


NATHALIE KARG

DORIAN GAUDIN

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DORIAN GAUDIN

(born in 1986, Paris, France)

Dorian Gaudin is a New York-based artist who works in sculpture and installation. He studied at the École Nationale supérieure des Arts Décoratifs, Paris (2009), the École Nationale supérieure des Beaux Arts, Paris (2011) and Le Fresnoy, Tourcoing, France (2011). His installations often include masterfully engineered machines that lack any explicit purpose, yet move spontaneously, animated from within. These autonomous and unpredictable works of art allow us to question the nature of objects and whether we engage with machines as active users or passive viewers. Gaudin's work has been shown at galleries and institutions nationally and internationally, including Palais de Tokyo, Paris. His work will be included in the Guangzhou Triennial (2018) and the Greater Taipei Biennial of Contemporary Art (2018).

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DORIAN GAUDIN

B. 1986 in Paris, France

Lives and works in New York, NY

EDUCATION

- 2011 Le Fresnoy, Studio National des Arts Contemporains, Tourcoing, France.
- 2011 ENSBA, Ecole Nationale supérieure des Beaux Arts, Paris, France
- 2009 ENSAD, Ecole Nationale supérieure des Arts Décoratifs, Paris, France

SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2022 (upcoming), Solo show curated by Ji Ran, OCT Boxes Art Museum, Foshan city, Guangdong, China
- 2019 Future Flirts, Gallery Pact, Paris, France
Climax Change, Ghebaly Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
- 2018 The coffee cup spring, Nathalie Karg Gallery, New York, NY
- 2017 Dirty Hands On, Dittrich & Schlechtriem, Berlin, Germany
Rites and Aftermath, Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France
- 2016 Second Offense, Galerie Pact, Paris, France
Jettison Parkway, Nathalie Karg Gallery, New York, NY
- 2014 For Cowgirl, Window Project, Nathalie Karg Gallery, New York, NY

SELECTED GROUP EXHIBITIONS

- 2021 Shady Beautiful, curated by Anna Hygelund, Malin Gallery, New York, NY
Heedlessly, with Margaux Valengin, PACT, Paris, France
- 2020 Won't You Be My Neighbor, Nathalie Karg Gallery, New York, NY
Elle & Lui, Dorian Gaudin and Robert Janitz, Pact, Paris, France
To Martian Anthropologists, curated by Chun Yi Chang, New Taipei City Arts Center, Taipei, Taiwan
The Cultivation Syllabus, François Ghebaly, Los Angeles, CA
- 2019 Room for Failure, curated by Omar Lopez-Chahoud, Piero Atchugarry Gallery, Miami, FL
What's Up London, by LVHART, Frieze London
- 2018 Guangzhou Triennial, Guangzhou, China
Greater Taipei Biennial of Contemporary Art
Liquid Dreams, Ghebaly Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
New Lights, Galerie Francois Léage, Paris, France
- 2017 What's up Americas, by LVHART, Frieze London, London
Que la Famille, Duo show with Justin Meekel, Galerie PACT, Paris
Singing Stones, Palais de Tokyo, EXPO Chicago, Chicago, IL
What's Up New York, LVH ART, New York, NY
- 2016 Untitleds, Dittrich & Schlechtriem, Berlin, Germany
Your memories are our future, Palais de Tokyo, Zurich, Switzerland
Rebranding Floes, Galerie Jérôme Pauchant, Paris, France
Outer Market. History in Motion, Maison James, Paris, France

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- 2015 C'est la vie?, Occidental Temporary; Curated by Neil Beloufa, Villejuif, France
démocratie, curated by Edouard Montassut, Tripode, Nantes, France
- 2014 Derrière, après les chutes, C L E A R I N G, Brussels, Belgium
- 2013 Always yours, Des objets manques, Des monuments, Balice Hertling, Paris, France
dés-orienté(s), ISELP, Brussels, Belgium
Soirée muette - Palais de Tokyo, Paris, France
- 2012 MIRACLES: 7 Reboots, DUMBO Arts Center, New York, NY
ES BICHES, C L E A R I N G, New York, NY

PUBLIC COLLECTIONS

High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA
Rubell Family Collection, Miami, FL
Collection VR D'affaux, Paris, France
Collection Cookie Butcher, Jacques Verhaegen, Antwerp, Belgium

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

- 2018 Bury Louis, "The Coffee Cub Spring", Brooklyn Rail, October 2018
- 2018 Dayal Mira, "Critic's Picks", Artforum, September 2018
- 2018 Kröner, Magdalena. "Ich mag es, wenn die Technik sichtbar bleibt und trotzdem etwas Magisches passiert", Kunstforum251, 2017
- 2017 Browning, Frank. "Roberts, Love, & Fate in Paris," Hufingtonpost (February 2017) [Online]
- Fronsacq, Julien. "The Mechanism of the Emotions – Interview with Dorian Gaudin," Rites and Aftermath, Palais De Tokyo, Le Presses Du Reel (Exhibition Catalog)
- Sutton, Kate. "Incomparable Theatre: The Splendid Ambiguity of Dorian Gaudin's Machines," Rites and Aftermath, Palais De Tokyo, Le Presses Du Reel (Exhibition Catalog)
- Relinger, Marine. "Infernal Machine," Mouvement magazine (March 2017) [Print]
- Zagha, Muriel. "I Hope One Day To Have A Deep Conversation With The Chair I Am Sitting On", Elephant Magazine September 2017
- 2016 Steadman, Ryan. "The sculpture that gets around," Observer (February, 2016) [Online]
- Tang, Jo-ey. "Dorian Gaudin," Artforum (October, 2016) [online]
- 2014 Sutton, Kate. "Neil Beloufa and Dorian Gaudin," Artforum (May 2014): 33 [Print]

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ARTFORUM

Dorian Gaudin

Nathalie Karg | NEW YORK

September 12 - October 21, 2018



View of "Dorian Gaudin," 2018. *rather than found objects suggests something more like a joke—as emphasized*

In the center of Dorian Gaudin's current show is *The coffee cup spring* (all works 2018), a giant yellow conveyor belt that forms an elaborate loop through the space—a rectangular prism with additional horizontal, vertical, and upside-down segments. The belt itself is composed only of two chains, which carry not consumer products but two lone objects rendered in fiberglass: a disposable coffee cup and a houseplant. Jerking along endlessly at a rate slower than a moving sidewalk, the objects almost mount a commentary on postconsumer

waste. (Perhaps the brown planter could be made from the recycled coffee-cup sleeve?) But their status as crafty representations rather than found objects suggests something more like a joke—as emphasized by the inclusion of a second fiberglass coffee cup on a windowsill in the back of the gallery, as if left by a gallerygoer.

Pivoting from the steel conveyor belt's associations with industry, consumption, and construction, the other works in the show are more architectural, insisting upon a DIY aesthetic as applied to a prefab house: Here is the floral wallpaper (*Forget me not carnation*), there are the stairs (*Things that do the same*), look at the wood paneling (*Busy undercover*). The omnipresent whirring of the central mechanism implies that all of these items might at some point zip into the center of the room, rotating as needed to conjoin into a makeshift house.

This emphasis on synthesis and orders of operation was particularly important to Gaudin; rather than applying wallpaper to a support or affixing wood paneling to drywall, the artist made the smooth fiberglass simulacra first, then tore them from their supports and affixed new backings. Though these additional steps perform little critical work, they do infuse the exhibition with a sense of fun, à la Rube Goldberg.

— Mira Dayal

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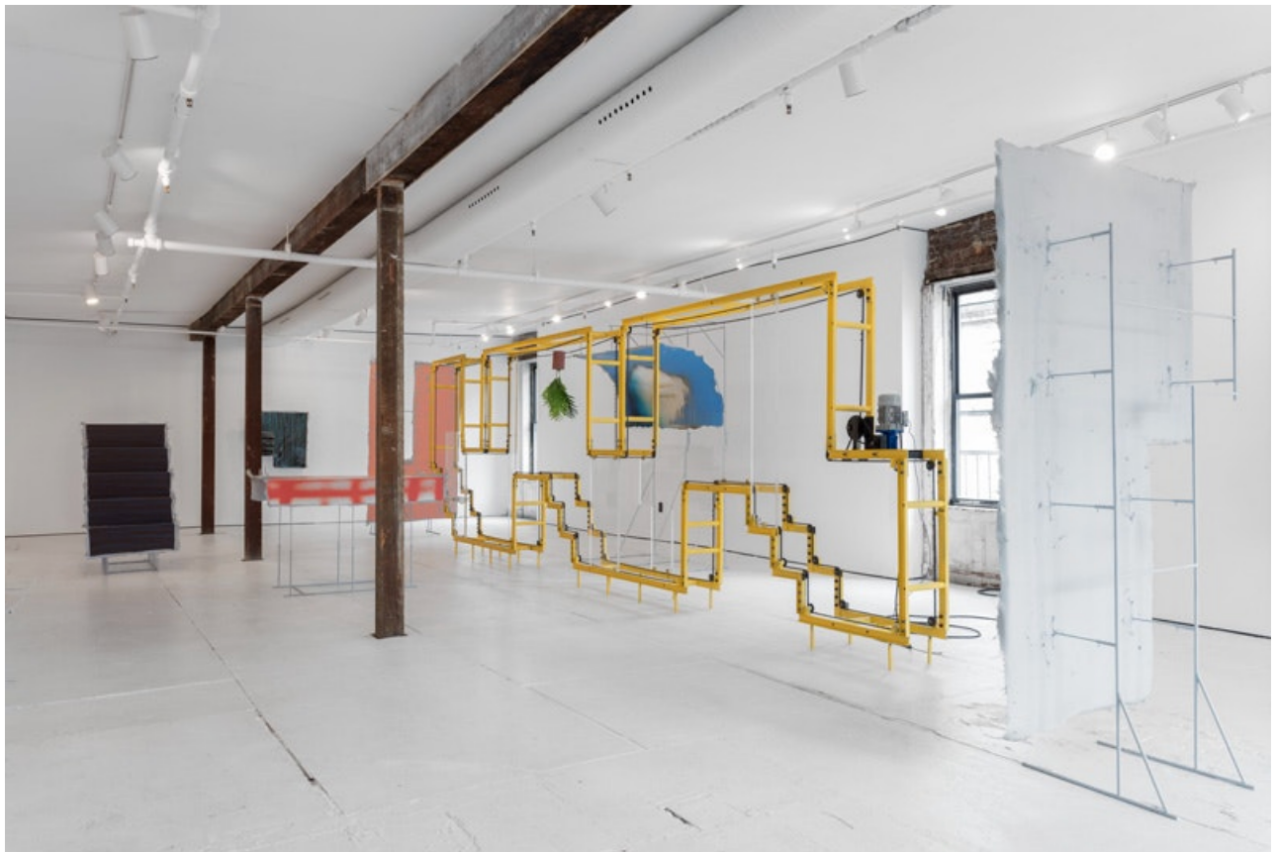


ArtSeen

Dorian Gaudin: The Coffee Cup Spring

Nathalie Karg | NEW YORK

September 12 - October 21, 2018



Dorian Gaudin, *The Coffee Cup Spring*, installation view.

The sculptor Dorian Gaudin has been making a name for himself with kinetic installations that combine Alexander Calder's economy of form and Jean Tinguely's gearbox aesthetic, teasing viewers with the stirrings of what seem like autonomous machines. For Example, his disquieting 2016 exhibition at Nathalie Karg Gallery, Jettison Parkway, contained an imposing, 9-foot-wide aluminum cylinder whose constellation of visible internal gears propelled it back and forth across the gallery in wobbly, unpredictable lurches. His jittery 2017 *Rites & Aftermath*—a solo exhibition at the Palais de Tokyo—centered around a 36-foot-long steel sheet that resembled a conveyor belt and whose gradual expansions and contractions set off sporadic chain reactions among the metallic chairs and apparatuses positioned around the room. Gaudin's kinetic works have the teasing, slow-motion drama of a Samuel Beckett play, in which, because so little changes from moment to moment, tiny plot

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developments produce outsized effects. In other words, as in a Beckett play, the action's apparent pointlessness is part of its point.

The centerpiece of Gaudin's current exhibition at Nathalie Karg is an eponymous, 25-foot-long installation (2018) constructed out of two parallel tracks of interlocking steel I-beams, spaced a foot apart from one another, evoking a jungle gym, a roller coaster, and an assembly line all at once. Painted warm yellow, the I-beams have been bolted together to form stepped, rectilinear circuits. A long gear chain, like that of a bicycle, runs along each I-beam track as a quietly droning motor inches the chains along the tracks. In two places, a flat metal bar has been affixed to both chains and is then used as the base for a sculptural object—a fiberglass disposable coffee cup; a fiberglass flower pot containing a synthetic palm plant—that completes droll, unhurried loops around the machine. How viewers understand the sculptures' surrealistic procession—whether a jokey critique or eccentric embrace of technological monotony—depends, in part, on how they construe the installation's suggestively ambiguous title. The “spring” in The coffee cup spring could be read as an ironic verb or an ingenuous noun.



Dorian Gaudin, *The Coffee Cup Spring*, installation view.

The choice of a coffee cup as the titular sculptural object provides an important clue here. The contents of a coffee cup induce jumpy excitement when consumed by humans, but the vessel itself is tranquil and impassive, a relationship not unlike that of the installation's own content and form. Indeed, *The coffee cup spring* differs from much of Gaudin's previous kinetic work in its acceptant attitude toward the absurd existential drama it enacts. Whereas the machines in *Jettison Parkway* and *Rites & Aftermath* both performed jerky movements that evinced anxious discomfort—a large cylinder staggering like a drunk across a sidewalk; clattering metal chairs skittish as colts—*The coffee cup spring* performs one steady, continuous movement that evinces yogic calm. The machine's actions still appear arbitrary and futile, but the machine itself appears untroubled by that fact.

Gaudin's commentators often note the way his kinetic installations invite descriptions that ascribe agency to machines. The exhibition's press release makes a similar case in its invocation of object-oriented ontology, a prominent recent strain of anti-anthropocentric philosophy that ponders questions of being and agency in non-human entities. While such considerations are perhaps inevitable when it comes to Gaudin's work, his installations' droll, mechanical repetitions make this line of inquiry less techno-utopic than it might appear. His machines do seem to exercise a type of agency but it's a circumscribed, impoverished one. *The coffee cup spring*, in particular, restricts the range of movement of both the machine and its passive component sculptures in a manner that verges on mocking.

The exhibition as a whole makes apparent that the architectural dimension of Gaudin's kinetic work is just as important as its agential one. Surrounding the titular installation is a series of multiform and multicolored fiberglass sculptures. Each sculpture consists of a thin sheet of fiberglass that has been set in predominantly rectilinear—sometimes curved—forms whose edges have been left frayed. The

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fronts of each fiberglass sheet have been painted with a reverse printing technique—akin to the inky impression a newspaper comic strip creates on silly putty—that has left behind variously colored wood grain and floral patterns. Mounted on the wall or floor with steel support rods, the fiberglass sculptures look like floating fragments of wallpaper or paneling, as well as a staircase in one instance and a tablecloth in another.

In a notable development for Gaudin's work, the sculptures are positioned around the periphery of the central kinetic machine in ways that put all the artworks in architectural dialogue with one another. *Enduring sensual objects* (2018) and *Cloudy Day* (2018), for example, have been arranged to create a view of an artificial horizon at installation's mid-section. *Forget me not carnation* (2018) and *Routine from outerspace* (2018) bookend the installation lengthwise to produce a demarcative framing effect. Even the sculptures' structural supports signal architectural intent in the way their rods and right-angles echo the forms of the central installation's I-beams



Dorian Gaudin, *The Coffee Cup Spring*, installation view.

These architectural configurations make smart and pleasing use of negative space. Both within and across the exhibition's artworks, openings, gaps, and cutouts abound, ventilating the mood. Several plexiglass panels affixed to the central machine also serve to partition and define space without making it feel congested. These airy qualities contribute to the sense of calm acceptance that pervades the exhibition. Whereas one conspicuous strand of kinetic art depicts mechanization as menacing and teleological—from Tinguely's self-destroying sculptures to *Survival Research*

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Laboratories' agonistic steampunk robots—The coffee cup spring incorporates light, sometimes humorous touches that soften the feel of its hard-edged components.

More than any of its specific effects, The coffee cup spring's architecture stands out in Gaudin's developing oeuvre for its deliberateness. His previous installations contained architectural elements but none so holistically articulated as here. Jettison Parkway, for example, also contained a central kinetic installation (the steamroller-esque cylinder) surrounded by peripheral wall-hanging sculptures (John Chamberlain-esque panels of crumpled metal). But while the conceptual relationship between that exhibition's center and periphery was apparent, the individual artworks' spatial and compositional relationships across the gallery space were less developed. The coffee cup spring's architectonic cohesion is a subtle and compelling sign of growth in a body of work that trades on the tension between subtlety and spectacle.

—*Louis Bury*



Photo: Louis Debordes

Dorian Gaudin

“I Like it When the Technology Remains Visible and Something Magical Happens Anyway...”

April 1, 2017

The French-American artist Dorian Gaudin, born in Paris in 1986, explores the tension between statics and movement, control and chance in his kinetic works. His works always revolve around the application of movement and its effects: whether in the form of a collapsing wall, which he showed in a group show at Balice Hertling in Paris in 2013, or an uncontrolled rolling cylinder in his first solo show in New York, "Jettison Parkway" in of the New York gallery Natalie Karg in 2016. For the cabinet exhibition "Rites and Aftermath" in spring 2017 in the Paris Palais de Tokyo, he built a complex

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machine park, at the center of which was an apparatus with a twelve-meter-long sheet made of thin, elastic spring steel strip that was set in motion at irregular intervals.

Dorian Gaudin, son of the choreographer Jean Gaudin and the dancer Sophie Lessard, who studied 3D animation before switching to art, showed a performance in his first German solo exhibition in Berlin in the Dittrich & Schlechtriem gallery in spring 2017. Its sculptural center, a fragile guitar object made of riveted aluminum and polyurethane foam, was destroyed by himself in the process. Gaudin's wall objects also play with the moment of destruction: the thin aluminum of the pictorial body is crumpled up like paper; scratches and cracks become gestural entries that are accentuated by colored anodizing or the application of chrome. These objects also directly depict physical effects.

Magdalena Kröner: I would like to know more about "Rites and Aftermath", your exhibition at the Palais de Tokyo in Paris.

Dorian Gaudin: In Paris I mainly tried to play with the idea of timing as the dominant element. In the center was an object that looked a bit like a conveyor belt: a steel band lay on a horizontal bracket, like a giant blade that moved in a random pattern and curled up at a certain point. The whole process, especially building tension, was very slow. There were phases in which nothing at all happened for a long time. Anyone who, as a viewer, had been exposed to the situation for a long time could, however, at some point have an inkling of when the tape would suddenly rise up or suddenly roll up. The idea was to gradually put it under increasing tension until it had to come to a kind of tension release.

How did the audience react to that?

The built-in delays played with both the expectations and viewing habits of the audience that, if nothing had happened for a while, they might have lost patience and just moved on. But as soon as people saw the slightest movement or heard something, they immediately sat down again and waited eagerly for something to happen again. Not only was there the assembly line, but there were also a number of smaller chair objects that stood around it. They were controlled by randomly programmed hydraulic motors, jumped into the air at irregular intervals or simply fell over. Sometimes it happened that almost all the chairs jumped up at the same time, which always gave people a bit of a shock. (laughs) So it always happened that you stood in the room, and only heard a short noise when another chair had fallen nearby. This moment of irritation interested me most: you perceive something, but you don't know where to focus your attention. The result was a game of surprise moments and the instinctive reactions of the audience, a mixture of boredom and tension.

That sounds like a lot of work, and it also sounds like an ingenious engineering feat... You always emphasize that you are not an engineer; nevertheless, technology and technical precision form a central aspect in your work.

I think one of my great qualities is less technical understanding than stubbornness. (laughs) That means, when I get something in my head, I come up with ways and means to achieve it, no matter how, and in the end it works ... mostly. Stubbornness is so much a part of me that you can also see it in my work ... If you think of the wall object that I showed at Balice Hertling, which collapsed and tried again and again to straighten itself, then that was it certainly above all a reference to my stubbornness and the countless attempts to build something new over and over again. I like it when the technology remains visible and something magical happens anyway.

At your solo show "Dirty Hands On" in Berlin, your approach seemed to be rather low-tech ...

You could say that... (laughs). In Berlin I made a conscious attempt for the first time not to do kinetic work. The object in the center of the show, a guitar more than six meters high, worked for me less as a sculpture than as an independent actor. I saw this object as if it was performing itself.

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On the other hand, wouldn't it make sense to become a performance artist as well, as it's hip again right now?

No no! I definitely didn't want to appear as a performer in Berlin, even if I was inside the guitar sculpture and triggered the movement. I just liked not having to focus all my energy on the very technical and complicated mechanical aspects of a work, but rather having space to think of something and to be able to relate myself to the object directly and spontaneously. I would like to continue researching this area in the future. This action gave me the opportunity to really try something new, even if of course I was worried the whole time that the guitar would just break apart and my performance could come to an abrupt end. (laughs)

What was the starting point of this work? Was it the idea of making a larger than life object? I immediately thought of Claes Oldenburg, who had initially developed his "Soft Objects" as props for performances in his New York "Shop". It was only later that they became "classic" sculptures.

I wanted a ... how should I put it ... I wanted to make an "anecdotal" object that seemed able to contrast the very abstract wall pieces. I wanted a simple, almost archetypal thing that everyone would recognize immediately.

... but that didn't last long. What role did the destruction of the object play?

The moment of destruction formed the center of the action: I was attracted by the idea that something only really gains in value when it is destroyed. Like a rock star who smashes his guitar on stage and that guitar becomes legendary. The object only becomes valuable when it is destroyed. In doing so, I wanted the destruction to come from within, almost invisibly; I wanted to create a magical and absurd moment.

This is something that interests me in a lot of your work: You set a process in motion, but you do not become visible in it ...

I wanted to act as an invisible force. In this sense, the performance wasn't that far removed from the kinetic work I had been doing up until then: I just replaced the motor, and now I was the motor myself.

What was the most exciting thing for you about this first attempt at a performance?

I realized that the physical aspect in particular was a completely new experience for me: I had invested a lot of energy, was sweating and was exhausted, it was great. Here I was able to implement my ideas immediately, unlike with the wall works, where in the course of the process I first have to see what actually comes out of it.

In your artistic process you often move on the borderline between creation and destruction. I liked the idea that you would revive the sculpture - the static object - in the performance. You dissolve the existing form by using movement. The execution of the movement destroys the original form, but only allows the actual work to arise. You once explained this very clearly by saying that these objects were primarily intended as an "invitation to imagine the movements and forces that triggered these deformations." I would like to know more about that.

Yes, it is always very important to me to find and use a movement that best suits the chosen object. It used to be the case in my animations, and it is the same now, albeit in a completely different way. For example, imagine a cup: it is shaped like a cone. If you want this body to move, it will not jump, it will roll, not in a straight line, but in semicircles from side to side ... It is important to listen to the object to understand how it moves naturally, and then translate this movement. That plays a role in all of my work

Tell me a little more about your wall pieces, which in Berlin formed something like the framework for the performance.

Above all, they are abstract at first, although here too there is a consideration at the beginning: I want to project a certain type of intention onto an object, as if I were giving the work its personality through the movement that affects the metal. I usually start by bending the aluminum arches, then I dent and crumple them more and more, at some point I also use tools ... it's all very physical and not necessarily controlled.

What role does destruction play in your wall pieces?

First of all, destruction is a means of creating something new. It changes the shape and also the value of the material: it is dented and warped, and it is precisely at these actually "faulty", because damaged areas, that the colored anodizing or chrome plating is added. I emphasize the destruction that has taken place; the existing damage, from the paint, resulting in a fetishized charge. These settlements thus arise as a reaction to the plastic, physical change in the material. Typically, the perfect chrome finish, like on a car's bumpers, is the most important thing for its owner. If these are damaged in an accident, even if only a little, they are usually replaced immediately. The high-gloss, For most people, a perfect surface is probably the best thing about a car, besides its shape and speed. My work begins after the "accident", as it were: I only chrome-plate after the damage, and thus make the object even more valuable. So I work in the opposite direction.

I would like to know more about the origins of your interest in kinetic art, which today is tied to historical positions, if you think of Tinguely or Calder ...

Yes, of course, I am often confronted with these associations. However, I am not at all interested in a comment or a reflex on recent art history. My fascination for this type of art is, I think, much more direct. I told you that my parents were dancers. Movement, performance and even something apparently as simple and mundane as posture played a big role in my childhood; dealing with it was omnipresent. So for a while the desire arose in me to become a dancer myself, but it was clear relatively quickly that I wasn't particularly interested in that. I think my interest was just broader than the exclusive body focus in dance, which was so important in my youth ...

So you focused on other bodies and their specific movements ...

Exactly. Very early on, I was fascinated by the specific way an object moves and the exploration of the appropriate movement for an object. How does something move and why? In 3D animation, however, it was always about a certain format, the perfect cinematic animation as the end result, since it was mostly about selling a certain product. I wanted to break that, because even during my studies I preferred to work with stop motion, that is, setting real bodies in motion. Working with kinetic objects was the way for me to bring all of my interests together. Everything was included here, but I was no longer tied to a certain format or a commercial statement.

Is colored anodizing and chrome plating painting for you? There are a few moments that connect your approach to painting: composition, gestural setting, choice of color ...

Hm ... (hesitates for a long time) ... I'm not a painter, if that's what you mean ... Let's put it this way: I'm not primarily interested in painting, but I definitely use painterly aspects: I use different colors and color gradients; I create reflections ... and to achieve that, I use commissioned processes that have to do with painting. And of course compositional decisions are very important, such as the decision not to chrome-plate the entire object, but only the areas that are most damaged. In addition, the drops of the chemical solution that occur during chrome plating are important. The viewer may initially

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perceive them as dirt rather than aesthetic settlements, but they are just as important as the shiny chrome-plated areas,

And that too is ultimately the effect of a movement; the movement of the falling drops that are preserved on the surface.

Exactly! The perfection, with which I play as a possibility, is briefly touched, but then immediately thwarted and directed in a different, more ambivalent direction. I am not interested in the effect of preciousness.

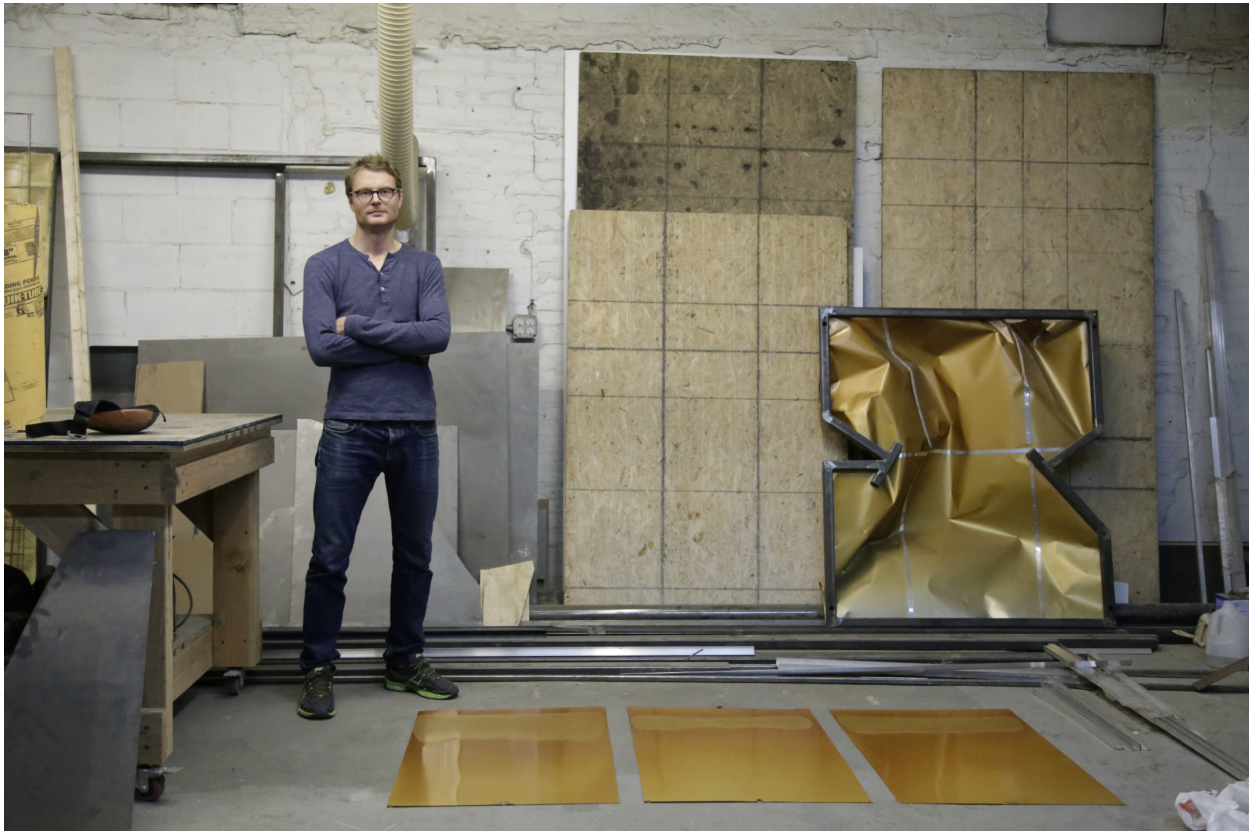
— *Magdalena Kröner*

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CULTURED

An Object in Motion: Dorian Gaudin Redefines Kinetic Art

January 23, 2017



“Bodies never lie” is an old saying in the dance world, though it also applies to the art of 29-year-old sculptor Dorian Gaudin. And not just because he’s the son of the highly regarded French choreographer Jean Gaudin, either. “The way I think of animating an object is by trying to find its own personal way of moving,” says Gaudin, as if elegance, slapstick and other expressive bodily motions weren’t only domains of the living.

But then movement—in all of its potential expressions—has fascinated Gaudin since he can remember. Beyond his formative influence of dance, Gaudin also studied animation and engineering before eventually settling upon art as a career. Now based in New York, he’s being hailed as a hot new artist to watch, thanks to an upcoming solo exhibition in February at the Palais de Tokyo in Paris.

In his first solo outing at the Nathalie Karg gallery this past spring titled “Jettison Parkway,” Gaudin wowed audiences with a radiant suite of crumpled aluminum, concrete and steel. Born in Paris, Gaudin now works out of his New York studio.

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abstractions that evoke both glamorous hot rod accidents and the truth-to-materials forms of the Russian Constructivists. While these arrangements are technically static, Gaudin offers them as a possible “invitation to imagine the movements that initiated them.” In fact, these are the considerations that Gaudin uses to inform his decisions when crafting these roiling compositions in the studio.

The wall works were instantly snapped up by collectors, but the real star of the show was an unusually aggressive sculpture that was almost scarily kinetic: a large aluminum cylinder that propelled itself with a series of gears, both creeping and lunging in succession across the gallery towards unsuspecting visitors. Thanks to its lightweight aluminum body, the risk of injury to gallery goers was nil, but the effect raised the adrenaline levels of anyone who entered the gallery that month.

Gaudin’s debut was followed by an installation at Paris’ Pact Galerie (which was actually a two- person “conversation” with an existing work by artist Gianni Motti) that featured a large aluminum panel Gaudin designed to topple against the gallery wall— only to then right itself before falling again. This raucous exploit happened ad nauseam throughout the run of the show.

Though Gaudin’s art seems unusual at first, it’s good to remember that Paris has a rich history of birthing kinetic work, from early progenitors like American expat Alexander Calder to the country’s own kinetic art stars such as François Morellet. Gaudin of course fits nicely into this historic lineage, while also offering up a contemporary aesthetic (and sense of humor) all his own.

And as for his much anticipated Palais show? Gaudin can’t specifically say what to expect, but he did admit it would be his largest installation to date and that it would be an “immersive situation for the viewer.” The fact that Gaudin couldn’t quite predict what these works would do or look like is just business as usual for this quirky artist. “The result is not so much the answer but my research,” he says, “and ultimately, the object’s own quest to find its identity.”

—Ryan Steadman

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Mouvement

magazine culturel indisciplinaire



Dorian Gaudin, from the exhibition *Rites and Aftermath* at the Palais de Tokyo. Courtesy of the artist, Dittrich & Schlechtriem Gallery (Berlin), Nathalie Karg Gallery (New York) and Galerie Pact. © p. Aurélien Mole

Infernal machine

The *Rites and Aftermath* theater, installed by Dorian Gaudin, still little known in France, revives the fantasy of a procreative art. And rustling in passing two pieces of wall of the Palais de Tokyo.

By Marine Relinger Posted
on March 15, 2017

Let's see a little: everything can evoke - according to the artist himself - a banquet scene deserted by his guests. We understand them: the rebellious furniture that makes up *Rites and Aftermath* (which can be translated as "Rites and Consequences") squirms and hiccups in all directions, obviously refractory to service. As a table, a long sheet of raw steel ripples to the ceiling, before falling on a long rod which, although weighted with a heavy stone, spills to hit the adjacent wall. Around, objects more or

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although weighted with a heavy stone, spills to hit the adjacent wall. Around, objects more or less abstract and a series of "chairs" badly sided seem taken by the dance of Saint Guy. One of them, aside, bumps the file against a chair railing, it begins painstakingly, while the whole negotiates a collective chain reaction, which is hard to pin down the proponents and the outs.

The "theater of objects" of the young French artist Dorian Gaudin, who lives and works in New York and who enjoys here his first exhibition in art center, detonates. Its performative character perpetuates a fantasy, that of a procreative art, which was already at work within the framework of "single machines" (the word is Duchamp) and more precisely "machines to make art" of Kowalski or Tinguely. It should be noted that, contrary to Tinguely's self-destructive sculptures, Dorian Gaudin's choreography of auto-mobile objects seems, surreptitiously, to undertake to demolish two walls of the Palais de Tokyo (she would be reluctant to let herself be defined by the museum institution?). We easily lend intentions and human attributes to objects,

Unpredictable research

But if the installation of Dorian Gaudin away from the well-oiled mechanics of Tinguely, it is primarily because it is the game of a random computer program. The latter controls, in practice, a compressed air tank connected by pipes to certain objects (placed "under perfusion"), as well as two engines mobilizing the long central plate. More precisely, the layout of Dorian Gaudin seeks to thwart the aerodynamic qualities of materials, in a logic of rising tension and then its noisy release at certain breaking points, determined by the materials themselves. " *The work, based on the principle of tension and relaxation is stuffed with springs, which reveal the nature of the materials. Drawing furniture and objects [all designed by the artist - Editor's note] are determined by functional, mechanical and aerodynamic questions, with the aim of "giving them life",* "he notes. The tension is tangible: the elements are in turn, or even at the same time, receivers or transmitters of a shock wave. But the unpredictable relative of the event gives rather the impression of a chaos and a world of interdependencies in struggle, than a coordination.

From the point of view of the artist, no doubt, there is a delight in creating a space-time which, to a certain extent, escapes him, which plays out in the back of his own designer. There is this risk-taking linked to randomness: for example, chairs may fall (knowing that they are not yet able to stand up by themselves) and remain "offside" until the end of the game. day. Each morning, the elements are returned to their original positions, but beyond that, the movements and impacts generated follow their course. " *I like the idea that you can come and see the sculpture many times and never see the same thing. If the tank releases its breath at the right time [like a machine kairos - Ed.], everything can jump at the same time. Other times, it may well be nothing at all for a long time,* "reports Dorian Gaudin.

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But what world are we talking about, if the artist does not only create a finite form but a micro-world, seemingly intrinsic, and in the making? Far from evoking the harmonious cosmology of the ancients - where everything is in its place in an immutable and ideal functioning - we are here on the ground in the contingency, the unpredictability of our contemporary world and the challenge of the reformulated disaster. Fresh again: this unpredictable event - it could have happened otherwise - and over which we have no hold, is all the more problematic because it is no longer natural but artificial, that is to say the work of man himself. Even more clearly, *Rites and Aftermath* evokes the spectrum of megamachine (formulated by Jacques Ellul in *The Technician System*).in 1977) in the era of technoscience: a machine that makes a system, to the point that we would choose nothing more from it and that itself - obviously - would in no way deliberate itself. Whence the vague fascination that one can feel against the jolts of this metal body; this cold ballet which, by force of circumstances, becomes a solid cacophony, in total indifference towards the spectator ... and the walls of the Palais de Tokyo.

> **Dorian Gaudin, *Rites and Aftermath*** , until May 8 at the Palais de Tokyo, Paris

NATHALIE KARG

ARTE FUSE

Dorian Gaudin: *Rites and Aftermath...*

PALAIS DE TOKYO | PARIS

April 7, 2017



Photo: Aurélien Mole

Palais de Tokyo is presenting the first solo show by Dorian Gaudin in an art centre. The artist, whose work has recently been shown at the off-site exhibition organised by Palais de Tokyo alongside Manifesta 11, in Zürich, will produce an original immersive installation.

By focusing on the primary nature of machines — an instrument providing motion —, Dorian Gaudin reminds us of the way the fetishism of objects and technology govern our relationship with the world. Under the sign of magic and kinetics, this show stages a theatre of objects which become animated according to a precise score and mechanism.

Curator: Julien Fronsacq

A monographic book published by Palais de Tokyo is accompanying this show.

—Guest Writer

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NATHALIE KARG

ARTFORUM

Dorian Gaudin

PACT | PARIS

September 8 - October 15, 2016

The revoltingly twee pleasure of watching a slam-dunking cat in GIF form can unleash all manner of anxiety. Dorian Gaudin, a French artist based in New York, occupies this space of tension in “Second Offense,” his self-deprecatingly titled second solo exhibition, which explores the social and political unease he feels in his home and adopted countries.



View of “Dorian Gaudin,” 2016.

We encounter a trio of slapstick, Mad Max–style objects: a chair, crudely soldered in aluminum, tricked out with a number of vile contraptions that could send a sitter careening into a death drop, along with a waist-high aluminum slide, rigged with a coil at its end so that it can feebly bounce off of a wine bottle (*Probabilities at Stake*, 2016); and the *pièce de résistance*, a 2016 work that shares its title with the exhibition: A steel wall, nearly ten feet high, programmed to rise and fall at erratic speeds, from slow-mo to lightning quick—a pathetic performer, frankly, much like the aforementioned kitty. In these pieces, Gaudin drolly references kinetic artworks of the 1950s and 1960s to darkly yet comically highlight contemporary life’s more vicious edges. Gianni Motti’s *Revendication, Terremoto, Rhône-Alpes* (*Claim, Earthquake, Rhône-Alpes*), 1994—a newspaper with a photo of the artist holding a sign claiming that he caused a 4.5-magnitude earthquake in eastern France, along with a seismograph sheet and an Agence France-Presse dispatch—undergirds and undermines Gaudin’s more labor-intensive works. Here, Motti’s conceptual violence contrasts starkly with the real violence of which Gaudin’s art is capable.

Motti’s earthquake caused no fatalities, and, hopefully, neither will Gaudin’s cruel, destabilizing mechanisms (a gallery attendant is hypervigilant about each visitor’s safety). But if we end up in a Brave New World with Trump and Nicolas Sarkozy at the helm (indeed, the latter wants another go at it, come 2017), getting fucked up by one of Gaudin’s torture devices will be the least of our problems.

— Jo-ey Tang

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NATHALIE KARG

OBSERVER

The Sculpture That Gets Around

Kinetic art that threatens you for a lark

February 29th, 2016



When someone enters a gallery and sees a piece of sculpture, it's common for them to move around the object in order to view it from different angles. What is less common—in fact it's quite rare—is for the sculpture to move past the viewer. Yet this is what happens when you enter the Nathalie Karg gallery during the run of Parisian-born artist Dorian Gaudin's show "Jettison Parkway," which is up through March 26.

The six-and-a-half foot tall aluminum cylinder in the center of the gallery is handsome enough, with its interior steel framework of gears and girders, but when it starts rolling quickly towards you, the common gallery activity (the mental act of viewing) quickly turns into a physical stance of self-defense. The large yet lightweight invention, which was designed to stop and start at repeated intervals thanks to a tiny motor and a weighted lever, wouldn't actually hurt you if it ran into you, but its motile presence surprisingly forces one to reconsider how we usually interact with art.

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But this artist's desire to turn the art viewing experience into a physical encounter makes more sense when you look at his background. The son of the well-known Parisian choreographer (and brother of an up-and-coming Parisian choreographer), Mr. Gaudin was raised to consider how the figure moves through space. But this 30-year-old, Brooklyn-based member of the Gaudin family was gifted with an aptitude for construction, so he opted to study animation and engineering: two fields that involve craft and movement.

He also grew up a close friend of fellow boy-builder Neil Beloufa, an exciting artist whose forays into DIY videos, installations and mechanical constructions—many of which move—are being celebrated this month with a prized solo exhibition at MoMA. For years Mr. Gaudin has been funneling his building prowess into Mr. Beloufa's work as an engineering consultant, but now he is focusing his skills onto his own sculpture, and the results vary from electrifying to enchanting.

Mr. Gaudin's wall works, such as *This Should Be A Plane*, 2016, eschew motion, but offer an exquisite and beautiful display of material control instead. In these mixed media works, Mr. Gaudin impressively configures materials against their raw state, turning wet cement into perfectly smooth geometries and sheet aluminum into rippling waves of gradient color. His finesse appears effortless, and the variety of engaging compositions Mr. Gaudin creates purely with steel, screws and rivets, makes for an impressive debut.

With a delicate touch, a palpable joy of working with materials and, most importantly, a sense of humor, Mr. Gaudin connects to a much earlier group of Modernist sculptors like Alexander Calder and Constantin Brancusi, but his deep understanding of the viewer-object relationship in art—more specifically his innate sense of drama as it relates to scale and movement—also connects him to the ultimate post-minimalist space invader, Richard Serra. Certainly these are lofty precedents, but ones that make a well-rounded cartel of icons for a sure-footed youngster with ingenuity to burn.

—*Ryan Steadman*

Neil Beloufa and Dorian Gaudin

CLEARING | BRUSSELS

May 2014

Reveling in the near-Duchampian turn of its title (which could be translated as either “Behind, After the Falls” or “Behind, After the Remnants”), “Derrière, Après Les Chutes” transformed Clearing’s town-house interior into an assembly line of bachelor machines, with a collection of contraptions by Dorian Gaudin and Neil Beloufa. While Duchamp’s bachelors grind under the weight of stunted desire, these contemporary devices strive toward a more perfect pointlessness—operating, perhaps, but not producing.

The first floor featured a suite of sculptures by Gaudin, centering around *Untitled*, 2014, in which a sheet of plywood is manipulated by a set of cables attached to a motor. At times the applied pressure hardly registers; at others, the wood torques wildly, slapping against its support the moment the cables relax. For *Pierre and Renée*, 2014—a piece named for Gaudin’s grandparents—the artist slathered a steak with magenta pigment, then encased it in resin. This crude comma is made to spin slowly on an axis beside a white-tiled shelf that is installed in two sections, with a slight gap in between. With each rotation, the “tail” pushes the spring-loaded first part of the shelf so that it meets its second, stationary twin, momentarily forming a continuous line before the steak cycles on and the first shelf snaps back into place. Another dubious tribute, this time to the artist’s girlfriend, *After Eli*, 2014, presents a vase, already broken and repaired with resin, teetering at a tilt off its table, as if about to break again. *Untitled*, 2012–14, is a monstrous contraption that attempts to build a wall from wooden blocks, which are slate gray and strung up on wires like Minimalist marionettes. Guided by an internal algorithm, gears tug at the blocks, causing them to collide and scrape against one another, only to clatter to the floor upon release. For this installation, the device remained unplugged, standing instead as a silent totem, a tower of spools and tubes and wires whose intercourse could only be imagined, leaving one to wonder what it would mean for this kind of machine to “work.”



Dorian Gaudin,
Pierre and Renée
(detail), 2014, resin,
motor, wood,
ceramic tiles, steak,
13¼ x 35½ x 7”.

Upstairs, Beloufa riffed on this play on functionality and futility with three wall-mounted sculptures, whose steel-framed MDF surfaces are built up around active electrical outlets used to power devices within the space. The rest of the floor was given to Documents are flat VI, 2014, the sixth and most recent configuration of a series begun in 2010.

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The installation features a video monitor embedded in a labyrinth of wooden platforms—viewing architecture reassembled from previous exhibitions. The video tells the story of terrorists’ purported occupation of a luxury villa in Algiers. The witnesses, a collection of neighbors and housemaids, deliver contradictory testimony with their backs to the camera: One claims the intruders lived like kings within their found castle, while another insists the men only ever entered the garden. The villa itself is presented as a series of false surfaces, a set plastered with paper printouts of couch cushions and kitchen cabinets, suggesting (but not necessarily showing) the original interior. The artist attached plastic sandwich bags of painted plaster flakes and stubbed cigarette butts, the alleged remnants of the terrorists’ presence, but the testimony of these relics remains as unsubstantiated as that of the living witnesses.

For this iteration of the work, Beloufa has added three GPS devices, which periodically, when I visited the show, punctuated the space with the taciturn admission “Recalculating.” The announcement could just as readily apply to the artist, who, by systematically rejecting hierarchies of “knowledge production,” refuses any resolution (or, in this case, a “correct” route). Beloufa has, in effect, become his own bachelor machine, but he leaves no bride to strip bare.

—Kate Sutton