ALMINE RECH

Sylvie Fleury

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For the first time, the Almine Rech Gallery, Brussels is presenting a solo exhibition by Sylvie Fleury.

Born in 1961 in Geneva, where she lives and works, Sylvie Fleury emerged in the early nineties as a key figure of the art scene. Featured in her early exhibitions already, her "shopping bag" installations laid the foundations for a body of work that would draw on elements from both twentieth-century art and consumer society. Exploiting paradoxes and the ambiguity of a seeming futility, Fleury was going to develop, from one series to the next, work that is open to a range of readings. Luxury clothing and accessories, the world of Formula 1, revisited modern and contemporary art icons (from Piet Mondrian to Andy Warhol or John McCracken), magazine covers, and outsized objects: Sylvie Fleury has developed a formal idiom that is more complex and disconcerting than one might thin

The subversive blurring of codes, the recurrent contamination of one sphere by another (the masculine world by the feminine, fashion by art or advertising, unless it is the other way around) go far beyond the sole field of art. More offensive and political than its seeming appeal might lead one to believe, Sylvie Fleury's work reflects and anticipates her epoch just as it participates in it. An actor in her own right in what her work refers to, she is nevertheless not taken in by it. While she claims to have read Marx and Engels as an adolescent, and while her unconventional career led her to New York in the early eighties, where she learned photography, developed her interest in cinema and experienced the night life, she would become the key figure of the underground art scene in Geneva in the late eighties. But she was especially going to "confront" her reflections against those of John Armleder and Olivier Mosset, who had a key influence on her work. It is probably due to this enriching dialogue that Sylvie Fleury's work has more in common with post-conceptual thought than with an environment that one could at first sight align with the legacy of pop ar

For her first solo exhibition at the Almine Rech Gallery, Brussels, Sylvie Fleury has chosen to create a kind of "retrospective," featuring works spanning the period from the mid nineties till today. The twenty pieces she has selected, including works created specially for the exhibition, are all in a golden colour that is mainly used to coat unexpected "supports": gold-plated bins, a gold-plated supermarket trolley on a rotating plinth, "tyre fountains" resting on plexiglas pedestals, a large neon sign reading "YES TO ALL," murals, mushrooms, as well as a "guardian" and a series of newly created golden "crash tests," etc.

Like the major retrospective dedicated to her work at MAMCO in Geneva in 2009, this exhibition underlines the richness and diversity of the artist's statements. It also highlights the singularity of a reflection which touches on both the art field and contemporary society.