

ROTWAND

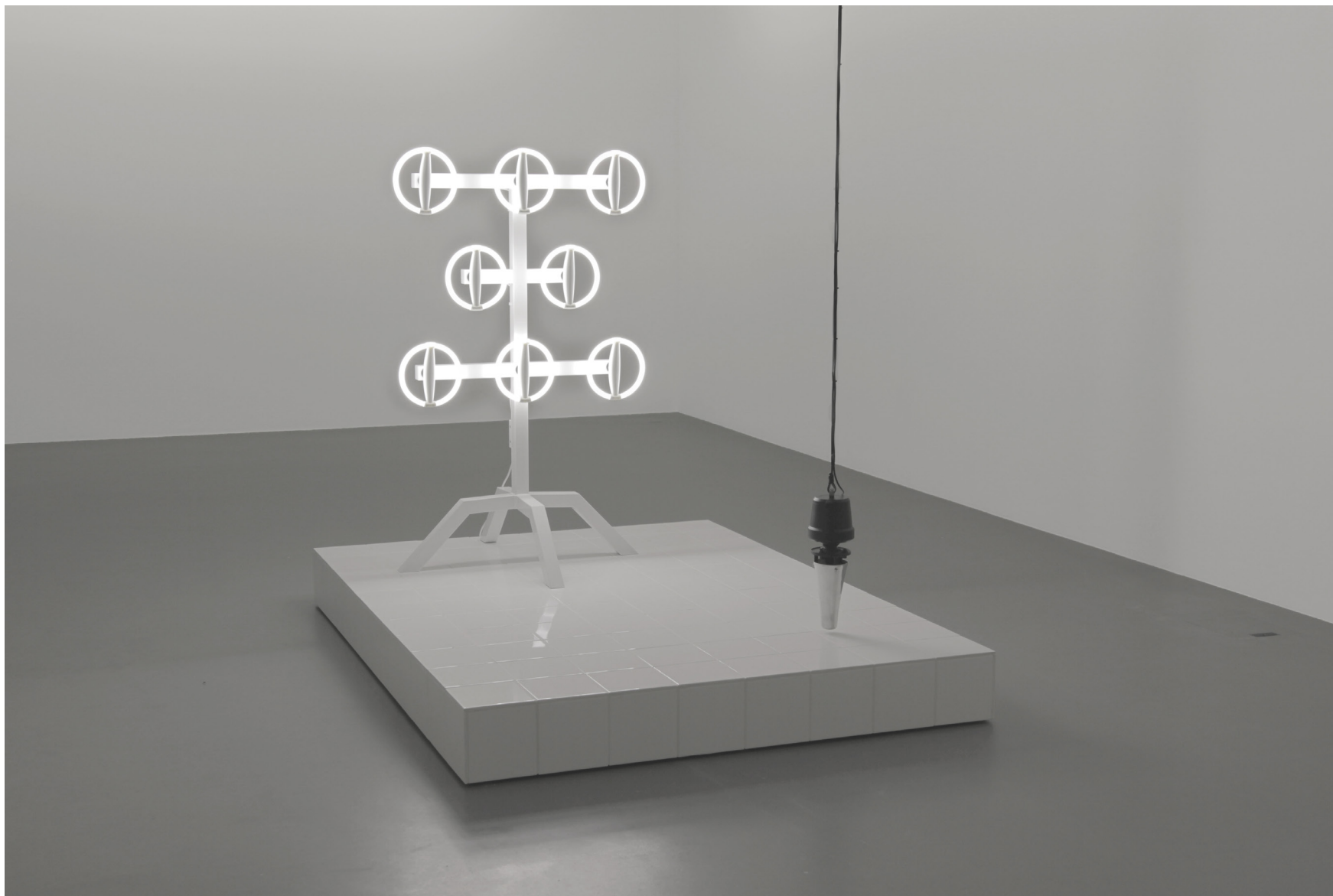
Sabina Kohler & Bettina Meier-Bickel

Lutherstrasse 34, CH-8004 Zürich, T/F +41 44 240 30 55/56

www.rotwandgallery.com, info@rotwandgallery.com

Luc Mattenberger

Documentation



Square, Triangle and Light, 2016
Wood, tiles, metal, light, loudspeakers
224 x 164 x 175 cm (88 1/4 x 64 5/8 x 68 7/8 inch)
Installation view at Kaus für Kunst Uri, Altdorf, 2016



Drapeaux, 2015
Calvanized steel, cotton, wax
180 x 80 x 10 cm (70 7/8 x 31 1/2 x 3 7/8 in)
Tryptich
Installation view at Centre PasquArt, Biel, 2015



No Meeting, No Standing, No Sitting III, 2015
Wood, tiles, rubber hose, metal
202 x 528 x 6.5 cm (79 1/2 x 207 7/8 x 2 1/2 in)
Photo credit: Alexander Hana



Installation view, Rotwand, Zurich, 2015
Photo credit: Alexander Hana



Double X, 2015
 Silkscreen print on polyester silk
 120 x 108 cm (47 1/4 x 42 1/2 in)
 Edition 1 of 1 (+1 AP)
 Photo credit: Alexander Hana



Flag I, 2015
 Silkscreen print on polyester silk
 164 x 140 cm (64 5/8 x 55 1/8 in)
 Edition 1 of 1 (+1 AP)
 Photo credit: Alexander Hana



Installation views, Rotwand, Zurich, 2015
Photo credit: Alexander Hana



Pickup, 2015
Installation view at Duttweiler Platz, Zurich
Part of the project AAA: Art Altstetten Albisrieden
June 13 - September 13, 2015
(curated by Christoph Doswald)
Photo credit: Cedric Einsenring



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Mattenberger's *Pickup* (2015) is positioned on a corner of Pfingstweidstrasse, a broad, newly laid road that signals Zurich's expansion north and west. A white pickup truck is parked, beached because its rear axle is raised marginally off the ground by a scaffolding structure, one rear wheel connected to a dynamo. This, in turn, is linked to a tall streetlamp planted on the truck bed. Pickups, or utes, are vehicles made for countries where there is a different conception of space; in North America and Australia they take on ever greater proportions. They used to embody independence, freedom and man's mastery (and these have been patriarchal myths) of wild, frontier territories. This one is harpooned and hobbled by its heavy cargo, not to mention penned by the surrounding fence. Every night a watchman or security guard enters the lot and starts the motor, providing power for a cone of light that falls on the isolated truck for a two-hour performance.

The work's site is a patchwork of concrete and tarmac, symptomatic of the recent re-zoning and redevelopment of Zurich West. The area is dominated by the Toni-Areal, once the Toni-Molkerei, a vast dairy processing plant from the 1970s that epitomised the industrialisation of farming; it now houses the Zurich University of the Arts and the Zurich University of Applied Sciences alongside hotels, residential buildings and a supermarket distribution centre. New transport infrastructure connects the major buildings, but the organic mortar to join them – plant life, human activity and the patina of use – has not yet developed.

Seen from the new Number 4 tram passing by, it is not clear whether *Pickup* is a trailblazer or a dinosaur. Each night's ritual enactment is carried out by a figure personifying authority, yet one with little prestige. So too there is a disjunction between the vehicle's brawn and its laming and abandonment. It throws a melancholy, Edward Hopper-esque light upon itself, starring in its own absurd drama in which power loops to no end. The metamorphosis of Zurich West has spawned countless narratives, mostly about adaptation, new life and progress that try to make sense of the new juxtapositions, designed and accidental, and of changing cultures, technologies, industries and buildings. Mattenberger's insertion of another figure in this drama brings them into focus, and suggests that alternative stories should be told, using new templates.

Excerpt from a text by Aoife Rosenmeyer, Catalogue „Art Altstetten Albisrieden“, 2015



Born and raised, 2015
Inkjet print on pvc, leather, aluminium
210 x 300 cm



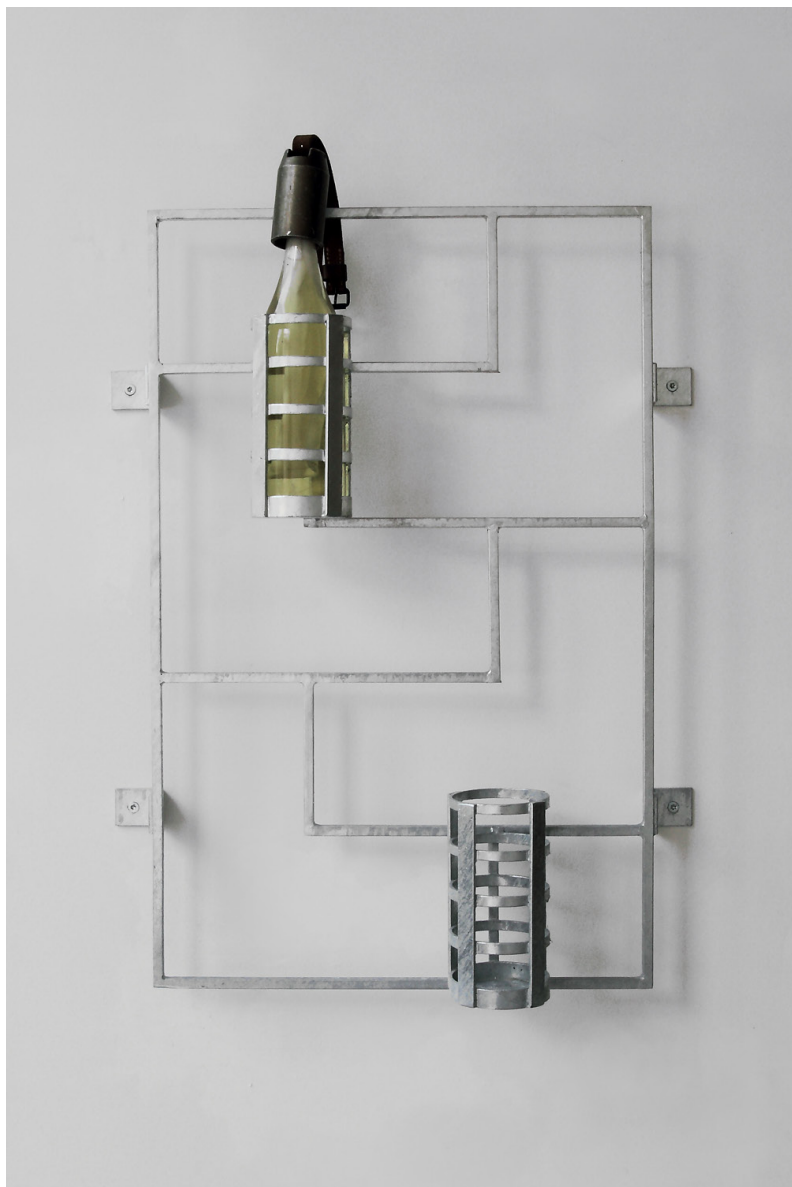
Souffleuse, 2014
Galvanized steel, led, leaf blower, fan, acrylic glass
185 x 62 x 36 cm
Installation view at Bex & Arts, Bex, Switzerland



Sans titre (Stretched), 2014
Galvanized steel, epdm rubber, cordura, sand
230 x 170 x 160 cm



Sans titre (Restraint), 2014
Rope, hand suction lifters, glass, steel
70 x 22 cm, variable height



Grille, 2014
Galvanized steel, flammable liquid, cotton, glass, leather
81 x 62 x 15 cm



Marquage, 2013
Steel, leather, various materials, performance



Ghost Tape Number 10, 2013

Vinyl

18.5 x 18.5 x 0.5 cm



Croix, 2013/14
Steel, chain
35 x 25 cm, variable height



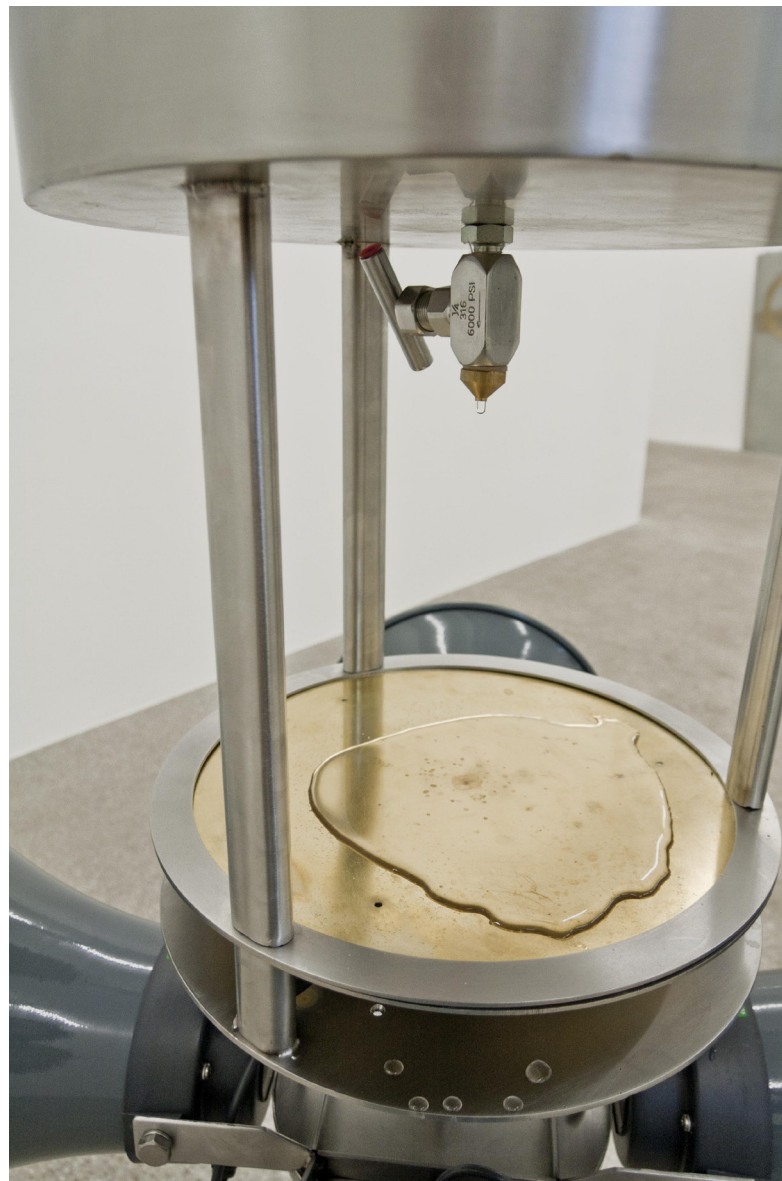
Croix, 2013
Steel, copper and nickel plated steel, chain
35 x 25 cm, variable height



Help for a Revolution, 2013
Stainless steel, leather, painted steel
200 x 70 x 30cm



The drop, 2012
Stainless steel, brass, water tank, sound system
100 x 60 x 60 cm



A drop of water falls regularly on a wide brass disk. The impact is magnified by four speakers.



Sans titre, 2012
Perfume, fan, stainless steel
120 x 20 x 30 cm

Sans titre investigates the dimension of the sense of smell, questioning oil as a time vector, as a history of decomposition. Organic essences originating from oil, an olfactory route with multiple layers are reflected in the perfume: first one smells many tannins, metallic grass, earth and crude petroleum and finally the acid smell of the calcined hydrocarbons opens up.



Wall, 2012
Concrete, brass, galvanized steel
185 x 90 x 5 cm





A rotor and its sharp spinning blades are placed behind a wire fence. The unit is held in balance with a lifting cushion placed at the rear of the heavy concrete base.



Flare, 2012
Steel, concrete, aluminium, rubber lifting cushion ,
electric motor
640 x 640 x 220 cm



Two cones of different material turn on themselves driven by an electric motor in a slow intermittent movement.

Sans titre, 2012
Steel, stainless steel, concrete, electric motor
120 x 60 x 60 cm



Made up of a lighting balloon and a stainless steel cage,
Baladeuse is hung from an overhead crane.

Baladeuse, 2011
Stainless steel, lighting balloon
100 x 100 x 100 cm



Cross, 2011
Stainless steel, steel
150 x 70 x 11 cm



Pinched between the ground and the ceiling of the exhibition hall, the sculpture acts as an expanding structure, supporting the building and at the same time exerting a powerful pressure on it.



Heimat, 2011
Alloy, stainless steel, wood, glass
22 x 33 x 8 cm
Edition of 5 + 2AP



Toy, 2011
Chrome-plated bronze, foam, plastic
46 x 22 x 17 cm
Edition of 5 + 2AP



Parabole, 2011
2 concrete blocks, 200 x 120 x 190 cm (each)
Installation view at Môtiers 2011 - art en plein air



Siren Backpack, 2011/2012
 Steel, aluminium, electromechanical siren, battery
 40 x 50 x 115 cm
 DVD, 8min

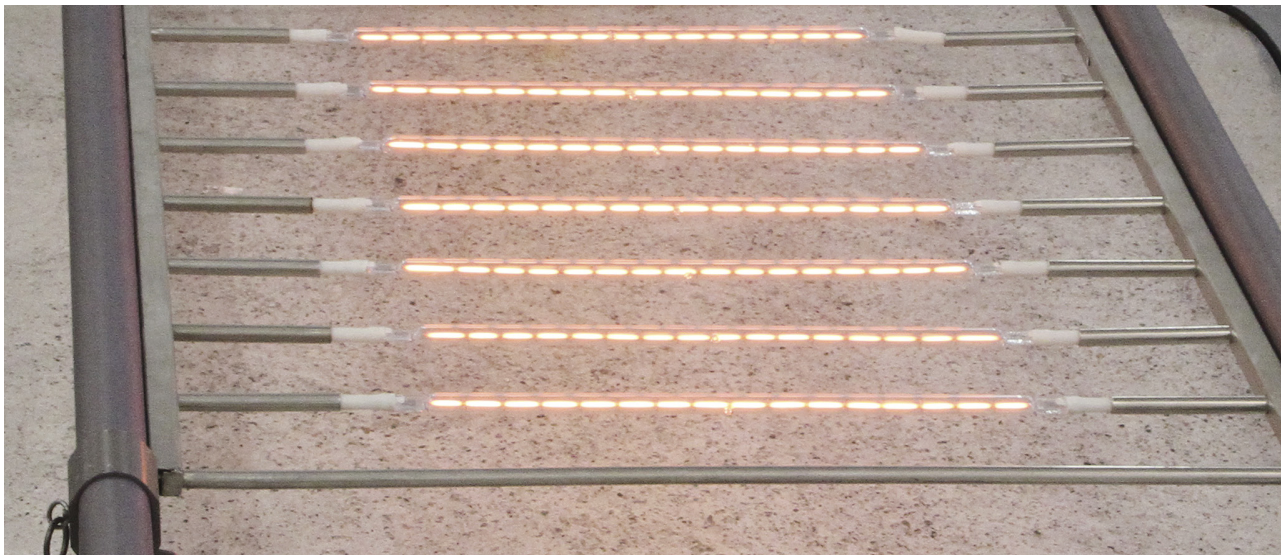
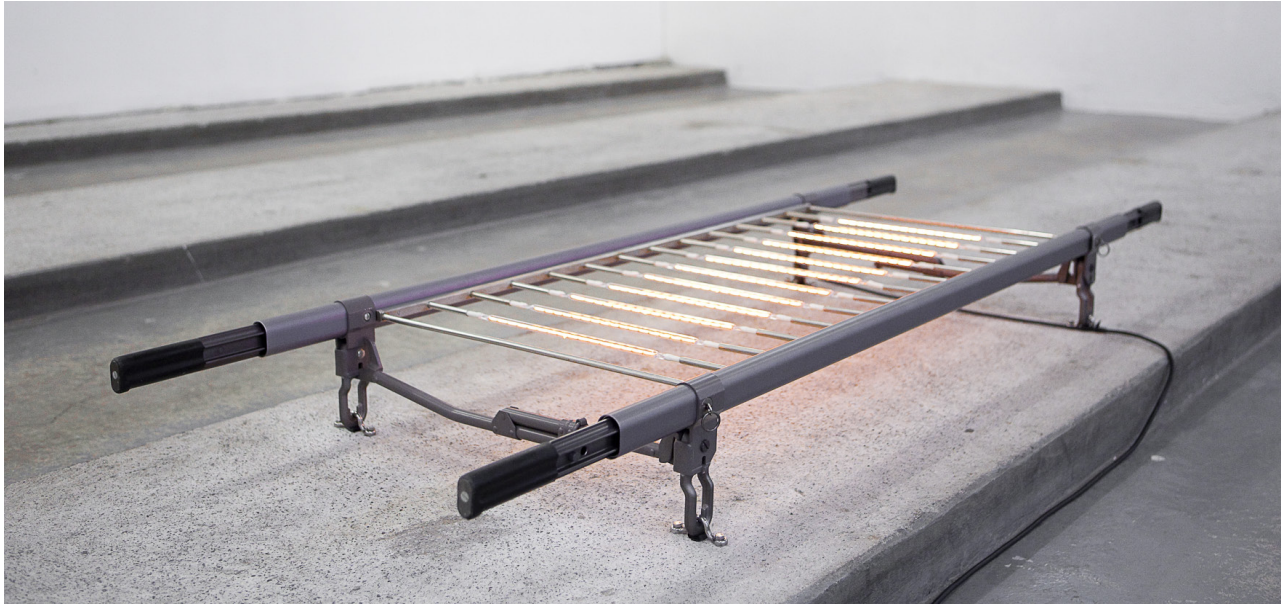


In the dark depths of the mountain, on the borders of the night, a man is harnessed by a heavy backpack topped with a siren and its powerful and strident regular signals.



Black Matter, 2011/2012
EPDM rubber, aluminium, cable winch and electric drive
600 x 800 cm

A horizontal winch pulls the rubber membrane until the maximum extension point is reached, and then reverses the rotation, leaving the membrane regain its original shape. Before starting a new cycle.



[...] Through the artist's works, the engine tends towards the fetish. The motor is admired for its visual qualities, its beauty and its strength; like an object of contemplation, a relic or a symbol of the development of a society constantly seeking to surpass itself. [...] But these so highly evocative engines can be like a two-edged sword: as useful as dangerous.

*Excerpt of Modifier, like you,
Boris Magrini*

Brancard, 2010
Aluminium, stainless steel, resistance, dimmer
60 x 20 x 180 cm



Booby Trap, 2010
Happening

[...] Luc Mattenberger's torpedo, like its predecessors devised by the Japanese navy at the end of World War II, requires a human pilot to reach its target. In Asimov's *Robot Dreams*, Elvex (LVX-1) is destroyed precisely because its dreams, the human side that is growing in him, could make him neglect the three laws of robotics. This is a pious work. In the ancient words of the archbishop of Narbonne and Pope's envoy Arnaud Amaury: "Cædite eos!", shoot'em up!

In „Les robots prennent le contrôle de Bâle“, *Le Monde*, Harry Bellet (translated)



Harnessed to the ceiling, the long, slender, tapering *Booby Trap* hangs in the air, aimed at a hypothetical target, a spectacular and frightening sight. Luc Mattenberger's aesthetic world regularly borrows from the vocabulary of warfare, machinelike fantasies and mad scientist inventions. Here, minimalist lines and industrial materials are combined to formulate the outline of a perfectly operational weapon of war. But the torpedo awaiting its kamikaze pilot can be seen equally well as a phallic toy for a sea-going jet-setter or as a vehicle for maritime smuggling. As often with the artist's ambiguous contraptions, starting the motor concealed under the black metal casing is all that is needed to choose how it is to be used. And yet this is a sculpture, a work that requires no activation for full deployment of its intense physical presence. The hanging object then becomes another sign that perpetuates the inquiry that the artist has launched into the persistence of utopias, whether they be political, artistic or social.

Séverine Fromaigeat, in special number *Kunst-Bulletin* n° 14 - 2011

Booby Trap, 2010/2011
Aluminium, two-stroke engine, additional tanks F5-Tiger,
turbine, chain host
80 x 120 x 550 cm



Bound, 2010
Leather, stainless steel, passivated steel
13 x 42 x 5 cm (each)
Edition of 7

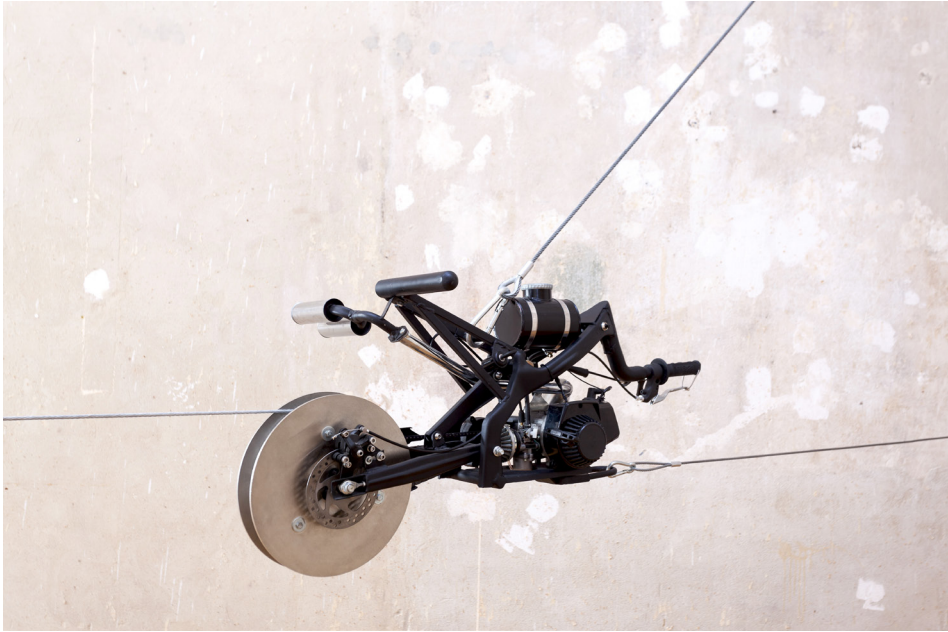


Siren, 2010
Stainless steel, electromechanical siren, time delay relay
200 x 96 x 96 cm



A light Smell of French Fries, 2010
Galvanized steel, barrels, filtration and distribution unit
240 x 100 x 1080 cm

Waste vegetable oil collected from the residents is filtered through the aid of the set-up filtration unit, then the oil is distributed for being used as fuel to be mixed with diesel. Its smell of combustion with the lingering odour of fried spreads over the city. An olfactory work.



Three cables are mounted on the wrought iron grilles of the km temporary art space in Berlin and are stretched almost to breaking point by coiling the cable on the reel.

Treuil, 2010-2013
Steel, two-stroke engine, wire rope
Dimensions variable



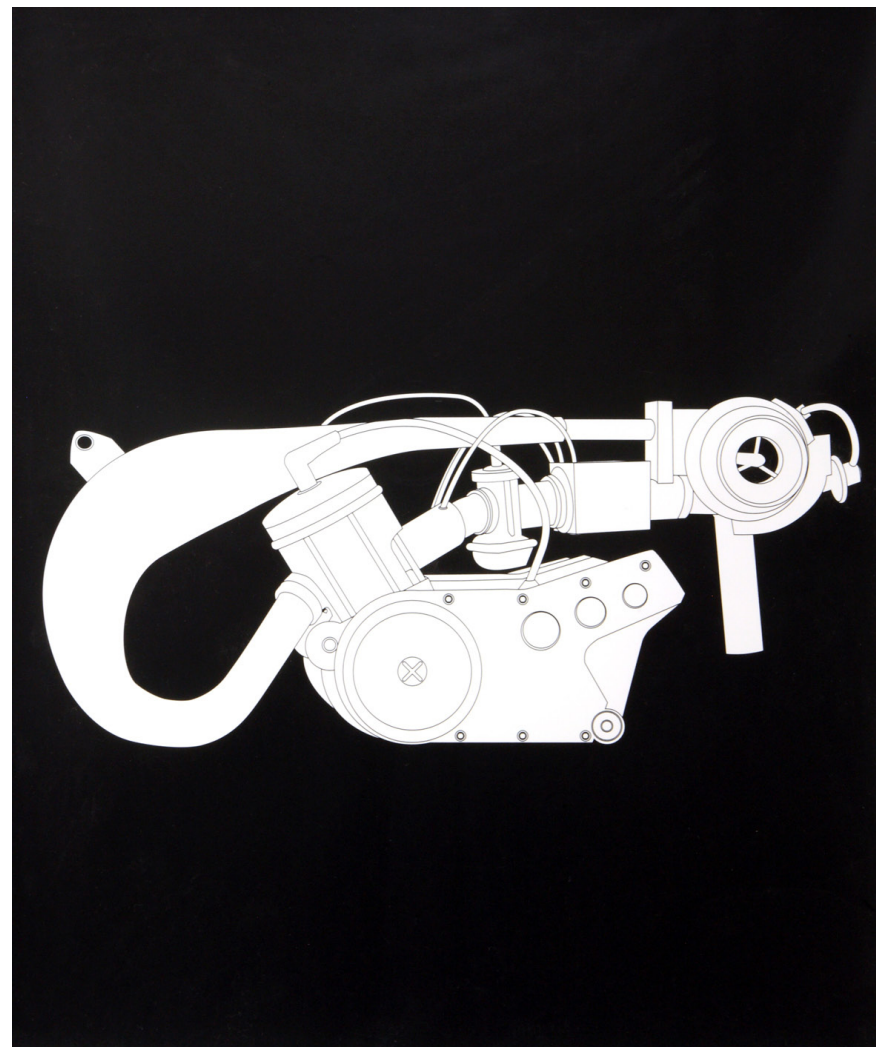
Moteur oscillant, 2010
Stainless steel, two-stroke engine, rope, pulley
Dimensions variable

Moteur Oscillant (Oscillating Engine, 2010) is a stainless steel sphere housing a two-stroke engine hanging in the upper part of the space, the part most resembling a church nave. Its consumption of oil, that modern incense, gives off a persistent but transient smell that inhabits and highlights the volume of LiveInYourHead. *Moteur Oscillant* replays within an enclosed space a pollution that the visitor notices and tracks down. While showing the art space to be a place of worship, the analogy with the censer develops the idea of ceremonials – that of a fetishist gaze coveting an object, that of a public visiting an exhibition, that of a society subjected to the ever-present engine.

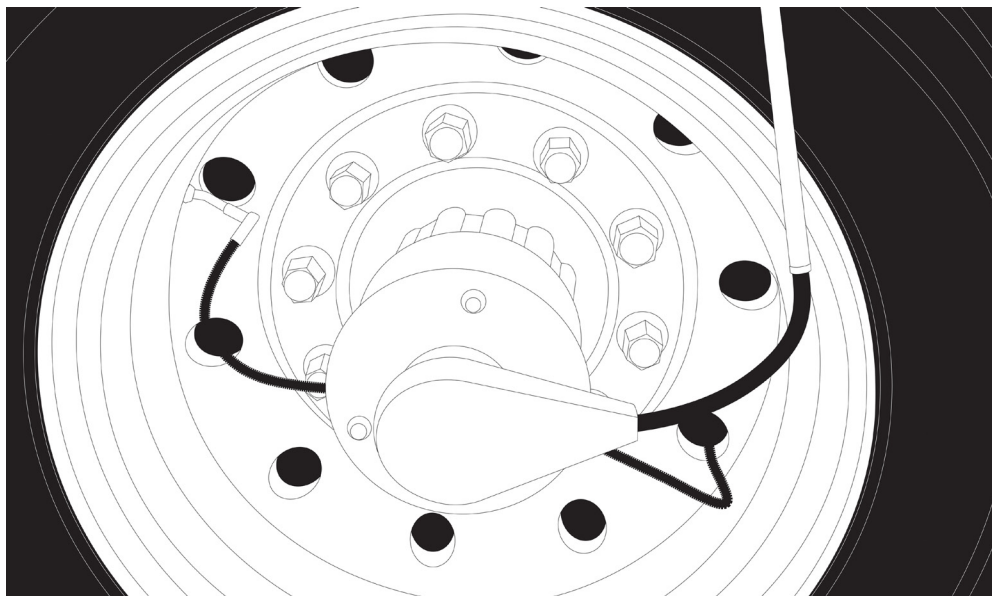
Laurence Schmidlin in *Full Vacuum*.



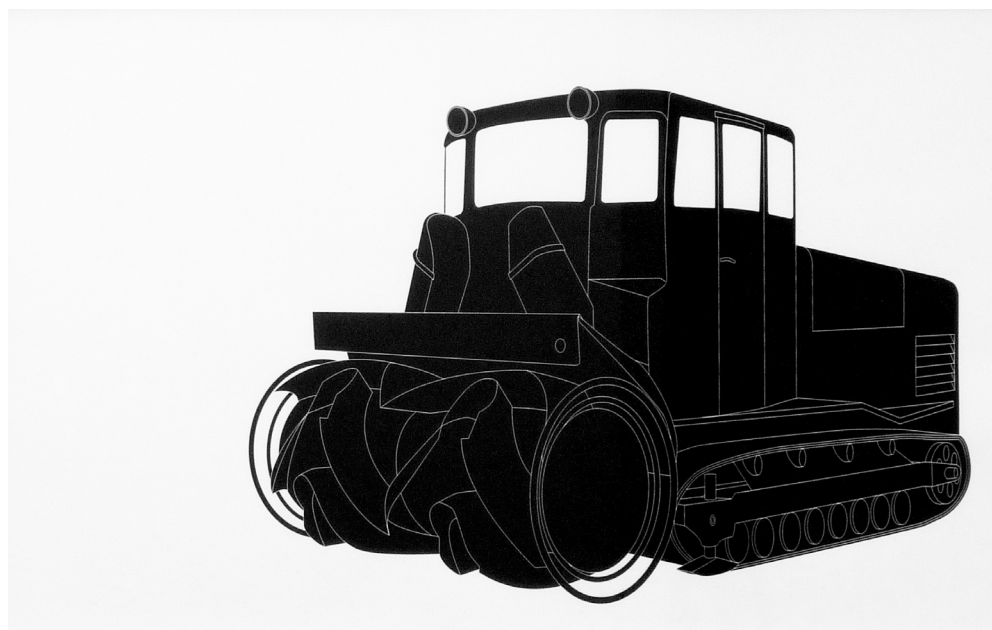
Ex-Voto, 2010
Silkscreen on normaset paper
59 x 49 cm
Edition of 12



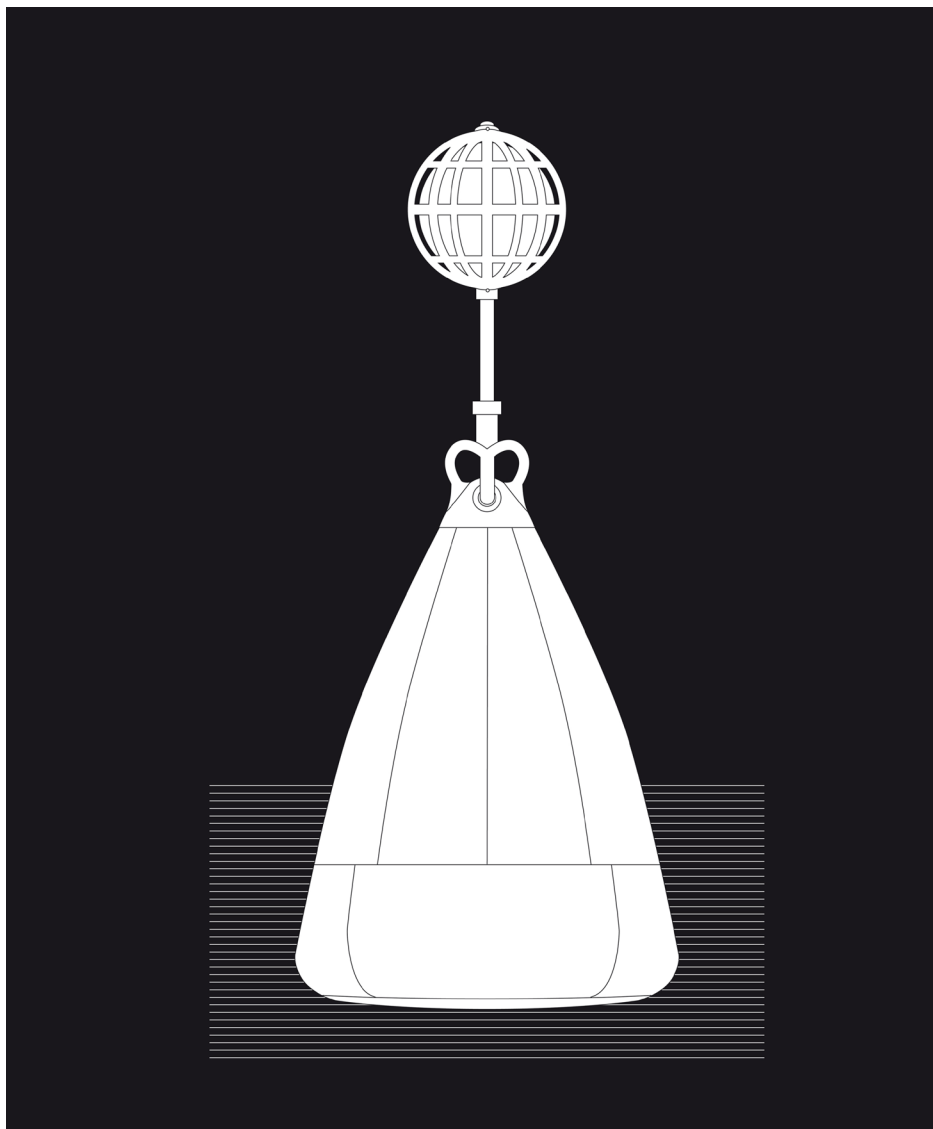
Turbo, 2010
Silkscreen on normaset paper
59 x 49 cm
Edition of 12



Roue, 2009
 Silkscreen on normaset paper
 59 x 99 cm
 Edition of 12



Sans Titre, 2009
 Silkscreen on normaset paper
 59 x 99 cm
 Edition of 12



Cardinale, 2009
 Silkscreen on normaset paper
 59 x 49 cm
 Edition of 12



Sans Titre, 2009
 Silkscreen on normaset paper
 59 x 49 cm
 Edition of 12



The Struggle is Over or an anthropomorphic cluster of forearms in black silicone pierced with protruding hooks. Stainless steel spheres at the other end. These limbs caught between the two evoke both people's obscure leanings and the countless dogmatic facets embodied by the raised fist.

The Struggle is Over, 2009
Stainless steel, black silicone, chain
80 x 10 x 10 cm



Ex-voto, 2009
Aluminium, glass, rubber, LED light
20 x 35 x 15 cm
Edition of 3



Travelling, 2009

Steel, galvanized steel, electric motor, halogen spotlights, automation system, drive system
900 x 60 x 120 cm

[...] „In the next space, Luc Mattenberger – whose superb sleigh with an incandescent sphere Moon Rise greets the public in the entrance hall at the Arsenic – has set up a spotlight structure that moves back and forth on a rail – a kind of surveillance apparatus, but one not very interested in human presences. Unsettling.“ [...]

Samuel Schellenberger in „Cacher, montrer“, *Le Courrier*, November 20, 2009 (Translated)



Moonrise, 2009
 Steel, aluminium, generator, tarpaulin, lighting balloon
 200 x 100 x 460 cm
 DVD, 6min



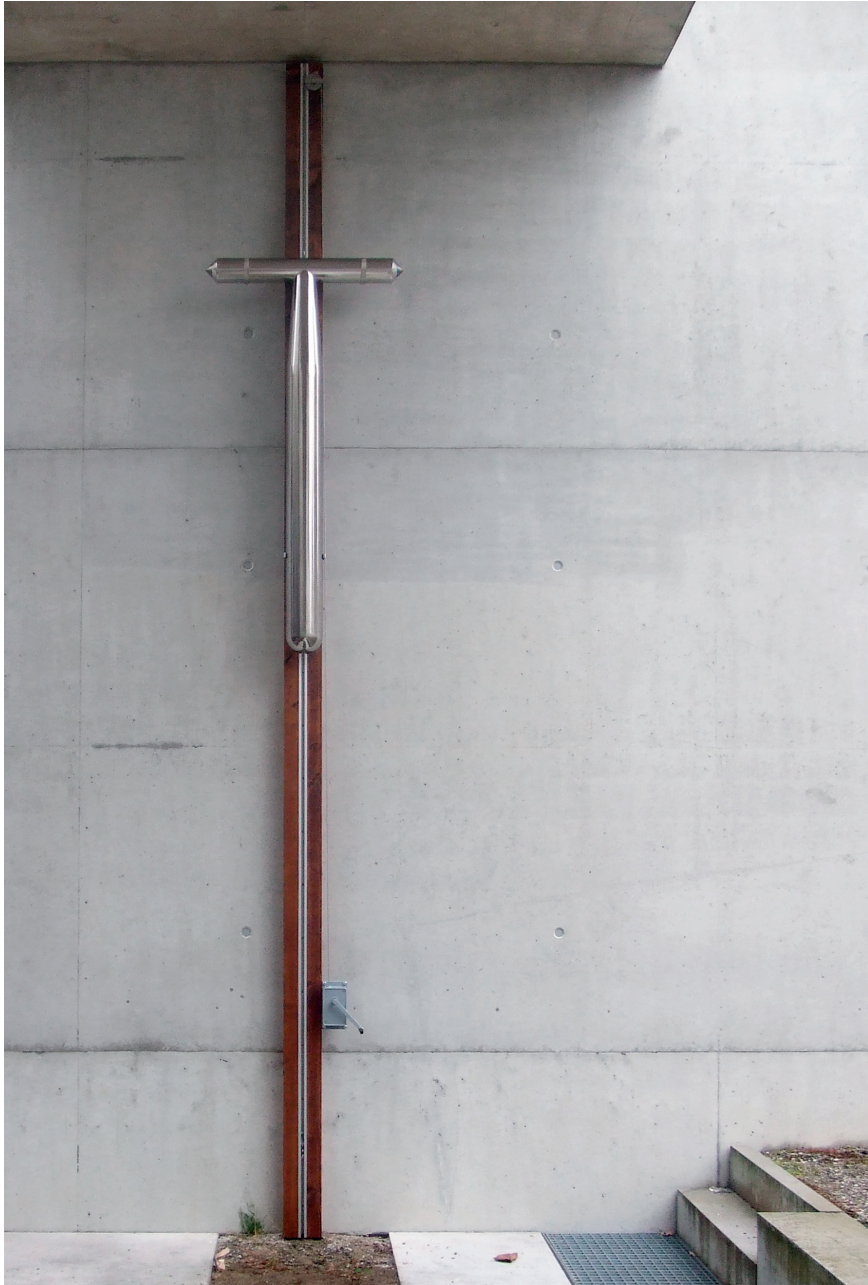
Moon Rise, a 6 min. video projected in a loop, makes it fairly clearly. In a snowy night landscape, a man on skis pulls with great difficulty on a sleigh over which there is a ball of light resembling the Moon, with electric power supplied by a generator. We think of Sisyphus, so futile does the effort of this cross-country skier seem, as he drags this load with such great difficulty. We may also see this offering that is visual and metaphorical in equal measure as the sign of a lover's dependence. This machine which has the ability to create this type of sublime reality – an artificial construction for the eye of the lunar satellite, no less – really needs to be loved, and served, even if it has become a tyrannical breed. There is no choice, whatever the cost and effort demanded, if this is the price of beauty and marvelling.

Excerpt of *Mécanismes transcendantaux*, Paul Ardenne



Radar, 2009
Inflatable PVC
60 x 60 x 105 cm, each

Un groupe de vingt-quatre objets à l'inquiétante étrangeté repose sur le sol de la plus petite des salles du Palais de l'Athénée. Une fois entré dans l'exposition, une armée de leurres prêts à sévir surgit de l'angle mort, tel des croix tirées au cordeau dans un cimetière militaire. Migran d'un univers belliqueux vers la vie civile, ces leurres marquent leur territoire avec force. Pourtant, Radar semble annoncer une mort certaine du principe de l'épouvantail. A l'heure de l'émergence d'une surveillance généralisée, réelle ou factice, qui va-t-il berner avec son dispositif de sécurité de façade?



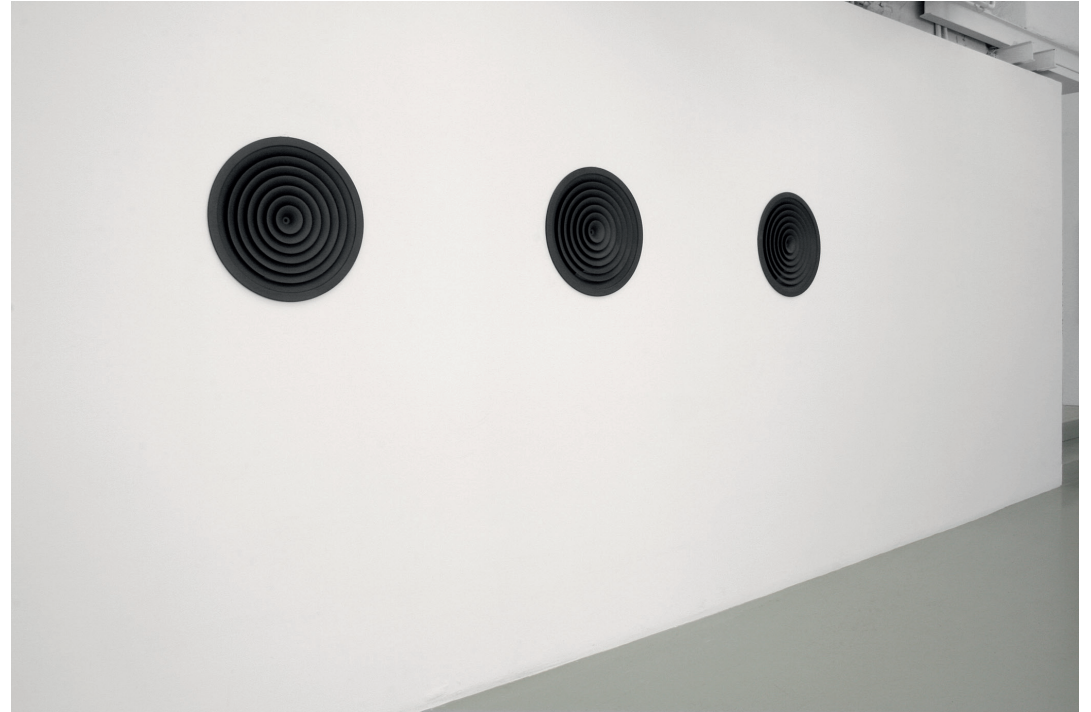
The Ram reveals the museum to be a sacred place, but also asks for it to be desecrated.

The Ram, 2008
Stainless steel, hand winch, wood
500 x 80 x 50 cm



Turning slowly on its rotary base without ever stopping, *Candidate* awaits a likely launch into water. Is it a self-built motorized toy or a torpedo tube for a kamikaze pilot? Only activation will tell.

Candidate, 2008
Motorcycle, drop tanks, steel, revolving pedestal
200 x 240 x 450 cm



Hanging close to the ground on top of the Centre d'art de Neuchâtel (CAN) entrance steps, a mechanical object welcomes the visitors with a brief howl, panting in a long groan, before starting up again. Higher up in the main exhibition gallery, three air vents built into the wall blow in foul air that gradually fills the art centre with a chemical odour, that recalls the smell of fried, tear gas or ammonia.

This Is not a Lullaby, 2008

Electromechanical siren, electric motor, time delay relay, steel, flat sling, air vent, fan 600m³/h, tubes, chemicals and perfume
Dimensions variable



„Luc Mattenberger’s work deals precisely with this burning passion. Uncontrollable feelings felt towards machines, motorized objects, flying machines and other vehicles of sound and fury. This irrational desire that leads people to have an immoderate worship of everything with a motor. There is no valid reason for wanting a large engine, unless it be an inexplicable attraction to this mechanical power, along with an almost carnal desire for possession. To illustrate this generally widespread veneration, Luc Mattenberger erects an altar.“

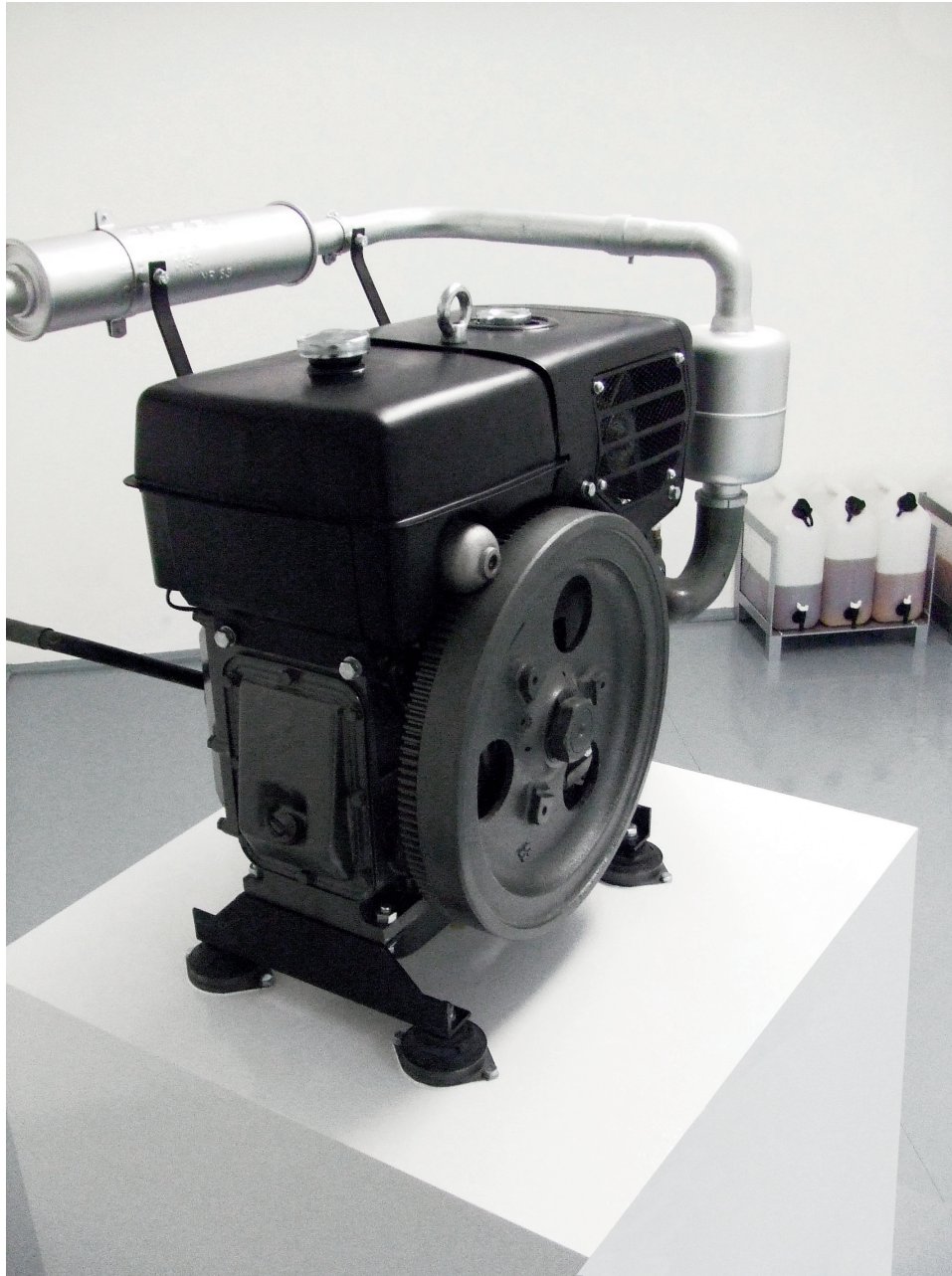
Séverine Fromaigeat, August 2008

Passion ardente, 2008
Two-stroke engine, stainless steel, treated wood
Dimensions variable



A Story of Coolness, 2008

Black PVC tarpaulin, folding stretcher, stainless steel, tempered glass, sealing profile
140 x 35 x 20 cm



A slight whiff of French fries, rather sharp, sickly even... Follow the scent of this used oil. Take the olfactive path to solve the puzzle. Come to an inner courtyard, pursue the elusive plot. A penetrating, almost disturbing smell. Especially here. Isn't this the site of an art gallery? You might doubt it, with the twenty square meters of the aptly named Zwanzigquadratmeter suddenly invaded with sound and fury. [...]

In *Une légère odeur de frite...*, Séverine Fromaigeat, 2008

Une légère odeur de frites..., 2008
Diesel engine, forced ventilation, muffler, pedestal, antivibration system, used Berlin bio fried oil
Dimensions variable



A furtive, matt black machine. An engine. Its proeminent ex-
haust. Frozen and yet always ready to pull on a four-bran-
ched anchor. An anchor part grappling iron, part sex toy.

The Tied-down Rope Law and the Wild Drag Race, 2008
Four-stroke engine, wheels, chrome-plated steel, wire rope,
stainless steel pipes anchor
Dimensions variable



3 motors hung above the stairs at the Geneva Contemporary Art Centre. Permanently running during the whole course of the exhibition.

Lustre, 2007
Two-stroke engine, chrome-plated steel, wire rope, pulley,
hand winch
Dimensions variable



Luc Mattenberger's *Sac à dos à moteur* (Backpack with Engine, 2007) arouses curiosity. At first glance, it looks like it could be used for mowing the lawn, trimming hedges or clearing away dead leaves – or else, along totally different lines, for propelling someone skywards like a novice astronaut. Yet, since it drives no “useful” machine, it serves none of these purposes. Nor can it be qualified as the sort of “useless” object that the art world could label simply as sculpture. Indeed, this two-stroke engine runs – that is, produces noise, a smell and stains. As a portable contraption that uses fuel and pollutes for nothing but its own sake, this object is incorrect both ecologically and politically. Moreover, from an artistic point of view, it suggests a position as disturbing as it is radical with respect to the status of sculpture, (non-) performance and viewer participation. (...),

Excerpt of *LUC MATTENBERGER - THE TOXIC POETICS OF PETROL ENGINES*, Jean-Paul Felley & Olivier Kaeser

Sac à dos à moteur, 2007
Two-stroke engine, steel, cordura
70 x 30 x 20 cm
Edition of 3



Tour de cou, 2007

Cast concrete of a lifebuoy, natural leather strap, black and
chrome-plated steel

60 x 120 x 12 cm

Edition of 3

Photo credits: Aurélien Bergot, White balance, Geneva



Another work implying potential use and a need for polluting fuel is his *Disqueuse à essence* (Petrol-Driven Circular Saw, 2007). The distinguishing feature here is that the object – coming from a hardware store and presented as is – remains out of the viewer's reach. This is because it is enclosed in a galvanized steel plate housing, into which a picture window has been pierced. On one side we see a small metallic instrument, in red, which immediately brings to mind the “in case of emergency, break glass” warning associated with a rescue gesture in case of accident. Here, however, to follow the emergency instructions would be to provide access to a powerful machine customarily serving to cut through metal or pierce walls. It is an object suited to providing life-saving openings, or else to enabling prison escapes by sawing through jail cell bars or again, in a more dramatic situation still, to spreading terror in the fashion of Jack Nicholson's hysteria-driven antics in Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining*.

Excerpt of *LUC MATTENBERGER - THE TOXIC POETICS OF PETROL ENGINES*, Jean-Paul Felley & Olivier Kaeser

Disqueuse, 2007
Cut-off machine, two-stroke engine, steel, glass, emergency hammer
80 x 35 x 45 cm



A truncated leather sphere, the same size as a cast-iron demolition ball, hangs from the crane in the exhibition gallery.

Putsch, 2007
Natural Leather, chain slings, wood, sand, steel
1100 x 80 cm / Dimensions variable



86 hours running container , 2006
20ft container, engines, steel drums, 1:40 fuel-oil mix, wood
244 x 259 x 610 cm

The device was installed for ten days in the middle of Geneva's old town, and operated nonstop for the 86 hours that the exhibition „Les Vrais durs ne dansent pas“ (Real tough guys don't dance) was open.



...The machine was resting on the floor – being stopped, it looked as though it was just waiting for a brave hand to start it up again. The space was filled with the stench of a warm engine, and there were tyre marks on the ground behind the machine.

Excavatrice, 2006
Machine, batipin floor panels, twin four-stroke motor, wheels,
steel blades
99 x 74 x 160 cm