

Thomas Ruff *jpegkj01*,
2004, C-print with diasec,
269 x 188 cm
COURTESY DAVID ZWIRNER,
NEW YORK

the United States. Ruff would appear to have returned these images to a state of grace, stripping away meanings which may have accrued to them in the public realm, and presenting them as the somewhat abstract amalgam of pixels they are.

But what motivated his choice of these particular photographs? Ruff's aim was to amass an encyclopaedic representation of contemporary history from his Web-sourced jpegs, which he classified according to alphabetized abbreviations: aa standing for American Architecture, for instance, ab for atomic bomb; although there is no apparent reason why either letter pair could not be shorthand for other terms, say

Afghanistan Bamiyan. Yet, the show also includes images of parks in Korea and Paris which Ruff photographed himself and which do not, therefore, fit with his project. Ultimately the selection seems arbitrary rather than encyclopaedic.

Beyond exploiting the inherent visual imprecision of the source images, Ruff's enlargements add nothing to them. Pointing out their hollowness does not give them new meaning, and enlarging them, while making handsome, somewhat slick images reminiscent of Richter's hazier landscapes without the surface, simply continues the process of reproduction and consumption which saps images of their content. JM

Wim Delvoye

Sperone Westwater

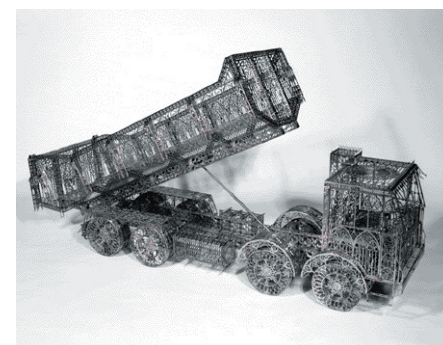
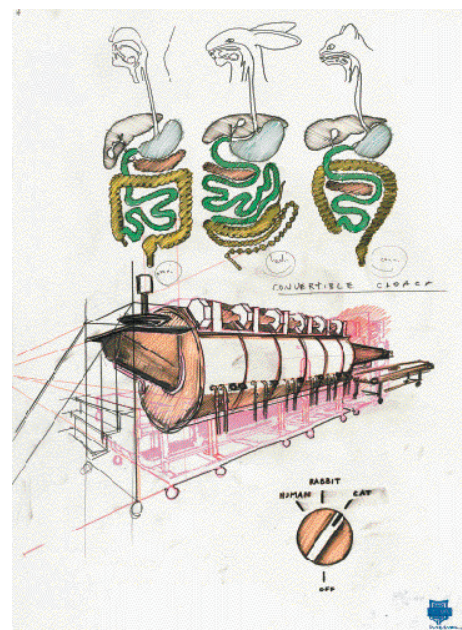
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There is a question as to whether Wim Delvoye will ever be able to outpace his monstrous digestion machine, *Cloaca* (2000). The looming presence of its progeny, *Cloaca Turbo* (2003), *Cloaca Bullet* (2003) and *Cloaca Quatro* (2004) – all represented in one form (drawing) or another (scale model) in the artist's recent show at Sperone Westwater – suggest not. And given a presentation replete with its own logo (Mr Clean™ missing his abdomen), professional logotype (aped from Coca-Cola®) and a celebrity endorser (the Michelin Man™), it is difficult to tell if the artist isn't, in fact, consumed by both the commercial and culture industries he aims to gut.

A question more easily posed in the context of the current show asks after the guiding logic of Delvoye's non-*Cloaca*-based work. For alongside his deftly executed, quasi-technical drawings of the machines, which date from 2000 to 2004, there are stainless-steel scale models of a dump truck and of a flatbed truck towing a Caterpillar® excavator, decoratively laser-cut in the pattern of gothic tracery; there is a series of lipstick imprints on hotel stationery that superposes the oral and the anal by a subtle formal displacement; and there is a digital video which defies polite description except to suggest 'suppurating' as a more appropriate title than *Sybil II* (1999).

Yet it is none other than *Sybil II* which supplies the guiding logic we seek. In this work we find that the main formal convention, the cinematic close-up, is turned from diegetic engine to tool of pure magnification. This serves to remind us not only that the optics of the cinema trace their genealogy to the microscope, but also that it is *scale* which mediates this terrain between the spectacular and the quotidian. Here scale is conceived of not as a quantifier of relationships between the drawings and models and their real-world counterparts, but as a site of disjunction between differing levels of description and horizons of phenomenological experience. Witness the models: to apprehend the detail of their tracery one must lose sight of their familiar industrial profiles. At close range, there is only a meshwork of perforations; take a step back, and the trucks reemerge but their detailing disappears. Or consider the drawings: the perspectives, plans and elevations are rendered invisible if one moves in to read the technical notations, or to reconstruct the fragments of first attempts left unfinished or erased.

There can be little doubt that *Cloaca* itself provides the object lesson for such disjunctions. Digestion, after all, cannot be reduced to the mere actions of protease (protein solubilizing), amylase (starch liquefying), or lipase (fat splitting). Nevertheless, Delvoye's continued heavy investment in his *Cloaca* industry risks the collapse of his other work's far more interesting economy of scales. JTDN



Above
Wim Delvoye *Dump Truck Scale Model*, 2004,
laser-cut stainless steel,
73 x 207 x 69 cm
COURTESY SPERONE WESTWATER,
NEW YORK

Left
Wim Delvoye *Untitled #4*,
2000–2, mixed media on
paper, 76 x 56 cm
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NEW YORK