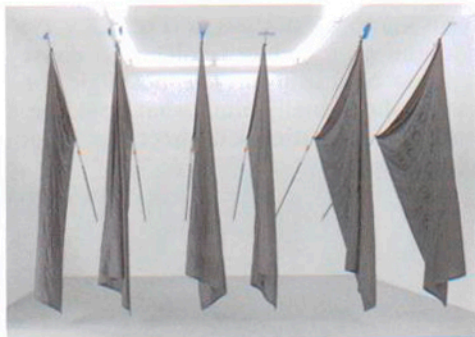


# CLAIRE FONTAINE

GALERIE NEU - BERLIN



CLAIRE FONTAINE, *Change*, 2008. Installation view. Courtesy Galerie Neu, Berlin.

The exhibition “Change” is the most recent manifestation of Claire Fontaine’s inspection of the political, economic and cultural conditions under which the collective and self-declared “ready-made artist” produces her work. Six black flags (*Untitled*, 2008) dominate the gallery space. They are embroidered with quotes from an essay by French philosopher Gilbert Simondon, elaborating on the cultural repercussions of technology and

its impact on man. The gothic darkness of the flags forms a stark contrast to the colourful gardening tools that make up their poles and highlight notions of man’s estrangement from agricultural or manual labor. *Multitude* (2008), the title evidently borrowing from Hardt and Negri, is a stall lifted from the streets of Mexico City. It displays an unstructured all-over of patches, youth paraphernalia with their differing symbols and messages, a panorama of an ideologically fractured world. *Passe-Partout (Berlin-Mitte)* and *Passe-Partout (Vichy)* (both 2008) consist of a number of lock picks used by locksmiths as well as burglars, complete with key rings and chains. They promise to open up places that are economically or historically charged and are considered hermetic topographies by the artist(s). But these keys also provide access to the gallery premises, alluding to the surplus value in power that the potential collector acquires. Claire Fontaine’s work is always also a reflection on the role of a contemporary artist’s complicity in participating in the

art market and on the values that change hands through its distribution channels. Her works very knowingly employ ideas of critical agency in contemporary art, but at the same time they are very aware of the limitations of such an attitude and the difficulties posed by the system in which they operate.

*Astrid Mania*

*Multitude*, 2008. Readymade patches, cloth, metal screen made of 7 panels. Courtesy Galerie Neu, Berlin.

