

Each decade is inevitably marketed by certain trends, placed in parenthesis by following trends. As they say, we see what we want to see, and on that path history is written. Perhaps a more accurate statement would be that we see what we already know. Those on the fringes often introduce the biggest changes and more often than not, we cannot even register their existence until they are already at the gate. Duchamp's Coal Bags, Frank Stella's U-T- and L shaped canvases and Leo Castelli's ...Leo Castelli did not come out of nowhere. They were distant ships poised to wipe out all that came before them.

For some the trend I am about to introduce may be completely new, sound completely ludicrous, or perhaps strike a cord. Certainly, I can say with personal authority (which is meaningless unless you know me) that this particular trend is gaining recognition in North America. In Eastern Europe I would say that art's purpose, as this blog has well discussed, diverges too far from Western value systems for this term to be relevant there. However, in Western Europe this movement may be so widely accepted as part of the norm, it has silently slipped by any art historical body, media, museum or other. Some are calling it Interstitial Art & Design. I have lately been so bold as to conjecture that in Paris they may call it 'habitat'. The art of design was arguably invented in Europe. Design has aligned itself with art since the period when Chateaus were being built with the expectation of frescos and chairs designed to emulate romantic lines ending in arabesque. In my opinion, the point at which art and design are considered distinct, remains under researched or defined. A undertaking well beyond this blog post, though undeniably what inspired it.

The distinction between art and design is exhibited through separate fairs, and museums floors. Yet open an Artforum, Architectural Digest, or Monocle and the crossover, to me, seems obvious. The distinction between an art and a design object is often only a difference in functionality. Whether one agrees or disagrees with this proposed crossover, a second question arises: Is curating a faculty of design or art? Recently I have been actively taking apart Brian O'Doherty's "White Cube", in an effort to create a timeline indicating turning points in the format of art exhibition making. Current economic constraints have lead to the creation of third or "off" spaces, in which the exhibition of art takes over a space not necessarily designed for that purpose. Hotel rooms, streetcars and cellars are taken over by curators, creating spaces in which art lives. The clinical setting of the white cube that presents art through a process of alienating the viewer, is replaced with warmer more familiar surroundings. Placed about the space art can often be found on the floor, in cupboards, bookshelves, on desks and even the ceiling. Remaining furniture is often emptied of all usual objects and accepts its new role as a support of art - a poor mans plinth (I kid). There are galleries engaging in this 'off-space' effect, finding unique spaces and painting them white. Curators choose them for their unique qualities and engage them to every edge. I am reminded of Ei Arakawa's "Why Painting Now" exhibition at Galerie Meyer Kainer 11.10.13-14.11.13 in Vienna.

Recently I had the pleasure of discovering the space of [Johan Fleury de Witte](#). On the Ile Saint Louis in Paris. There, under barrel vaults, in the basement where once an office lived, he invites curators two or three times a year for short run exhibitions. From January 17 to February 16, he hosts OUTRESOL, an exhibition co-curated by Mathieu Buard & Joel Riff. The exhibition is one in a series of 'Outre-' that have happened in several locations in and around Paris. Each have engaged an 'off-space' of sorts, allow the space to dictate the layout of the work within. In Riff's words, they're "fighting for a total freedom to show what [they] want and how, whatever categories and habits". Both actively engaged in the 'scene', Buard & Riff also teach design. Riff is notorious for visiting every single exhibition in Paris equaling roughly two hundred a month (though he notes that the number of exhibitions in Paris is slowly diminishing). His blog, entitled [chronique Curiosité](#), is an excellent guide to art in Paris, past and present.



Photo credit: Nicolas Brasseur. Art: Lina Scheynius, Maude Maris, Rémy Brière



Photo credit: Nicolas Brasseur

OUTRESOL's incarnation in de Witte's cavern includes work by: Maude Maris, Rémy Brière, Jean Baptiste Bernadet, Lina Scheynius and Mimosa Echard. Many of the artists use commonly found objects, obverting their function. Rémy Brière's Série Bronzes Ephémères which includes flowers and a watermelon (still contained inside their bronze cast) are carefully placed on the floor or a table. Maude Maris's "Curiosités" made from polystyrene, fill a book shelf. Photorealist depictions of them cast about surfaces, are hung low to the ground or as the single object in yet another book shelf. The viewer's path is not as obvious as in a conventional white cube, in which the art forms a ring around the room. Nor is the purpose of the space as clear as the contemporary gallery. The art now serves the function of defining space.

Certainly, artists often participate in the placement of their art objects. However, OUTRESOL in all its incarnations exhibits a shift brought about

by the 'off-space'. The gallery space is no longer a seemingly predetermined space outside of the curator or artist's sphere of influence - after a long history of futile attempts to push against its white walls. The off-space introduces a far more collaborative format for exhibition making in which the design/space choices made by the curator have a direct and transparent effect on the art invited in. Interstitial Art & Design, is commonly defined as that which sits in between art and design - teetering on craft, often functional, but with very clear limitations. This definition is still being defined by those creating within it. What I offer here is an addition to that definition. One that includes art that sits between the readymade and Eugene Reznik's Glitch Furniture. Art that is ready and willing to be transformed into an 'objet' in the 'off-space'. Where its presence makes us question what composes a living room or an office and why we put fruit on the dining room table.



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