

Guillaume Bijl Sorries and Compositions

In 1988, Guillaume Bijl transformed the former gallery space of Lumen Travo into a 'private solarium room', with among others a solarium and a home trainer, as if it be a room of some well-to-do young woman. At the same time he presented at Tanja Rumpff gallery in Haarlem a window, through which we can, so to say, peep into the middle-class interior of an older woman's living room. Guillaume Bijl transforms spaces: a museum room is turned into a carpet shop (Stedelijk Museum, 1985) or a rifle range, a gallery becomes a private house. These works are also a staging of a situation. At a certain moment, Bijl's art was labeled 'Shopping Art', together with artists like Haim Steinbach and Jeff Koons. But Bijl's work is certainly not uniquely dealing with the consumer society, making this label not very apt to categorize his work. His art is critical about developments in our society and these have a broader scope than the consumer's world alone. In the nineties, for instance, he created installations in which he's dealing with 'cultural tourism'. He belongs to the forerunners who, in the 80-ies of the last century, have given a new impetus to the *ready made*. In general, Guillaume Bijl shows us the archeology of our 'civilization', that is: now.

In this exhibition he shows some of his *Sories* and *Compositions*. About these works Bijl has written the following texts:

'Almost all my compositions are called 'Composition Trouvée'. This name came about at the installation of a composition in 1983, The term 'Composition Trouvée' alludes to the existing 'Objet Trouvée'- term, in the sense that each of these is a consciously compiled and recognizable composition – a previously existing, found one, 'so to speak'. They are chunks of reality that vary from trivial consumption and interior fragments to pseudo-public manifestation décors.

The Compositions are a logical consequence of the way in which I manipulate themes and materials in my larger installations. These Compositions, however, *are devoid of all situational pretentions*. I myself would describe the relationship in my oeuvre between the compositions and installations as follows: If I were to interpret my larger installations as 'large tableaux', my compositions would relate to them as *sketches* or small *drawings*. In general, I wish to regard them as *present-day, archeological still lifes*.'

'The word 'sorry' is a prototypical, cool word of this age.

When, in 1987, I started compiling a number of absurd assemblages from existing objects, and thus made an abstraction, I was 'being unfaithful' realistic form. I called these little works 'sorries'.

Later on, I also made a number of larger, absurd installations, in which I consistently insinuated the human figure in a surreal tableau. Those works became an *absurd poetic extension* of my oeuvre.'