

Paris: June 6 - July 20, 2013

AIDS-3D
Dora Budor & Maja Cule
DIS
Aleksandra Domanovic
Lizzie Fitch
Janus Høm & Martyn Reynolds
David Horvitz
Parker Ito
Tobias Madison & Emanuel Rossetti
Miltos Manetas
Artie Vierkant

New York: June 20 - August 3, 2013

Nate Boyce
Parker Ito
Sean Raspet
Brad Troemel

Curated by: Toke Lykkeberg and Franklin Melendez

New Galerie's first transatlantic exhibition ties together its art spaces in Paris and New York with two overlapping shows collectively entitled 'Rematerialized'. The exhibition presents a new crop of artists from America and Europe – interrelated, though offering a diverse picture of a burgeoning art scene. In order to see what these artists are doing, one might start out by looking at what they are undoing.

Much has been said about the art object “dematerializing» over the last half a century. All that matters, it has been told, is the idea – no matter how vague it might be. With the expansion of the service sector and the advent of the Internet, this discourse, rooted in the 1960s, has informed and perpetuated a certain viewpoint on art until today. Since the turn of the new millennium, aesthetic practice has been largely conceptualized as “immaterial labor” alongside other non-corporeal and non-manual professions. And place, it seems, no longer matters.

The artist as so-called “nomad,” however, has not flattened the art world, but mapped out a network of important global art cities. And if we are looking back at history, art as idea has been a very visual thing all along. As it turns out, the so-called “dematerialized art object” has been fashioned in a style of transparency much like the typeface Helvetica – designed in such a way that it is not looked at, but read. In this sense, the dematerialization of art was simply a re-materialization of art. The immaterial was and is imbricated in the material; just like the digital was and is embedded in the non-digital. This has always been the case, but in contemporary art and culture it is now also a major concern.

This concern is found in the works of the artists gathered for 'Rematerialized'. They might come from different places and traditions, but they reflect and reflect on the same moment in time: right about now. Their practices are diverse, but the overlaps are evident. They consider themselves artists, but they also frequently inhabit the role of the curator. Curating is part of their artistic practice as it is increasingly part of the practice of everyone's everyday life on social media. They do not try to set themselves apart from popular culture, but rather to a certain extent integrate it – to the point where what is popular culture and not, art and not, gets fuzzy.

In parts of these artists' work, which could be apprehended under the heading “rematerialism,” certain features stand out. The invited artists do not seem alienated by, but rather inhabit and probe an economy, which is not just that of intangible experiences and attention. It is also marked by what was once called “materialism,” a preoccupation with mundane things which manifests itself anew in communication and information technology that is not simply technical and practical, but also social and highly aesthetic. Indeed, this is a materialism of technology as lifestyle, which can no longer be said to just churn out “fashion victims,” but evidently offers new margins for maneuvering. The artists of 'Rematerialized' cannot be understood as either simply affirmative or critical of the new technological environment, but rather as users who explore and seek out its possibilities alongside other users. In this environment, what is luxurious or practical, just fashion or necessity, is difficult to distinguish.

Generally speaking, the artists in 'Rematerialized' might not be thought of as producers, post-producers or consumers of objects such as images. Their art practice might rather be seen as unfolding in a conflation of production and consumption into prosumption. They are not at the beginning or end line of anything, but rather part of a continuous circulation of objects and ideas – a circulation, which cannot simply be understood as the workings of the market. It might be better apprehended as something akin to a biological process.

These artists are more interested in how objects enter and re-enter circulation, taking on new shapes and formats, rather than in making them exit this flow. A screen no longer seems to mark out a gateway to another world, be it cyberspace, Utopia or a platonic realm of Ideas. A screen is in itself a thing, a variety of things, whether LED, LCD or HD, offering different resolution and luminance, embedded in laptops, smart phones and tablets, which respond to certain finger gestures, whether it be on a keyboard or a touch screen. In said artistic practices it becomes visible that the qualities of an object changes as it travels simply from screen to screen. But also from format to format, from file to surface to studio to exhibition space to camera to Photoshop to website to Facebook to blog and so on and so forth. Technology may offer new ways of circulating objects, but is also in itself an object—a small, malleable and tactile thing among other things.

Though we might still use old terms dear to conceptual art and associated strands of critical theory to describe new art, many of the artists in the show are now more concerned with how objects rematerialize than dematerialize. Their respective practices are contemporary with the advent of and debates surrounding national and geopolitical topics such as reindustrialization and technological inventions such as the 3D-printer and the Internet of Things. They all work the Internet, but no longer as a virtual non-place, but rather as a tool and network, which is digital as well as non-digital. After all, this network is also urban, socio-economic and geographic, as the Internet thrives not just on coding and algorithms. It also thrives on submarine cables, now accounting for 95% of international telecommunication.

Once, globalization was described as a progressive triumph of time over space. It is true, we no longer say that the distance between New York and Paris is 5850 km, but rather 8 hours. With phenomena such as high-frequency trading, where stocks change 'hands' within seconds, the rhetoric of dematerialization might be pushed further. One might focus on the use of algorithms, but one might equally focus on fiber-optic cables that transmit data with 99.7% of the speed of light at Wall Street as well as across the Atlantic.

In said manner, 'Rematerialized' also endeavors to shift focus. The show sets out to re-describe artistic practice in order to see how this artistic practice re-describes the world we now inhabit.