

# DAVID DOUARD

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In practice, I try not to have a work theme, it would scare me to have one. There is certainly a process but I am not aware of it, nothing precise. I try not to stay away from that. However, overtime, there are symbols; ways of working which come back and I only realize it at the end. It is not a grid I established since the beginning.

My works of art are object that are spatially present, but the subjects I address are rather intangible. There is a language I think, that is not material. It is something from the soul, a sort of belief in the object, in the content of an object, like a fossil. How can one succeed in communicating the subject, but with a lapse of time. Materializing it multiplies it, makes it timeless, like a vase, a sort of recipient, it is anachronic.

There is the idea that in a language, there is a continuous flow, exchanges, transmissions of language, words, sentences bond to an actual, literal connection. And in the object, there is what is represented, the symbol of language, of transmission, but in the same time the material, the aluminum, the copper that is inside, all those threads. All these elements create the object. The materials I use, are those that make up computers, electrical wires, and therefore the tools of communication and transmission. The idea is to take the material back to the story it has soaked in and give it back a "human form". This means that, inside, it is still in there. Why concentrate on silent objects? Because there is this idea of death, that of one of reality's artifacts or that of a life. So it rather speaks of the shadow, the ghost, that wanders inside. In a way, it is frozen, crystallized, and in another, it's free, vacant.

I do a lot of salvage. At a moment, there must be an assembly in the workshop between what communicates things of everyday life and objects shaped in time, in 3D for example, as long as it serves the purpose, as abstract as it can be, or national. These objects must be communicative. It is not an introspective question to the art object, or to the movement of a daily object becoming an object sacralized by the art world. As

long as it speaks, everything is a question of transmitting a strange form of life. Communities for example. What interests me in working is to scan what works today in groups of people where there are gatherings, how they are represented, how they represent themselves, what their actions are, what they communicate on through which medium, how TV progresses, phones, tablets, all those things that are now used by people, by all in a community. When I am walking around in a *Franprix* or *Lidl*, and I see a box of eggs or a baguette, I really perceive it as the container of a community. We are also (re)presented by the objects that surround us. There is technology of course, but there is also that which is born from the rhythm of the machine's economy. We are not so disloyal, although it is a regrettable condition, it is one I put up with everyday in my workshop, otherwise it would not be worth making art.

My work is not intended to send out a message, at least not in the true sense. On the contrary, it bothers me when it is too legible. When you come too close to a sort of reality, consensual, you took the classic path to get to your point, that scares me. First, because it leaves less space for the spectator's interpretation and, it asks the question of his emancipation inside of the work. When something evades our understanding, it makes us think; it becomes something in which and with which, we have an experience. As an artist, I have also lived things in relation to other artists where I did not understand what I was seeing, that I could hate and then adore. We are made of contradictions, it also what I do, the worst and the best of things. It is like many dialogues at the same time; to tell something very real, concrete about what we are living in the moment, of what is happening around us in this world, the machine for an example, the object, the aluminum. Ant then, to break this quickly with something completely distant. To objectify your work with a very real subject, even political, but mostly social and then directly destroy it with something very personal, disturbing, ambiguous.

To me, aluminum represents a living material here in my workshop, but it mostly something we have around us all the time; all machines are made of it, and we have ended up swallowing it, soaking in it. It is our relationship to a material that is purely chemical, the fruit of the mechanism of scientific thought on a product. Tomorrow, if we live on another planet, that is apparently the point, it will be in an aluminum capsule. Right now, even you are recording this interview with an object made of aluminum. It is everywhere, and I like the idea of absorbing it. I have always seen things as a system of absorbing and regurgitating, and think of it as spit on the ground. So I use it as a flow that has been absorbed by the user and then spit it back into the world. It is a splash on the ground with letters or pieces of letters, that I quickly transplant with languages, poetry that I find on the internet. A "W" for example which represents the beginning of "we", the anonymous movement, the community. There is a shape that comes from a flow that continues to live inside, with the idea that the material is used for resistance, retaliation, reaction. It is a political way, like the ownership of technology, to take ownership of the street.

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I am cautious not to become political or too involved, as I try not having a «work system»; nothing is fixed. The things that move me the most in today's society, in their reactions, are generally apolitical, things that are not considered as political actions. I am distrustful of reactions that are formed, formalized objectified, like blocks. It exists, and it is good, I watch it and it interests me more than the contrary, but what moves me the most is maybe this way of getting out of the world. That is already a political act. To be an artist is also a political act it is a way of being irreverent towards the world, it is counterproductive, you generate «affects», like a writer does, a poet, a photographer. When your work serves creations, you do not need to be additionally politicized. In this work, in this path, there are symbols and patterns that show up where everything becomes political, taking a picture of your daughter is political! I want my work to stay ambiguous, not necessarily understood, maybe far from an actual concern while being very actual, taking distance with the world.

I found in art a way to see the world that made me stay here. I like an artist called Robert Filliou who said that art is what makes life more beautiful than art. In a way, when you are sucked up by art you see life, you sing objects, and you think of life differently. So you can rightly appreciate, see kids running in a certain way, appreciate aggressions, the violence of the world, find something fascinating and absorbing without being cynical. It fleshes out reality, which is sometimes a bit difficult. There are some things that you can not do anymore. You can put up with people's stupidity without enduring it. In a way, you distance yourself from it.

I think of the artist's own image as a kind of lost bum. I like the idea of wandering of the celestial bum, an expression I found in a *Kitano* movie. He is there, lying around, at a certain distance. Like someone unemployed who feels good and continues to live in Paris. It fascinates me, I really consider myself like this. Somebody with no real anchor in the active world, but who needs to be there to see all this. I try not to be too visible, also because I protect myself from the art world, even if I am up to my neck in the system. I am here, but I am careful with my relation to it, because I have a lot of love for art. It is something strong, so I go to places where I feel comfort more than anxiety, I protect myself from this sphere, which is beautiful but too near. It is like in every field, in cinema or fashion, at one moment, the artist inevitably takes a different path, and he goes away. I actually spend a lot of time using the internet that I consider like a tool. I have a bit of a schizophrenic side to my practice.

I have two functions, I spend time locked away in my workshop, which is like a stomach of digestion, and I also spend a lot of time finding things on the internet. Numerous texts, because the desire of using poems started early on, like a sort of prolongation of the relation I had to graffiti. I did graffiti for fifteen years,

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spending time in the street, painting walls, and being immersed in this ambience. I asked myself questions, about the fact of being an artist, of locking myself away. I considered this period, anonymous, occupied wall street etc.. I compared what was happening as an artist and what was happening outside. Would I go down into the street, go on strike, etc..? I decided to take this distance, to stay here, and not to go.

I started becoming interested in the internet, because like everyone I watched TV. I created a fictional world thanks to it, to Tv series. Being young and a bit lonely. And slowly I fed an affect. It was then natural to start spending a lot of time online searching, forming my eye, and I observed street strikes via the internet. I started having nervous breakdowns, anxiety, mostly urges and then I printed everything, content, images... I was inspired by conceptual artists who use text, documentation, and I decided to put it all in plaster, in matter, and then start incorporating all this flow into matter. To take disintegration seriously, to glorify it, is what I try to do in my work. That is a simple sentence, the most simple, neutral possible, the most distant from something intelligent may be the thing that becomes the strongest. A certain neutrality in the writing, a distance, a normality which, in time becomes a disruption.

The image of wandering, of a lost person that is not aware, that has no direction and, at the same time, who tells a story. Like a sort of little mollusk, that gradually, by salvage, turned himself into a patchwork shell. That speaks a lot of about oneself, like a big weaving of different fabrics, that is what I find on internet. This new process has, of course, revolutionized a lot of things. I started making screenshots which, to me, are photography; copying and pasting texts, which, to me, are writings. Suddenly, I started to struggle with the notion of identity. First with online identity, but also what we take of it. We change, we modify ourselves, we become different, we become someone else. There is the identity, the notion of authorship, that is being put into question. I archive everything and continue. I am interested in anonymity, because I think it is a way of acting in the world that is beautiful.

Ghosts, impersonality, it is a bit a quest of nothing. I like this idea. It is in fact nothing, the person is nothing, it annuls itself and, in the same time, takes an avatar, and its obvious that, in anonymity, we project ourselves and let go more easily. As an artist having desires of shapes, I am interested by this dilemma. In anonymity, in anonymous texts, in the ways we have to use technology, to melt into a form of multiple identities, I thought it was interesting to put shapes on this fabric, that have no shape and no name. Put faces, sculpt masks, create environments for these ghosts. The exhibit space suddenly becomes contextualized, like a place haunted by all the rumors that are being spread. At the *Palais de Tokyo*, it was like this. I love the idea that there are texts, pictures, in which I have done nothing but copied and pasted. They are particular collaborations. It is almost ready-made.

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Online, I am an observer, But I am also very passive. I certainly do not want to be a geek or know things, on the contrary, it frightens me. I like using the ways of doing things, I order computer parts but I certainly do not want to know how to use them. I like not knowing how to do things and how things are made. The dark web, it is easy, you enter an environment. It is a bit like you were walking, and you suddenly drifted off into the catacombs. On the dark web, there is something hard. Some websites shock me, but at the same time they have to be seen. It is like in literature, the writers I like, the texts I like, the artists I like always have an ambiguity, a sort of decay, or decline. It is a way of seeing inside humanity to see the worst things. And you can find the best things. On the dark web, what interested me for example were the places where people exchanged elements to denounce horrible political systems. And I think it is like the spaces I build, we find ourselves with things that are a little sad, and others that are a little cheerful. This is how we build something a bit incoherent, but in the end, true to the image of our times. Writers talk about sex, hard, SM, trash, it is a way of describing a social entity that I like. Taking fragments of technology how they are, with what we find in them. It is a way of creating an image, a scanner of our body at that time, the social body. After that I recompose these fragments. It becomes silkscreen printing. There is the work of reinterpretation, but is my base. For the texts, for example, I give them to a singer with a jewel in her mouth, so that her singing becomes particular. For the pictures, there are boys smoking crack in front of their webcams, they annul themselves from the world, and at the same time, show it into us. Expose themselves, hide, close their eyes, they go away. It is a crystallized moment, it becomes a silkscreened print on a T-shirt as if it were a brand, a logo.

I do not really ask myself questions about the artist's status. I think I like to complete downfall as much. It is better when everything falls apart. There is no construction of a career or whatsoever, it would be hell. The thing I would not like to do is to make my work evolve around trends. I will maybe now go towards more incomprehensible and dark things. Artificial intelligence for example, and all these things are interesting because I think they will give incentive to the next generations to be artistic. I do not know if I would still want to be connected, and if I think there is a real connection with the work and the era. I also think it is good when artists are going against the current of their time. It is something that I would like to happen to me. I wish objects could have their own vitality, even if I dry them completely in there time, but they do not chase after their era. I think that there are a lot of people that do not understand me and I would like there to be even more.

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