

„Book Stories“.

Art Objects by François du Plessis

One cannot flip through François du Plessis' book objects. At least not in the way we readers and viewers of pictures, we seekers of advice and amusement, we wanna-be commissioners and readers of children's stories are used to. These book objects are firmly screwed, in parts glued; their bodies cut up, ripped, some whitened, others wrapped in zinc, pressed between wood pieces, bound to one another in contrast to their tale. Often it does not become apparent which book has been used here. For François du Plessis books are genuine material in the original, tangible, mechanical sense – not as Heiner Müller's thought quarries from which whoever can read and understand can pick to create something new for reading and understanding, but they solely are objects to treat and act upon. Books have a history – yes. They are cultural artefacts – naturally. But that is not important, not decisive, none of the objects is based on this. Neither the extensive works nor those which reduce space, constrict it.

Nevertheless – or rather because du Plessis rejects the book as intellectual stronghold – his book objects have a narrative power, a secret of which only they can tell us, only they can relate of what they remind us through their shape, the interaction of added invented materials, the character, the colour and the remaining text fragments perceptible on the surface, and through the ubiquitously visible power, the bonding, the clasp. We cannot turn page after page, but still we read amazing stories if we immerse ourselves, follow the endless meandering turns, decipher the cover. We browse in the mind, in our own reading-book-experiences.

Rather more than for other artists, such who paint or sculpt or photograph, for du Plessis the choice of material is first and foremost a work defining limitation because it is at the same time material, palette, carrier of idea, image and form. He commits himself formally – there are rarely books above certain measures, even the volume follows, one might believe, fashion, because novels nowadays with more than 350 pages are rare – so works arising from the deconstruction of only one book have a very similar bodily frame. Also the scope of aesthetic possibilities is narrow – the

method of intervention is (always) of mechanical origin; this includes the whitening which marks earlier works as well as the joining of single parts.

On the other hand, in the new large-sized book-cover alliterations I see delightful painting analogies; earlier works already roused memories of landscapes, there were horizon lines and space diagonals, natural and artificial landmarks. These however are 'built' like paintings – perhaps with a larger degree of ironizing intuition as the common classical 'flat ware'. Irony after all is what especially fascinates me with the new works: a series of similar looking objects, each arising from an art book – identifiable by the visibly placed spine. Impressionism, Picasso and others.

We see nothing but immediately remember one or the other work.

Francois du Plessis encourages us to think – and plays with the values.

Then from now on the works include a genuine Picasso, a genuine van Gogh, a genuine

And all this is successful without du Plessis referring to the book contents, the stories – to quote the title as name of the work is the utmost form of intimacy between his work and that of the others.

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Stefan Skowron