

CLAIRE FONTAINE

HOUSE OF GAGA - MEXICO CITY

The Paris-based artist collective Claire Fontaine presents their second solo exhibition in Mexico at House of Gaga. The artists, who took their collective name from the Claire Fontaine brand of school notebooks, declare themselves “readymade artists.” In neo-conceptual installation works they use neon, video, sculpture, painting and text to advance an ongoing interrogation of political impotence and singular crisis that seems to define contemporary art today. *Arando el mar/Ploughing the Sea* refers to the work of Sisyphus, whose ongoing work we do daily in order to participate in a visibly corrupt system devoured by crises.

Entering the gallery, the spectator feels oppressed by the low ceiling. This spatial intervention acquires full significance by reading an excerpt of Lidia Falcón’s book *Letters to a Spanish Idiot* (1975) burnt in long lines into the ceiling surface. The text refers to the vicious cycle of unpaid and unrecognized domestic labor, described in the excerpt as a perpetual movement and continuous reproduction of material life, regenerated only to be exploited.

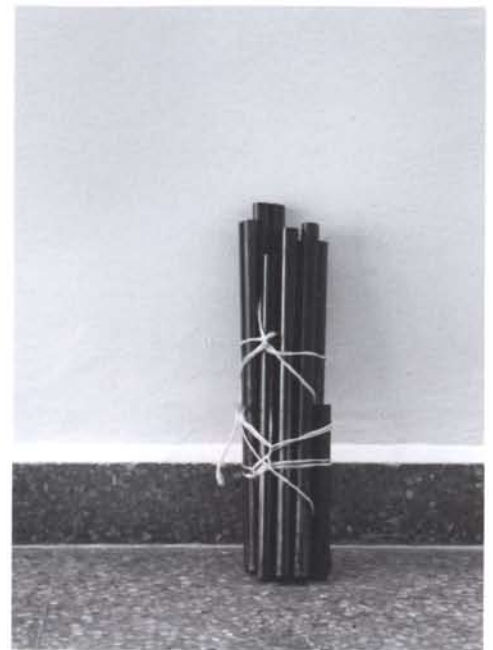
A dishwasher filled with black latex dildos, symbols of deepest promiscuity between object and human flesh, transforms the objects into a washable industrial tool to be reused within an anonymous chain of consumption and satisfaction.

A bundle of sawn-off shotguns evokes the illusion that the weapons could be in use elsewhere. *Untitled, Missing* (2011) leaves the viewer with questions of hidden but ever-present violence.

In the front of the gallery, a perforated hole-in-the-wall safe invites one to push their hand through, while blocking one’s fist from getting out. This *Untitled (Money Trap)* (2011) alludes to our continuous desires within a materialistic society as sure-fire traps ensuring the devaluation of human feelings.

Finally, through a planned deviation of various objects from their prime significance, Claire Fontaine uses the readymade to remind us of our most profound emotions and values by evoking a pause or “human strike” — a term coined by the artist in which we briefly recognize ourselves.

Bernadette Felber



CLAIRE FONTAINE. *Untitled, (Missing)*, 2011. Sawn off shot gun barrels, newspaper and cord, variable dimensions. Courtesy House of Gaga, Mexico City.