

Flash Art

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MATHIEU MERCIER

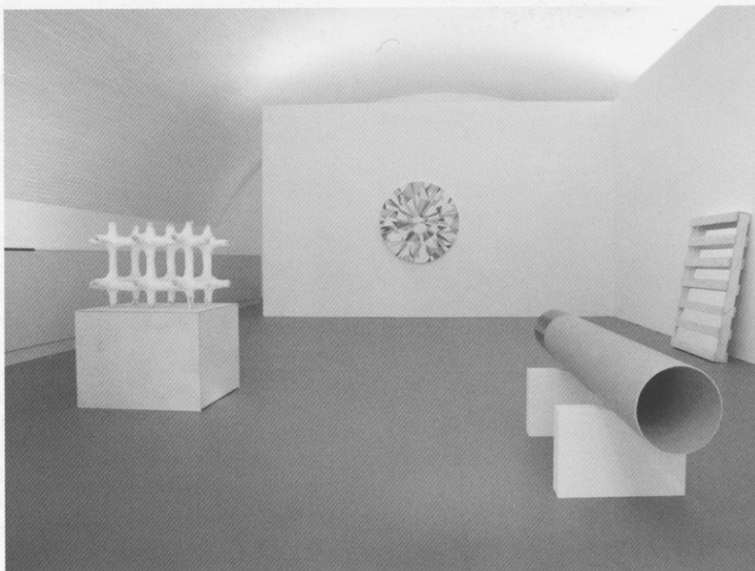
MEHDI CHOUAKRI

Mathieu Mercier's most recent exhibition introduces a new series of works that radically question their own conditions of reception and perception. Not an installation, nor a mise-en-scène, but a carefully planned assemblage of independent elements, the show aims to challenge visitors' capacity to gain information from aesthetic forms.

A cardboard tube, one end of which has been painterly plunged into tar, rests on two plaster bricks. Nearby, a simple plinth introduces a sculpture comprised of wooden grid-work covered in plaster. A strange object in iron — a small ball attached to a rod by a rough hinge — simply lies on the gallery's desk. Mirroring the traditional dichotomy between painting and sculpture, surface and form, motive and material, all the works refer to modernism in some fashion, either through an abstract motif (grid, stripe) or a recurrent principle of assemblage (specifically Gerrit Rietveld's working process).

Mercier's new work seems to correspond to a radical desire to challenge the way even the finest connoisseurs of his work will read and understand it. Indeed, this series of work is remarkable for the way it exposes radical changes within his artistic vocabulary and reveals even more complex cognitive layers. Mercier is essentially concerned with knowledge. If each work is a production tool, it also exposes the processes through which it has been conceived, allowing the viewer to acquire information on his or her environment while no longer referring to any obvious potential use. In fact, even if the artist admits to his fascination with the act of making objects, his continuous attempt to reposition and redefine art objects and aesthetical motives has now reached a remarkable complexity, further testing the conditions of the reception and perception of his artistic production.

Florence Derieux



MATHIEU MERCIER, exhibition view at Mehdi Chouakri Gallery, Berlin, 2004.