

METRO PICTURES

Claire Fontaine “Some Redemptions” Upstairs Gallery 2013



“Some Redemptions,” installation view, 2013. Metro Pictures, New York.

In her presentation in the upstairs gallery of Metro Pictures, Claire Fontaine addresses the consequences of our economical and ethical crisis on the destiny of individuals.

On the wall a ten dollar note folded on itself makes appear the word “Tears” as if it was hidden in the very fabric of the dollar bill as an encrypted message.

The recycled cans, inside the bags suspended in space, redeemed from their status of trash, deploy an unexpected beauty and a powerful presence. Their hollowness draws as a watermark the trajectories of the disappeared liquids inside multitudes of unknown bodies and the comings and goings of vagrants, homeless and unemployed people that collected these empty shells.

One of the bags turns around itself and acts as a kinetic sculpture evoking the endless cycle of recycling. The artist suspends

for a moment the continuous process of exploitation of the cans (used, abandoned, melted and re-used virtually forever) creating a form of redemption for them that, from the condition of value-less and meaningless objects, become artworks mimicking the possible salvation of people continuously evicted from the productive cycle and deprived of a destiny by poverty.

Although the home made aluminium smelter, which is a sculpture with an actual use value, introduces the doubt that we are faced with, a disproportion between the number of cans packed and present in the space and the real possibility to redeem them with our domestic means. The smelter is displayed unplugged, out of use, although it bears traces of melted metal and an extinguished fire.

Twenty-five aluminium ingots are stacked on the floor. Each of them is made with the content of a bag of cans, they are another state of aggregation of the same material; if the cans are light, empty and coloured, the ingots are opaque, dense, heavy and impossible to suspend.

In the third *Thesis on the Concept of History* Walter Benjamin writes that for the redeemed mankind the totality of the past is quotable and nothing is lost for history. Redemption is depicted there as the full ownership and accessibility of history by everyone, and this accessibility to one's and everybody's destiny takes place under the sign of happiness. But this happiness isn't a new one, it's the familiar joy and fulfilment we are used to, that comes from habits, repetition, recycling, as we can read beforehand in the same text: “the kind of happiness that could arouse envy in us exists only in the air we have breathed, among people we could have talked to, women who could have given themselves to us. In other words, our image of happiness is indissolubly bound up with the image of redemption.

*Gallery hours: Tuesday-Saturday, 10 AM - 6 PM. Summer hours beginning July 8: Monday - Friday, 10 AM - 6 PM.
For more information, please contact Alexander Ferrando at alexander@metropictures.com or call 212 206 7100.*