

La période molle
Aubry-Broquard

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DESIGN

Too much staging!
Too many cymas!
Too many pedestals!
Too classic!

We're afraid of space.
We thought, "It's too big, we have to fill it up"!

I like it when there are several elements that echo each other.
The heterogeneous aspect.

It's all about formal considerations. But the content... that's the problem.

That's what's missing actually: something basic that holds it all together.

Should we make things up that aren't true?
False objects?

No, rather a false story, a kind of legend that would hold everything together.
In text form?
Yes, maybe. I don't know.

Often in our work, we make everyday objects.

Yes, but with ceramics we could also make sculptures, like Giacometti.
Well, we haven't really thought about it, but we never work with the body, human beings.

We're quite object-oriented, really.
We talk about popular content, about nothing. It's the idea of making icons with everyday objects.

Well, that's completely pop art and it's already been done.
Yes, it's rubbish...

But is a shelving unit design?
Yes, because design is function.
I think it's all getting too serious.

I'd like to make freer shapes.
More expressive.
More gestures?
Shapes that live on their own.

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THE WORKSHOP

Do you have to be alone in your workshop?
Artists all have to create their own little world.

But some artists work together, right?
Yes, but you still have to think alone.

In the past artists shared much more. Now they're in their workshop doing their own thing.

In the 70s it was utopia. Today it's the entrepreneurial artist.

It's paradoxical. You're alone in your workshop while showing off how cool you are on Instagram.

There's no interaction.

Going to the workshop or going to the office?
We used to go to the office because we were graphic designers.
Now, since we're artists, we go to our workshop.

"Workshop" is old school! Now everyone says "studio"! It sounds better!

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HUMOUR

For me, humour tells stories.
You can't make a sculpture that's abstract *and* funny.

But is the dog funnier than the three-legged sausage?
It's ridiculous.

You can't make serious art, there has to be a discrepancy.
If we'd done this work without humour, it wouldn't make sense.

There are enough serious things in life.

Should we entertain people?
I wouldn't be able to do an exhibition with three stones, where you're bored shitless.

I want to have fun too.

But d'you wonder if people will like it?

A little bit anyway.

But that's lame then?

Yeah, it sucks!

Humour is also grotesque, it's exaggerating things!

I don't like imitation. It's too caricatural.

On the other hand, in the dictionary, they don't really talk about grottos...

Grotesque: whimsical figure, caricatural, burlesque, extravagant, ridiculous.

I like "ridiculous".

When art takes itself too seriously, it's airtight, you can't project anything into it.

But then again, there's obviously something between serious and ridiculous?

A dog, for example, is it grotesque?

Of course it is! The basic object is already hyper-extreme.

But are our jugs grotesque?

Yes, they are. When there are so many of them and they're piled up on top of the cupboard, it's so over the top!

If they weren't deformed, the perception would be different?

Yes, but we can't make beautiful ones.

I'm interested in ugly things!

If it's just aesthetic and you can see what it is right away, it's boring.

A bronze on a pedestal, a painting in a frame, it's almost too light already.

Even if the shapes are extreme?

The object itself remains hyper classical. It's a sculpture!

Yes, that's an interesting question.

Do you make pictures?

Do you make sculptures?

Do you do installations?

Do things always have to be really obvious about what they are?

With humour you can do anything, while not being funny!

Funny humour is boring!

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ART BRUT

We're interested in the forms of art brut, naive, let's say spontaneous, without constraints.

But with ceramics, you can't just do something quickly and finish it. There's a whole work process that's quite constraining.

It's a contradiction, isn't it?

It's like doing things very badly but really well.

We're fake amateurs.

We aestheticize amateurism.

Yes, unfortunately.

Why unfortunately?

Indeed, why unfortunately?

Still, upside-down tree trunks and mirror tubes, that's different!

In terms of continuity, it means that you have to decide on a style?

It's lame, isn't it? That's why I like the notion of "world", because it's open.

And there's also humour, isn't there?

But there's no humour in the trunks!

It depends, all you'd have to do is put a little branch on the side and hang a handbag and it would be funny!

We do funny things.

That's who we are.

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CROCS

It looks like a kind of gherkin with these little bumps.

It looks like some kind of clog.

With a strap on the back, a bit like a ski shoe.

What's weird is also these air holes all around.

It's functional.

Plus, it's curved at the front, it perks up, it sticks out.

Organic design!

Everything is round and soft, exactly.

It's made out of special plastic that doesn't make you sweat. It doesn't go "zip-zip-zip" when you walk.

It's a monobloc.

Yeah, they're made out of one block.

They're indestructible. But everything needs to be ruined after a year now. Basically.

I don't think they'd thought of that.

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ARCIMBOLDO

For me, creating faces with tomatoes and other vegetables is just an effect.

Exactly.

It's like a pseudo-exaggerated fake.

But why is it valuable?

It must've impressed people at the time.

Also because he found an idea and stuck with it.

You have to have a clear picture if you want your work to be successful.

All artists do that.

So you have to keep repeating the same thing?

Yes. As Gianni said: "Your work is cool, now keep on doing the same thing, but bigger."

So, the bigger it is and the more it repeats itself, the cooler it is?

That's it. Yes.

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THE HEAP

A heap is ugly.

A heap starts when you have a lot of stuff you don't know what to do with.

For example, you're in your garden, you're picking up the dead leaves...

You pile them up, you throw them away carelessly.

You group them together to make space.

And often the final destination is the bin!

The heap is the stage before the bin.

So does that mean that heaps are rubbish?

I wonder if it's possible to make a heap of beautiful things.

But what's "beautiful"?

No, but here, for example, you have a bunch of planks. It's a kind of storage space, by the way. You group things together so that they're not scattered everywhere.

Yes, that's it. You group them together, you push everything together.

A heap of planks, a pile of tyres...

For example, we could make a heap of old porcelain, a heap of old corks. But you could also make a mixed heap.

It's quite nice to make heaps where the objects are all the same, with this repetition effect.

Then there's a stack of plates, for example. That's not the same thing.

But you can't stack flowers. You have a bunch of flowers.

What's beautiful is the pyramidal shape of the heap. That's earthly attraction. It's physics.

You can't make a cylindrical heap.

You can't make a heap that starts thin and ends larger.

But what do you find fascinating in heaps? We've done works that are heaps.

We've made heaps of luxury work. You can buy a heap of ceramics for CHF 15,000.

But ceramics are almost like a heap, a pile. A pile is more practical than a heap.

Yes, a pile, that's tidy. Whereas a heap is messy, it's unorganised.

But then again, a pile is not necessarily structured. Like vinyl stacked in a shelving unit, you can take any record out any way you like.

But in a pile of records, you can't take out the one that's underneath...

The pile is an orderly heap. First of all you buy a lot of books, you have them all over the place. It's a heap. Then you make a pile to save space and then you arrange them in your library.

The heap is the stage before the pile.

The heap that becomes a pile that becomes a shelving unit.

But that's only when you want to keep the objects!

Yes, otherwise they're off to the bin!

A pile of shit.

A pile of slice.

But how big is a big heap?

Because it has this pyramidal shape!

When they made the pyramids, did the Egyptians think "We're going to make big heaps?" No. It's for architectonic reasons.

But it's very stable, a heap. Well, some of them collapse all the same.

It depends on how you build your heap.

There are heaps of wood where people go to a lot of trouble. It takes them hours to fit the pieces of wood together.

Yes, there are "stacking" techniques.

There's heap and heap. What's beautiful about this heap is that from a distance, visually, it makes a sort of random structure, but close up, if you look at it, you discover things.

I don't think it's a nice heap!

Its shape is not nice, it's not a nice pile. It's more of a horizontal spread. It's wider than it is high.

When I was little, my favourite hobby was going to the tip.

A tip is a collection of heaps.
It's a big heap made up of little heaps.

Often it's thematic in the tip, you have: the "washing machines" heap, the "tyres" heap...
It's already sorted.

That's the rubbish dump, objects are decomposed: you put the plastic on one side, the metal on the other and they make new groups.

But tips don't exist anymore. They're forbidden.
It was fascinating, it was a discovery.
The treasure heap.

Because of the environmentalists, there are no more tips.
No more heaps!

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WAITING

I don't like waiting!

You have to learn how to wait. Patience is part of life.

But without action, there's no reaction.

In a plane or a train, you move but you're not doing anything!

You're not doing anything, but since you have to wait, you don't feel like you're wasting your time.

You have the right to do nothing!

I like "daring to do nothing".

'Cause when you're in the workshop and you're not doing anything, you start feeling guilty.

I'd love to be in the workshop and do nothing.

Do nothing?

Yes, looking at books, waiting... 'til you're the master!

Waiting to be the master?

Waiting for a long time...

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PIZZA

Bastien, do you like pizza?

Pizza is super cool!

Because you could make an analogy between pizza and design, the random way a pizza chef puts his ingredients on a pizza... It's already a composition system, isn't it?

You have different ingredients, and you throw them on top...

They just land where they land. And at the same time form a structure. That's distribution.

That's what it is. It's the art of distribution.

The pizza chef tries to place his ingredients in a random way. But he still tries to spread them all over.

A Four Seasons is actually four pizzas.

Yes, that's right, but does everything have to be spread out evenly?

And then you've got the calzone...

It's always been a bad example, in terms of composition, hasn't it?

Back at school we were told: "Don't make a pizza".

That's it: "Stop making pizza!"

That's visual anti-tension.

What's more, when a record is poorly recorded, we say: "It's been recorded on a pizza".

Really?

But is a pizza always round?

In the end, it's not very important. It would be the same if it were square.

But would you like to work as a pizza chef? Achieve that level of freedom?

Yes, exactly, but pizza is precisely the art of distribution. Each bite must have the same number of ingredients to have the same taste.

So you know you're always eating the same thing?

That's right, but I don't think that's what we're looking for. I find it interesting how well pizza works. There's always a tomato base and then the ingredients, and the cheese on top, it's kind of the connection between the things.

The mozzarella?

It's the cement of the pizza.

The cheese is the cement between the ingredients.

Yes. And then there's the foundation, the dough and the crust.

The soil!

The structure. Then you have the ingredients and the cheese, that's the cement.

So if the dough is the structure and the mozzarella is the cement, what are the ingredients? What would that symbolise?

The taste.

The taste, yes, but mozzarella too?

I don't know, mozzarella doesn't really have any taste.

It's the fat.

It's the flavour enhancer.

The fat enhancer! But if you put it in a visual or architectonic context, you have the foundations, the cement, and the ingredients are the bricks!

Yes.

So a pizza is a foundation, bricks and cement?

Exactly.

Yes, yes, you can talk about anything with pizza.

That's interesting!