

Lequeux, Emmanuelle. [Translation by Jessica Johnson] "Pour un art de la décroissance: des oeuvres recyclees a partir de dechets". *Le Monde*, January 13, 2011. http://www.lemonde.fr/culture/article/2011/01/13/pour-un-art-de-la-decroissance-des-oeuvres-recyclees-a-partir-de-dechets_1465127_3246.html.

For the Art of Decay: Works from Recycled Waste

The decay has its followers, its adversaries, its demonstrations. It now, too, has its exhibition: "Rehab, the art of re-", on view until the 20th of February at the EDF Foundation in Paris. Here nothing is lost, nothing is created, everything is transformed: the twenty invited artists chose as raw material waste and recycling – everything goes. Used cardboard, foam mattresses, old books, sticks of wood, cut up geography manuals... Any debris serves as their raw material. Even the graphics, superb, of the cartels is inspired by forgotten typography.

A monumental work of the exhibition: it is comprised of charred tires, a completely artificial plant sculpted by Douglas White. No room here for nature: it's the paroxysm of our society of overproduction that the artists show us. The young Eva Jospin-Thoretton's lace from a bit of brown cardboard boxes, a fragile sculpture that promises a short life. If the butterflies here seem like pins on the wall, it is actually the "skin" of household appliances tanned by Christian Gonzenbach: the hairdryer on the phone, they are flattened and exposed on the wall like an herbarium.

Greenest? While some of the artists are, it's not the result of a demonstration of good conscience: rather the desire to rehabilitate the ruins of objects produced, (a tower arm?), from industry. Others take a malicious pleasure in questioning new certainties: with his sculpture conceived from molten plastic bottles, the Danish Tue Greenfort underlines the fact that almost twenty liters of water and 40 grams of hydrocarbons, sulfur oxide and other carbon monoxides are necessary to recycle this detritus. So where is the virtue?

Two pioneers of the 1970's are put in perspective with regards to this new ecology: Mierle Laderman Ukeles and Gordon Matta-Clark. From 1978 to 1980, the first spent the two years with scores of garbage collectors from New York City. In a multitude of photographs, she thanked them symbolically for their invisible and thankless work done to benefit the whole community. This volunteer residence was most beneficial: she attracted the attention of City Hall (or the Mayor), who embarked on a major operation to modernize the waste-collecting system. As to the second, Matta-Clark, he sends his truck to the landfill, perfectly symbolizing the "American Way of Life": in a Technicolor film entitled "Fresh Kill", one sees the red machine smashed by construction machinery, until it is reduced to dust.

The young Marseille Damien Berthier follows in Matta-Clarks lineage, with more lightness: a video depicting him persistently trying to properly store garbage in the street, in a perfect geometry. A few seconds after the end of his performance, the garbage collectors come and mess up his beautiful arrangement. Lastly, some note the poetry of their abandoned objects: and Gyan Panchal, who sculpts a single sheet of plastic by the enforcement of a string, and destines this eminently electrostatic object to become invaded by all of the dust generated in the duration of the exhibition.

But it's the young Canadian named Steve Lyons who proves the most stunning. At first glance, his installation does not seem like much: the fragments of paper, dirt, pieces of wood, laid unimportantly over the ground. This mess is at the same time filmed by an installed camera within the piece that re-transmits the live image on a television screen. Thanks to the effect of perspective, what one sees on the screen is the appearance of a famous work by Robert Smithson, with its crossed mirrors and reflections of sand. Nothing, absolutely nothing is suspected in this jumble, that it could hide a work of art of the 1970's. The decay has its miracles.

"Rehab, l'art de refaire". EDF Foundation Gallery. 6, rue Recamier, Paris 7e.