

Title: In and Out of Storage
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Drews, Cyra Pfennings, Vivian van Saaze,
and Renée van de Vall
Project: Out of Storage



Laurie Parsons_Depot



Philippe Meste_Depot



Daniel Spoerri_Depot



Walead Beshty_Depot



Jessica Diamond_Depot



Mathieu Mercier_Galerie

Introduction

The conservation of contemporary art-works presents collectors with great challenges. If you regularly visit exhibitions of modern or contemporary art, you must have wondered how artworks are preserved when they are made from aging, transient or vulnerable materials such as plastic, food or glass. How do you present film and video art when the equipment that is used to show it wears down or is simply not available anymore? But also: what does it mean for an artwork when it was designed for a specific space and later re-installed in a different environment? How do collectors deal with these 'instable', transient artworks? Which decisions are made, why, by whom and what are the consequences of all this for the artwork's biography?

Artworks are usually presented as original, unchangeable objects. Once they have left the artist's studio, they are not supposed to change anymore, let alone after they have entered a museum or other public or private collection. However, the stories that are brought together in this booklet show that activities such as acquisition, storage, transport, installation, presentation, conservation and restoration may affect the appearance and the meaning of a work. In some cases, they even lead to great changes to the artwork. That is why these stories are called 'biographies': like human beings, works of art may go through developments in which they change, and yet they may continue being the same work. Not surprisingly, questions like: 'which changes are in line with the work's identity and which are not?' and 'when has a work been altered so much that it has stopped being the same work?' are matters of much debate and research (see for instance www.newstrategiesinconservation.nl).

The stories in this booklet describe practices of conservation that usually take place behind closed doors and show how backstage and front stage are irrevocably connected.

The booklet is compiled by students and researchers from the Faculty of Arts and Sciences of Maastricht University and printed for the occasion of the exhibition *Out of Storage* (2011) in the Timmerfabriek, Maastricht, the Netherlands.

Out of Storage is organized by Marres Projects in cooperation with FRAC Nord-Pas de Calais and WOM Belvédère.

Title: A Biography of Laurie Parsons' *Stuff*, 1989
Text: Julia Bevilacqua Alves da Costa

Stuff was 'created' by Laurie Parsons in 1989 and acquired by the Fonds Regional d'Art Contemporain Nord-Pas de Calais in 1991. The word 'created' is placed between brackets because the artist hardly played any role in the physical process of giving shape to the art object. Instead, twenty-six objects that the artist collected and subsequently arranged on the floor of an exhibition space shape *Stuff*.

The origins of the objects are unknown; the artist could have found them anywhere. The types of objects are also very diverse; they include a lamp, a little address book, photographs, papers, books, wooden shapes, a little basket and a travel toothbrush. The selection of the objects seems random, varying from one single shoe to a pair of boots, a biscuit without expiration date and a photograph of someone sitting in a field. There seems to be no hierarchy between the objects either, they are randomly placed on the floor.

Stuff can be placed within a tradition of 20th-century artists that question the essence of art or the potential of art. These ideas challenged the traditional categories of established art from the past. One of the most seminal artworks expressing such ideas is the work *Fountain* by Marcel Duchamp from 1917.

The FRAC bought *Stuff* together with three other artworks for a total of 17,500,00 dollars from the Lawrence Monk Gallery in New York. The artworks were transported from the United States to France and reached the French territory on the 11th of December 1991. What has driven my attention to look into the biography of *Stuff* is the interesting position of the artist in regard to the future life of her work. Upon the acquisition of an artwork, artists usually

provide information concerning the materials they use or the conservation or re-installation of their works. Laurie Parsons, however, does not seem to be too much troubled with the future of this artwork. This was highlighted when part of the installation, an arrow, went missing during an exhibition in 2001. When the FRAC consulted the artist about the missing arrow she answered that the missing part was not a problem. Moreover, she told the FRAC to instruct the security guard that was in the room to allow people to take other parts of the artwork too. In the artist's words: "It is fine with me that someone took off with the arrow. (I like people doing what they want to do, in general, and I've not been doing 'actual' 3-d pieces for a long time, sort of wouldn't mind if they all disappeared....) I've also personally encouraged security staff members to focus on other things than the art at hand..."¹

This 'new' position of the artist towards her work could also be understood as an invitation to add personal objects to the artwork. The FRAC, however, does not seem to have taken the idea of the artist into account, as becomes clear from the sign that is often placed next to the artwork: 'work of art – do not touch'. This presents an interesting tension between the position of the artist and the position of the institution, which bought the artwork thinking that it would remain in the collection in the same state as when it was acquired.

In essence, the fact that one of the objects went missing and the subsequent decision not to replace this object by a new arrow or a different object do little to change the meaning of the artwork. However, it is worth questioning what would happen if most of the objects were stolen or went missing, as the artist suggested. What is the minimum of objects required for this artwork to remain the artwork? A second point of interest in regard to this work is the way the objects are arranged in

the exhibition space. *Stuff* has been exhibited seven times and from the images below it becomes clear that the way the artwork is placed on the floor differs with every exhibition.



Exhibition *Arredare La Casa, Abitare Il Museo*
Selezione di opere dalle collezioni di arte e design
Del FRAC Nord-Pas de Calais
(02/04/2004 – 06/06/2004)
Vila Croce Contemporary Art Museum, Gênes, Italy



Exhibition *Trouble Girls* (17/01/2007 – 07/04/2007),
FRAC Nord-Pas de Calais, Dunkirk (France).



Exhibition *Decollecting 4* (13/12/2008 – 08/02/2009),
De Garage, Mechelen (Belgium).

Despite the ordinariness of the objects, the members of the exhibition team at *Out of Storage* were wearing gloves when handling the artwork, explaining that our hands contain an acid that can cause damage to materials. When the men first opened the crate they saw three pieces of wood. “Is this part of the artwork?” one asked to the other, who replied: “yes”. The first man was

not convinced and concluded: “we need to look at the instructions”. The artist did not write an extensive manual for installing the artwork and the “artwork memo” simply defines *Stuff* as a 3D artwork made of mixed media and with variable dimensions. Without any instructions on how to install it, this work could fill the whole room, could be one pile of objects or could be arranged in any other way imaginable. Because of this, a photograph of *Stuff* on display in previous exhibitions is used. The FRAC instructs to arrange the objects as “arbitrary as in the picture”.

Despite all the intensive care of the exhibition team in handling and installing the work, *Stuff* seems to be kept in its humble position when placed on the floor, which will continue to be a place without pedestal. This raises the question whether the way this specific artwork is displayed has an effect on the meaning of the artwork. The answer to this question can be sought by posing another question: where is the installation? It could be inferred that the artwork, in this specific case, is not found in the installation that we actually see on the floor. The artwork seems to be in all of the steps that comprise its journey into the exhibition. From this perspective, the meaning of the artwork arises in the moment when the artist chooses objects from everyday life, exhibits them in a gallery and sells them to an institution. What the visitors actually see in those objects are traces of the actual work; the provocative action by the artist. This might also be the reason why a missing arrow does not necessarily change the meaning of the artwork. At a specific moment, the artist Laurie Parsons stepped back from the sight of the art world and decided not to be an artist anymore.²

1. Email from Laurie Parsons to the MAMCO dated December 20th 2001, archive FRAC Nord – Pas de Calais.

2. Bob Nickas, “Dematerial Girl – Whatever happened to” published by ART-FORUM available on http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0268/is_8_41/ai_101938565, accessed April 7th 2011

Title: A Biography of Philippe
Meste's *Miroir*, 2002–2003
Text: Juri-Apollo Drews

As in other works by the artist Philippe Meste, *Miroir* is a reflection of and deliberate play with notions of virility and dominance. The choice of materials is quite provocative. In the reflection of the mirror, the spectator sees himself covered with stains of sperm, a strong allusion to pornographic images. The choice of materials in this artwork also presents a challenge to the people working behind the scenes of the exhibition, especially in regard to storing and conserving the work.

Miroir was acquired by the FRAC in 2007. When the work is in storage it is wrapped in thick plastic foil and placed in a wooden crate padded with foam plastic in order to prevent it from being exposed to light and dust. However, as it is desired to exhibit the work as often as possible, it is inevitable that dust and hands come into contact with the work. Consequently, the work needs to be cleaned before it is exhibited. For *Out of Storage*, this was done by carefully examining all the tiny spots on the mirror to distinguish which of them belonged to the artwork and which could be removed, after which the mirror was carefully cleaned with a cotton bud and a mixture of water and alcohol.

A more long-term conservation, which goes far beyond this cleaning process, is also required. Generally, the FRAC assures a “parfaite” – a perfect conservation – to the artist in the acquisition contract, which could be considered as somewhat striking when considering the unusual materials used in some artworks, such as Meste's *Miroir*.

Being an organic material, the sperm is subject to decay when exposed to oxygen. Although the work is relatively young, traces of this organic decay can already be seen as the sperm is becoming

crumbly at some spots. Furthermore, the wrapping material used for storing the work may touch the sperm stains, leading to further loss of material through attrition. This is very likely to occur when the artwork is transported. What adds to this is the fact that there is a relatively low adhesion between the mirror and the sperm spots. This again increases the chances that parts of the spots could crumble and fall off. If this effect becomes too extreme, an organic glue could be used to reinstall the crumbled pieces of dried sperm. However, it becomes apparent that the aesthetic appearance of the work also changes over time, which becomes visible in the fact that some sperm stains have already become more yellowish since the acquisition of the work.

Furthermore, no clear provisions have been made as to what happens when the work is majorly damaged, as to example when the mirror would break. If the sperm stains would have to be reconstructed one would have to decide whether the artist should reproduce them with his own sperm or whether another way can be found to restore it. The basic problem, however, is that the sperm pattern will never be reproducible in the same manner. A reconstruction would therefore necessarily entail an alteration of its visual appearance.

In this light, a ‘perfect’ conservation seems hardly possible, as the risk of damaging a work through cleaning, transporting and exhibiting it is always present.

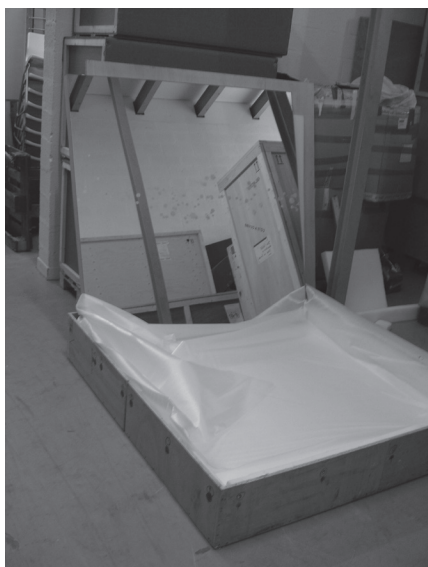
The work can also be intricate on a less material level, for example for the people who curate an exhibition and assign this artwork its place. Meste's *Miroir* is relatively uncomplicated to install, it only requires a wall to hang it on. However, its impact on other works in an exhibition should not be underestimated. Not only the spectator is reflected in the sperm-stained mirror, but he will see the other objects in the room

reflected as well. Given the pornographic allusions of this effect, it must be considered whether the work should be separated from the other artworks or whether an interaction with other works is an inherent idea of Meste's piece.

Some of the problems addressed here might appear far-fetched or unlikely, or even absurd. Nevertheless, the choice of materials in Meste's work makes this piece far more intricate and difficult to have in a collection than it might appear at first sight.



The mirror during cleaning.

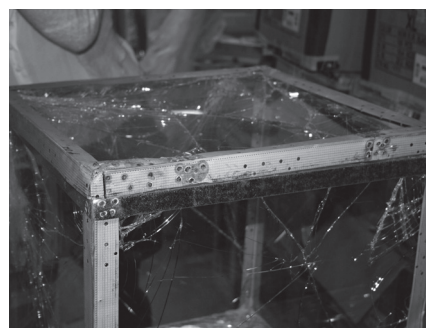


The mirror in its crate

Title: A Biography of Walead Beshty's *FedEx® Large Kraft Box* ©2005 FEDEX 330508
Text: Cyra Pfennings

Walead Beshty's box exhibits the exertions of its journey. Its name is definitely telling in this respect: *FedEx® Large Kraft Box* ©2005 FEDEX 330508; *Standard Overnight, Los Angeles-Washington DC Trk#797476282367, April 3-9, 2009; International Priority, Washington DC-London Trk#823852740440, September 24-October 8, 2009; International Priority, London-Dunkerque Trk#862012042228, February 12-February 15, 2010; International Priority, Dunkerque-Maastricht Trk#862012042228, June 8-June 15, 2011*. The name of the artwork changes with every journey it undertakes. This constant renaming does not only serve to keep track of the artwork's complicated history, but also helps to discriminate between the various boxes Walead Beshty produces for the *FedEx® Kraft Boxes* project.

All the glass boxes consist of shatter-proof double laminated safety glass – sometimes transparent, sometimes opaque. The box now owned by the FRAC is a transparent one and is, unlike most others, fortified by metal bars along the edges:



Detail of the box showing the fortifying metal bars.
Photo: author

Like all of Beshty's boxes, the work presented in *Out of Storage* exactly conforms to the standard dimensions of overseas

FedEx packages, which is 60x60x60. Since FedEx owns this format, no other logistics company is allowed to use it. The precise fitting is necessary for the concept of the artwork to function, since Beshty's work comprises not only the glass box and the FedEx box. Through the unique shattering patterns that the glass box obtains when travelling, the journey itself becomes part of the artwork. This is exactly what is so fascinating about Beshty's boxes: it seems to overcome the usually rather troublesome and worrying topics of transportation and conservation by simply incorporating them into the work's concept.

The FedEx box serves as the artwork's stand when exhibited. As a consequence of all this, the FRAC should not encounter big problems with this work concerning its transportation, conservation and installation. It is all cared for by the artwork itself: the FedEx box is part of the work and it is obligatory that the glass box is sent around in just this box by the FedEx service. When in storage, the glass box could actually also stay in the FedEx box. However, since it might then be mistaken for waste, both boxes are placed in one of the orange crates in which all the artworks of the FRAC are stored.

The disfigurement of the glass box is intended: by only protecting it with the FedEx box, the glass box has to endure all the "carelessness and mishandling typical of packages in transit"⁶, and thereby achieves the effect desired by Beshty: the work "problematize[s its] own conditions of production, of transportation and of reception."⁷ By making these part of his artwork, Beshty addresses problematic notions in contemporary art, such as site-specificity, transportation, (re-)installation, and conservation. In so doing, he seems to highlight the transitory and contingent nature of daily life and raises awareness about the instability of objects, sites and situations in contemporary culture.

Thus, the overall concept of the *FedEx® Kraft Boxes* project seems to run counter to the general goal of conservation. Self-destruction is part of the work and when the box is completely broken, it ceases to be the artwork and is replaced by a new box. Is Beshty's concept a suggestion of how we should deal with objects? Should we use them until they do not work anymore and then simply dispose of them? And, the bigger question implied here: if this held true, would the same count for artworks, too? Should the concerns about the conservation of artworks be taken less seriously? Should the works decide about their life spans themselves?

Two main problems are likely to bring the project to an end. Firstly, if Beshty dies the broken boxes will not be replaced by new ones, unless he commissioned someone to produce new glass boxes. Secondly, if FedEx were to close down, the project would either be over or an integral part of it would have to change, namely the type of packaging and the shipping company. As long as these two cases do not occur, there are little problems to be expected with this artwork, since it is not bound to one specific glass box; the whole project is in a constant flux. The only specifications that are given in regard to this work are that the glass box has to travel in its FedEx box only (it has to be the same one), that FedEx has to take care of the logistics and that when exhibited, the glass box has to be placed on top of the FedEx box. Next to these specifications, there is also a contract with Walead Beshty, which states that Beshty will produce a new box in case it breaks. It is rather unusual to have such clear guidelines as to what happens when a work of art is "dead". A problem that could occur, however, is that the box breaks on the way to an exhibition and there is not enough time for Beshty to produce a new box and send it to Europe via FedEx.

Out of Storage is this box's second exhibition. Prior to this exhibition, it was shown at the École Municipal d'Art in Boulogne sur Mer for an exhibition called *Partir, Revenir*. The unpacking of this artwork upon its arrival at an exhibition site is always an exciting affair: since the glass box's appearance changes with every journey, one never knows what to expect.

Walead Beshty's concern for the effect travelling has on objects as well as the general fragility of objects can be seen in several of his other works:



Travel Pictures Exhibition, Hammer Projects, Hammer Museum, UCLA, Los Angeles, CA ⁹

Title: A Biography of Jessica Diamond's *Tributes To Kusama: Me Constellation* (1992–1993)

Text: Vivian van Saaze

Contemporary artworks are often more complex than their wall labels suggest. Although *Me Constellation* by Jessica Diamond is said to be a mural painting, one could question whether this is an accurate description in the case of its display at *Out of Storage*. One of the key characteristics of a mural painting is that it is applied directly to the wall. However, it was not allowed to paint the walls in the Timmerfabriek and the exhibition makers did not consider the brick walls an appropriate surface for the painting. Therefore it was decided to construct a fake wall made out of plywood and to place it in front of the existing wall. Also, one could argue that this *Me Constellation* was not made by the artist in 1992–1993. Instead, the painting was realized in 2011 by one of the exhibition team members following the written instructions of the artist.



The plywood 'wall' constructed for Jessica Diamond's mural painting

Jessica Diamond (New York, 1957) became known for her ironic and sharp texts painted directly on the wall. Her mural paintings often have the character of a memo or a declaration; one or two words opening up a whole world of meanings. Recurring themes are power, sex, money and business. The ephemeral nature of her

6. Revue d'Art Contemporaine, 48, Winter 2008, p. 40.

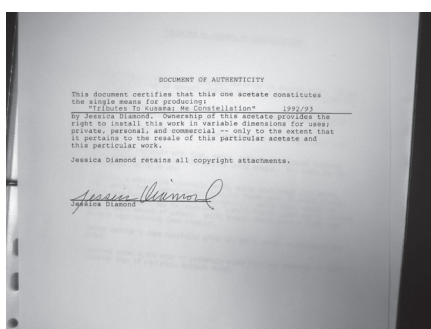
7. Ibid., p. 41.

8. Picture retrieved April 27, 2011 from <http://www.wallspacegallery.com/popimage.html?id=2,6&view=4>

9. Photographs of the abandoned Iraqi diplomatic mission in former East Berlin, which were, when still undeveloped, accidentally taken through an airport x-ray machine. (Pictures retrieved April 27, 2011 from http://hammer.ucla.edu/exhibitions/detail/exhibition_id/84)

murals can be understood as a rejection of the materialism of contemporary consumer society (and presumably the art market). Diamond: "What I like in this type of mural paintings, is that they are like love. Love exits, but its contour is not determined, like a non-object, it is elusive."¹⁰

Me Constellation is part of a series of mural paintings made by Diamond between 1992 and 1997 as a tribute to the Japanese artist and novelist Yayoi Kusama. The white dots – in between which we can discern the word 'ME' – refer to the repetitive use of dots in Kusama's work.¹¹ Diamond's work has been acquired by several museums such as the S.M.A.K. in Ghent and Het Domein in Sittard. When *Me Constellation* came into the collection of FRAC Nord-Pas de Calais in 1997, there was no art object to be handed over. In order for the work to be put on display it has to be realized anew in every venue. To this end, FRAC received a neatly compiled 'black box' from the artist.¹² The black box contains the following items: instructions on how to install or execute the work, instruction samples, examples of placement variations, an acetate for producing the work, and a document of authenticity signed by the artist certifying that this one acetate constitutes the single means for producing *Me Constellation*. Rather than buying a physical, portable art object, the FRAC has purchased the right to execute this work and to allow others to execute the work.



The document of authenticity signed by the artist.

Execution of the work is done by projecting the image on a wall using an overhead projector. The projected rectangular shape is then painted black, according to the artist's specifications by applying flat, matte, latex (water-based) interior house paint with a roller until opaque.



The acetate utilised to project the image onto the wall

The instruction for painting the white dots reads: "Utilizing a sable-like synthetic brush, apply text/image with WHITE, flat, matte, latex (water based) interior house paint OR WHITE Flashe paint (manufactured by Lefranc & Bourgeois). WHITE paint should be opaque. 2–3 coats may be necessary (WHITE Flashe paint may be diluted with a small amount of water). WHITE shapes should have a sharp edge as with sign painting."¹³

"An installation is richer than its specifications," says Pip Laurenson, conservator at the Tate Modern in London.¹⁴ The same holds true for mural paintings or any art work that needs to be re-executed and re-interpreted from artist's instructions. Within the boundaries set by the artist there is always room for variation. Despite the artist's unambiguous instructions how to execute the work, each *Me Constellation* is the result of many decision and the outcome depends on several variables. In the case of *Me Constellation*, the most prominent variables are placement and size as the artist has stipulated that the work can take on any desired scale and can be placed on any part of a wall.

Another important factor determining the specific outcome of the work is the interpretation of the person(s) executing the artist's instructions and his or her own personal touch to the painting. The work at the Timmerfabriek was executed by one of the exhibition team members, Johan Rijken. With a bit of help from his co-workers, it took him about four days to complete the painting.



Execution of *Me Constellation* at the Timmerfabriek by Johan Rijken

Because of his background as a restorer of antique books, he is used to this kind of meticulous work. His precise and careful way of working is reflected in the painting and if you look closely at the white dots, you can tell this person has a steady hand.

In the past, the work has been executed at an art fair in Lille (France) and at exhibitions in Maidstone (UK) and Genève (Switzerland) among other places. *Me Constellation* has also been on loan at a school. Here, the painting was executed by several students in the context of an art-education project. With every execution the work will look different, depending on available space, scale, placement, lighting, and personal touch of the painters.



Me Constellation executed at a school as part of an education project
Photo: FRAC Nord-Pas de Calais

Me Constellation does not need to be preserved like material objects would have it. The largest risk for maintaining the work concerns the black box; if the original acetate image gets lost or damaged, future executions of the work will be jeopardized.

But what will happen to *Me Constellation* at the Timmerfabriek once the exhibition has come to an end? In the case of an exhibition containing a proper mural painting, the wall would probably be painted over, erasing the artwork by a new layer of paint. In the case of *Out of Storage* however, the plywood on which the painting is made will probably be dismantled and thrown away. What is now perceived as an artwork will become garbage and *Me Constellation* will no longer exist in its materialized form until it is executed again.

10. FRAC collection catalogue: *Collection FRAC Nord-Pas de Calais #2 1991 > 2000*, (2009), p. 270

11. Ibid., p. 271

12. Referring to the artist's documentation, this term was used by the *Out of Storage* exhibition team

13. Instructions by the artist.

14. Laurenson, P. (2006) 'Authenticity, Change and Loss in the Conservation of Time-Based Media Installations, Tate Papers, <http://www.tate.org.uk/research/tateresearch/tatepapers/06autumn/laurenson.htm>, accessed June 2011

Title: A Biography of Daniel
Spoerri's *Triple Multiplicateur
d'Art* (1969–1971/1991)¹⁵
Tekst: Renée van de Vall

When on Tuesday, the 20th of February 1990 Daniel Spoerri's multiple *Triple Multiplicateur d'Art* returned from Antwerp, the staff of the FRAC was in for a shock. The work, which consisted among other things of a glass sheet, several glasses, bottles and a mirror, had been on loan to the Museum of Contemporary Art (MuHKA) for the exhibition *Au delà du quotidien* since December. It had left the FRAC in good condition, but when it came back by truck and was unpacked from its storage case, it turned out to be completely broken.

What to do now? The work had been too badly damaged to be repaired. As it was a compilation of elements that were still readily available, remaking it seemed a more viable option. It was not the kind of work that needed to show the hand of its author; actually it was designed as a critique on the idea of the artist as privileged creator.

Spoerri, who originally was a dancer and theatre maker, started to compile 'Fallenbilder' ('snare pictures') in 1960.¹⁶ These consisted of ordinary objects like plates, cups, spoons and cigarette boxes glued ('snared') to tables or drawers, their composition being a matter of chance. According to his website, Spoerri himself gave the following definition: "Objects, which are found in randomly orderly or disorderly situations, are mounted on whatever they are found on (table, box, drawer, etc.) in the exact constellation they are found in (...). By declaring the result to be a tableau, the horizontal becomes vertical. For example: the leftovers of a meal are mounted on the table and the table is then hung on a wall (...)"¹⁷

By arranging these objects in an artwork, Spoerri lifted them out of their ordinary existence and immersion in time.¹⁸ By taking real objects rather than painting or photographing them, he reversed the artwork's usual relation between reality and its depiction. The works were not meant to be unique originals but prototypes for series; moreover, chance and decay were allowed to play a role in their biographies. When rats ate from the pieces of bread glued on one of the works, they were acknowledged as co-creators and included in the title, which became *Les os du Szeleky guljas, en collaboration avec les rats de Galerie Schwartz* (1960).¹⁹

Sometimes the objects were glued on mirrors reflecting each other: the first of these 'art multipliers' appeared in 1964. They ensnare the spectator's gaze and lure it into an infinite play of perspectives, intertwining real objects with their mirror images and substituting material things for reflections. The FRAC's *Triple Multiplicateur d'Art* (there are several works with this name) consists of a metal framework on a wooden pedestal, the frame carrying a sheet of glass above and a sheet of mirror glass below. On top of the glass sheet, several objects are glued, like two beer bottles, two glasses, an ashtray and a cigarette box. The same objects are glued upside down on the other side of the glass, mimicking mirror images ("a false mirror", as the artist wrote, "Janus with the double face"), and again, upside up, on top of the mirror glass at the bottom where their reflections mingle with those of the objects hanging above them ("Narcissus, reflecting his own Echo")²⁰.

Triple Multiplicateur d'Art was made in the time that the artist ran "Restaurant Spoerri" in Düsseldorf, where "the table at which one had eaten, could be fixed and mounted on request and bought as a work of art".²¹ There are no records about its whereabouts before it was bought

by the FRAC from the artist in a public sale in 1985. It had been exhibited three times before the FRAC gave it on loan to the MuHKA in December 1989: twice in Villeneuve d'Ascq near Lille and once in Chateau Dampierre, apparently without any damage. Why it did not survive the journey with the truck back from Antwerp is hard to tell.

After consultation with the artist, the remains of *Triple Multiplicateur d'Art* were sent to Otto Hahn in Paris, who took on the job to reconstruct it. He wrote to the director of the MuHKA that what he would make was not a fac simile of the old piece but the 'mise en situation' of a new idea according to the same principles and the same format as the previous one.²² The reconstruction was then authorized by Spoerri through a document that caused some confusion at the FRAC. On a piece of paper with the photo of the original work, Spoerri had drawn a cross through the photo and written next to it:

Otto en tification:
Pièce détruite en 1990
et refaite
"verschlimmbessert"
(embellaidit)
pour que ceux qui ont
des yeux, voient:
Daniel Spoerri
1.1.91

Was 'verschlimmbessert' the new title of the work? the FRAC wanted to know; and should the work from now on be exhibited in a plexiglass box?²³ Hahn replied that 'verschlimmbessert' was not a title but an appreciation and that the work should be exhibited in the box, as Spoerri had been troubled by the exposure of his works to dust.²⁴

What was not mentioned in this correspondence was that the new work was indeed 'worsebettered' in more

than one sense: Spoerri had slipped three small photos of the previous version between the bottles and glasses, adding a new layer to its already complex relation to time and space, matter and reflection, reality and representation. "So that those who have eyes, see." Since 1991, the work has been exhibited many times and travelled as far as Maidstone (UK) and Genua (Italy) without further trouble.

15. Unless indicated otherwise, the information for this biography is derived from the FRAC's catalogues *Collection FRAC Nord-Pas de Calais* # 11983 > 1990 and *Collection FRAC Nord-Pas de Calais* #2 1991 > 2000

16. The FRAC's catalogue speaks of 'trap paintings'; I have followed the artist's website for this translation.

17. <http://www.danielspoerri.org>; accessed 8 July 2011

18. This interpretation is derived from Heidi E. Vieland-Hobi, *Daniel Spoerri. Biographie und Werk*. München etc.: Prestel Verlag, p. 22–25

19. *Ibid.*, p. 26

20. Daniel Spoerri (2002) *Anekdotomania. Daniel Spoerri über Daniel Spoerri* Basel: Museum Jean Tinguely; Hatje Cantz Verlag, p. 121

21. <http://www.danielspoerri.org>

22. Letter Otto Hahn to Florent Bex, 10 July 1990; archive FRAC Nord – Pas de Calais

23. Letter Virginie Maes to Otto Hahn, 7 February 1991, archive FRAC Nord – Pas de Calais

24. Letter Otto Hahn to Virginie Maes, 16 February 1991, archive FRAC Nord – Pas de Calais

Colophon

This publication appeared in the context of Out of Storage, a temporary art museum in Maastricht, the Netherlands (2011). Out of Storage is an initiative of Marres Projects in cooperation with FRAC Nord-Pas de Calais.

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