

KOENRAAD DEDOBBELEER: THE SENSELESS MOMENTUM OF OUR TIMES

Exhibition dates: 27.05 > 31.07.2020. Tuesday to Friday, 11:00 to 19:00 h. Saturday: 11:00 to 15:00 h.

The first exhibition of Belgian artist Koenraad Dedobbeleer at ProjecteSD happened in April 2009 in a duo presentation with artist Asier Mendizabal. The two authors met long ago, in 1997. Their personal relationship, affinities and the profound understanding that they have of each other's work made that two-person exhibition possible and meaningful. This was also their introduction as ProjecteSD's represented artists, already more than 10 years ago.

The link between Mendizabal and Dedobbeleer has continued over these years and most recently has materialized in a text that Mendizabal contributed to *Kunststoff*, Dedobbeleer's first survey publication (2018). Mendizabal's text refers to the solo exhibition Dedobbeleer's had in Culturgest, Lisbon in 2010 titled *A Privilege of Autovalorization*, which in turn is the title of a sculpture by Dedobbeleer that we showed at ProjecteSD back in 2009. Instead of producing a new press release we thought that Mendizabal's essay would be a good way to accompany today's show. There is no need to write or produce more sometimes, just use what is already there, makes sense and maybe has not been read or seen enough. So here it is, *I guess one could say animize*, an essay by Mendizabal on Dedobbeleer's work.

"The intimate relation of the domestic space—and especially the objects that inhabit it—with memory and imagination" is a fragment in Mendizabal's text. Reading these words I cannot help remembering that *A Privilege of Autovalorization* was in fact a work that was acquired by a young, passionate, well informed and loyal collector who left us too soon, ten years ago, Antonio Fernández Villalba. I would like to dedicate this exhibition to him and his family and to those that have left us recently, collectors, colleagues, artists, in this strange and exceptional moment. *The Senseless Momentum of our Times*.

The exhibition has been conceived and installed following Dedobbeleer's guidelines but in his physical absence, given the current context. We are most grateful to the artist for his effort, braveness and complicity.

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[I guess one could say animize](#) (text by Asier Mendizabal published in *Kunststoff*, König Books, Ltd., London, 2018)

I know Koenraad would share the appreciation of the potential in this simple, almost silly idea: furniture is always composed by the relation between a function and a set of legs. The four legs elevating a horizontal plane or receptacle (in a bed, a table or a cabinet) seem strangely reminiscent —if one adopts that idea—of the physical constitution of animals domesticated for work (a horse, a dog, an ox) implying, maybe, a lost totemic analogy between use and obedience, in inanimate objects and animals respectively, shaped by millennia of human culture. We do call them 'legs', after all, in a hardly concealed acceptance of the predisposition we have to animate the objects with which we establish a more intimate contact. Is this anything other than a *boutade*? Well, maybe not, but it is one thought that comes to my mind when I recall the memory of the exhibition at Culturgest that Koenraad titled *A Privilege of Autovalorization*. Finding that this title is a decontextualized fragment fished out of a sentence in Gaston Bachelard's *Poetics of Space* (1958) confirms my intuition that the mood at stake in the exhibition was indeed related to the intimate relation of the domestic space—and especially the objects that inhabit it—with memory and imagination: a relation to the images of one's memory, based not on the evocative strength of a recollection fixed to a partial object that we link to a given event, but to an inexplicable attraction to the slight displacements between the object one remembers and the image one imagines. The grammar of this exhibition, then, could be categorized as a *topoanalysis*, following Bachelard's term: a systematic study of the sites of our intimate lives. Such a task is bound to bring not a comforting recognition of the revered objects of what is familiar (or literally belonging to one's family) but rather a confrontation with the *Unheimlich* that, in Koenraad's case, is processed through a salutary resort to practical humour. And there is, of course, a bunch of works which feature, mimic, distort or replicate furniture legs. Most notably tables. But I do not claim that it is their mimetic relation to living beings that effects this animating quality in the objects. What animises these sculptures is a precise exercise of estrangement, in which constitutive elements of what would seem like furniture or fixtures are

combined with unexpected, improbable parts that build aleatory organisms. And they do so in such way that the objects appear as if arranged in a self-organising principle, which imbues them with an uncanny vitality.

In a way, the enigmatic sentence from which the enigmatic title of that show is taken, also implied an exercise of animation—of personification, even—this time not the animation of things, but of the very process of daydreaming, which is the action that charges the intimate objects of our memory. ‘Daydreaming even has a privilege of autovalorization. It derives direct pleasure from its own being’ writes Bachelard, investing the act of reverie with an incomprehensible capacity to derive joy from its existence (*elle jouit directement de son être*). I cannot help but feel a correlation between the self-awareness of Bachelard’s reveries and that of Koenraad’s introspective sculptures.

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Koenraad Dedobbeleer (Halle, Belgium, 1975) lives and works in Brussels, Belgium.

Dedobbeleer’s work uncovers the surprising in the familiar. As an attentive observer of reality, the artist bases his work on the presentation of objects and spaces which accommodate tenuous transformations. His objects, sculptures and photographs are the result of his very subjective contemplation of the urban and architectural fabric of our daily environment.

Some of Dedobbeleer’s recent solo shows include exhibitions in the following institutions : Kunstverein Hannover, Hannover, Germany (2019); CAC Vilnius, Vilnius, Lithuania (2019); La Salle de Bains, Lyon, France (2019); Kunt Museum Winterthur (Switzerland) ; WIELS, Brussels, Belgium, (2018); GAK, Bremen, Germany (2014); Kunstmuseum St. Gallen, Switzerland (2012); Culturgest, Lisbon, Portugal (2010); and Kunsthalle Bern, Switzerland (with Rita McBride) in 2008, to name a few. His works are included in public collections such the Frac Bourgogne, Frac Ile de France, Frac Pays de la Loire; Frac Normandie Caen, in France ; Kunstmuseum St. Gallen and Kunstmuseum Winterthur, Switzerland; Mu.ZEE, Ostend, S.M.A.K, Gent and Extra City Kunsthall, Antwerp, Belgium; V-A-C Foundation, Moscow, Russia and the Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid, Spain, among others.

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