



Claire Fontaine, *Untitled (:)*, 2019, painted canvas, wood, magnet, coins, 39 x 29 1/2".

GENOA

Claire Fontaine

GENOA PALAZZO DUCALE
Piazza Matteotti 9
March 8–May 5

La borsa o la vita (“your money or your life”) is a typical old-school demand used by bandits in Italy. Wordplay is nothing new for Claire Fontaine, the Palermo-based conceptual collective, and it is evident in the title of this retrospective exhibition, “La borsa e la vita” (Your Money and Your Life): *o* (“or”) becomes *e* (“and”), reminding us that *borsa* in Italian means both handbag and stock exchange. As if the gallery were still undergoing installation, the floor is covered with pages of newspaper—selections from the financial broadsheet *Il Sole 24 Ore* (*Newsfloor, Il Sole 24 Ore*, 2019), evoking the disorienting and relentless churn of

the daily news cycle and the financial market. (How fitting that Genoa is the site of one of the world’s first private banking institutions.) In the first room, the video tutorial *Instructions for the sharing of private property*, 2006, teaches viewers how to turn ordinary tools into potential implements for breaking padlocks and thieving effectively. For *Untitled (:)* and *Untitled (:-)*, both 2019, the collective uses loose change to trace smiley and frowny faces on painted canvases, offering an emotive reflection on the value and commodity exchange of artworks themselves.

Elsewhere, five framed blank checks, signed by the artists’ dealers, past and present, attest to the financial faith requested and granted (*Trust [Paola Guadagnino]*; *Trust [Helene Winer]*; *Trust [Fernando Mesta]*; *Trust [Chantal Crousel]*; *Trust [Florece Bonnefous]*, all 2010). In *Change*, 2006, the artists modified US quarters by equipping them with prosthetic blades that won’t set off a metal detector. A declarative neon text piece, *No present*, 2009, riffs on the punk movement’s *No future* motto, seeming to suggest that, though free-market capitalism may have promised everything, its rotting corpse is a testament to how even eating its young can no longer sustain it.

Translated from Italian by Marguerite Shore.

— Marta Silvi