

# CUT AND SCALE: CRISTINA ATAÍDE'S READY-READYMADE

Anti-sculpture or sculpture-sculpture? Made in readymade or ready-Madein?

Who cares about the label in the presence of the extraordinary plastic evidence of these pieces? But, how did this happen?

Take a ready-made and apply to it the making a readymade, we shall get a ready-readymade, that is, a monster, a subversion of Duchamp's object, an artistic object. For, what is at stake here is to make a readymade, which is contradictory. Duchamp against Duchamp after Duchamp: the ready-readymade is a post-readymade.

The (strong) idea consists in building an "already made" object: in transforming the "already made" in "making", in a "creative process", in replicating the readymade from scratch into a new matter, by transferring its provocative power into its present power. Conceiving in sculpture acts the instantaneous decisions which preside over a readymade choice. Thus, it is not a traditional sculpting process but rather a "atto mentale".

The implementation obeys to a principle which has to do with the economy of the form for merely functional reasons, there should be neither lose nor waste in the way it is delineated. Due to its descontextualization and to its isolation, the readymade abstracts, perceptively, its aim from its form, these become rufe. Its narrow sense has no other reason but the formal afire, ready now to acquire aesthetical freedom and value. A corkscrew is almost an art object Different devices and industrial parts (all in certain circumstances) are almost art objects.

Two trucks swirling along the highway, dance.

Cristina Ataíde turns the functional principle into an aesthetical principle: she demands the maximum economy in the form/volume, form/mass and volume/mass relationship.

The first operator of this conversion is school. It is not enough to have a functional economy in arder to turn the readymade into sculpture; one has to remove its neutrality and indifference, to draft onto it an adherence principle. This is what Cristina Ataíde's scale performs.

Scale cannot be mathematically estimated as it is the focus for the dynamic adjustment of the onlooker's space to the work's space. Scale is the look turned into matter. That is how the onlooker's body enters into an osmotic relationship with the work's space. The objective size contributes towards or resists to adherence, but it does not cause it. A monumental sculpture does not necessarily induce a feeling of monumentality.

The inductive power of these objects seems to rise precisely from their objective dimensions: as if everything which keeps the readymade apart (presence without contact) turns into a reason for communication. In between the toy and the implement, these pieces have a scale which makes them communicate immediately with the onlooker's space. That is why they mar be materially intimate, or waiting or lively, or many other things without knowing why: the adherence principle introduces a factor of indetermination. The form/volume relationship seems to be made for that scale, that is, by it, inexplicably. Hence, its highly strong corporal presence.

The second operator of conversion is cut. Cutting is not restricted to, for instance, opening with the blade a conic section in stone; it mar be the opposite: closing one or two holes in a crane part, thus eliminating spare elements in the economy of forms. The point is, above all, to grant the forms geometry an opposite direction, the sculptural specialization of geometry. That is why cutting disrupts symmetry, creates fragments (ready made?), draws unfinished ("already-made"): cutting turns the forms loose and magnifies the mass bringing along another factor of indetermination.

So much so that, by interrupting the form, it adds a multiplying element of other forms; by disrupting a symmetry, it installs others. Each one of these objects, in their apparent simplicity, is however involved in a network of invisible geometrical forms. That is why it seems to rest, as something left, as a visible sign, as something remaining from a very complex, mysterious and intense combination of special geometries.

Cutting takes to an extreme the principle of economy: the “geometrised” fragmentation of sculptures creates a dynamic relationship among forms, weight and mass. As if this one, by suffering a cut, could provide now a better diffusion of forms in space, beyond the object. Elegance becomes lightness and non-gravity, reminding sometimes El Lissitzky’s constructivist objects. Scale offers the exact sense for the whole set of volume/weight/form/force relationships which cut portrays by projecting it onto space: and the pieces rise, they are no longer subject to the external gravity, acquire a specific centrifugal force which grants them weight. Now, they have weight due to “mass”.

Fragmentation extends forms beyond the object’s outlines thus instantaneously turning interior into exterior. In Cristina Ataíde’s objects there is no interior: cut opens the interior and, automatically, eliminates it, dissolving it into surface. The interior is outside, in the exterior; the supreme elegance, the “ornamental” sophistication of these works resides in their shadows, as allusions to, clear enactments of the vanished interior. The shadow is part of the body of the piece, holes do not open inwards but onto the shadow, they open light and shadow circulating spaces.

Objects bent over themselves and, paradoxically, irradiating. Their interiorless opacity, their mass visible opacity, rest on an abstract invisible transparency. There, everything is an “already made” movement of making. There, everything is finishing the unfinished, the focusing and projecting of the objects beyond themselves, with a minimum of effort, as if coming from their very nature: the principle of economy is principle of joy and fascination.

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