bucket. The same applies to the cup by Micheal Schrattenthaler, an object whose second-by-second movements mark a counter-clockwise rotation per minute. Alexander Laner's toolbox rattles to the beat of We Will Rock You.

Nonsense and irony are more or less present in each of these objects. Pravidoliub Ivanov's light bulb hangs from a 300-meter-long cable, which he

works into an enormous knot. Ruairiadh O'Connell's mini-sculpture consists of innumerable red dots—the spots that appear beside sold artworks—pasted one atop the other, and he calls it The Wonky Willie. The ball-playing net Stefan Wischewski hangs in a corner of the gallery strangely resembles a spider's web.

A phenomenon peculiar to objects that appear in other contexts is that they become perceived in a totally different light. When their use no longer dominates the foreground, other qualities, hardly noticed before, suddenly become visible. Or reversed, the charm lies in making objects dysfunctional, as in the case of Markus Wilfling's drastically isolated, bath tub left on the grass. Michael Kienzer, however, consciously exploits a product's function, in this instance that of a tripod. He extends two of these objects, one above the other, between the floor and ceiling, creating a space-disrupting sculpture.

The readymade's further development was considerable over the last decades, together with new approaches drawing from its principles. Therefore, too, objects that only appear to be readymades or found pieces are rather conspicuous now. Tim Bennett imitates standardized materials—the corrugated sheet metal only appears to be part of an overseas container; in reality, this is constructed. Tom Früchtl's paper bag only appears to be old and wrinkled—every fold and smudge is painted on. This reversal of the act of finding, as demonstrated by the meticulous imitation of the found object, concludes the wide selection of chosen objects.

With these ironic and fast absurd gestures, viewers find themselves positioned extremely close to the reconstruction of incidental objects of Fischli & Weiss. As with the artist duo, here, too, something asserts itself with great humor and sympathy, and it possesses the not to be underrated potential to become a cult-object endowed with a fetish character.