



CLEARING

**Koenraad Dedobbeleer**

***To Consider Colour Like a Great Variety of Shades of the Same Colour***

September 9 – October 22, 2022

CLEARING is pleased to present Koenraad Dedobbeleer's new exhibition at the gallery titled *To Consider Colour Like a Great Variety of Shades of the Same Colour*.

Upon entering the space, viewers are greeted by their own reflection in a polished plate of stainless steel. It is *Unironically Disturbing, 2022* is a room divider-cum-mirror playfully backed up against the wall. In her 2018 text, art historian Patricia Falguières says this of Dedobbeleer: "His approach is rarely frontal unless he is being deliberately burlesque". This gesture seems fittingly deliberate, frontal, and burlesque. Not only does the piece act as a signpost, inviting viewers simultaneously through a fun-fair mirror portal reminiscent of Versailles' Galerie des Glaces, it also reinforces our predicament as ambling spectators: indicating—like a Cheshire cat—the possibility of taking either right or left pathways into the exhibition space. In the reflection, we are also afforded a cheeky glimpse at another Dedobbeleer work (albeit not included in the list for this show), a 2017 collaboration with architect Kris Kimpe: the double glass door on metal framework and hanging lamp that mark the space's threshold.

In an ambitious architectural gesture, Dedobbeleer has created an ambulatory within CLEARING Brussels' main space, building a set of arches and walls which divide the gallery into a meditative inner giardino and an outer area dedicated to strolling. The etymology of "ambulatory" is: *ambulatorius* «pertaining to walking;» also «movable; shifting, not permanent».

In this architectural nod to the outer corridors of a cloister, Koenraad Dedobbeleer has installed an array of hanging lamps. One might think ambulatory and ambulance, sharing the same root, share the same chronology. However the latter word only came to common usage and meaning of a vehicle for transporting the wounded to hospitals in 1854 during the Crimean war.

A similar kind of anachronism is at play in Dedobbeleer's layering, piling, composing, and juxtaposing process. Over the past year and a half, the artist visited a "hospital", though not for humans. Traveling to the island of Murano, home since the Middle Ages to the artisans and creators of renowned Venetian glassmaking techniques, he selected each individual element that makes up these works from the "glass hospital" where spare, broken, and unwanted pieces of glass are stored. Time periods and styles are juxtaposed: a 1990s remnant brushes up against a 1930s casualty, Venini-esque pieces and blown glass hallmarked Barovier frolic with more lower-end items.

The chandeliers sit between the utilitarian and the sculptural, allowing the artist to pursue his questioning of both artistic and design production, as well as the history of display. It is important to note that Dedobbeleer has always shown a keen interest in the accessories required for exhibition, be it podiums, wall hooks, radiator covers, or heating systems. Here, he deftly short-circuits the problematic of lighting in the gallery space by making the works themselves light-emitting devices.

In the central space of the exhibition, Dedobbeleer's pathological "quotomania" (anonymously and persistently citing art-historical references by means of photography, sculptural accumulation, or work titles) reaches an apex: the building's architecture quotes itself as the arches present in the gallery are repeated on each wall.

This inner giardino hosts a standing lamp which replies to the same logic as those that hang in the corridors, while another work exposes the artist's ongoing interest in museum display mechanisms.

*Defined Domestic Cells of Social Conservatism*, 2022 appears as a teatrino whose doors in poplar, meranti, and oukoumé marquetry open onto a black and white photograph taken by the artist during a visit to the Baptistery of Saint John in Florence. One of the main attractions, Donatello's "Door of the Apostles" was on loan at the time, and rather than leave a blank wall, the masterpiece was replaced by a scale 1:1 photograph upon which the museum conservators had affixed a pair of shop-bought handles. This comic mise en abyme can be pondered by viewers as they sit on the double benches in the inner sanctum, where the sun filters through the roof, unperturbed by any artificial lighting besides that belonging to the works themselves.

While referring to and reflecting art-historical tropes and movements, Dedobbeleer has thread a discreet organic filigrane through the exhibition. Chestnuts, beans, cuttlefish, vegetables, fruit, jellyfish, mushrooms, eels, sausages, candies, artichokes, and a pear. Either perched upon or delicately placed inside the lamps, or captured like rare specimens in jars, Dedobbeleer delicately pins down these representations of nature as would a curious lepidopterologist. Like a modern-day vanitas, the introduction of such motifs raises questions of the natural and the fabricated. Haribo berries hang from one of the numerous lamps as a candy-covered trompe l'oeil that will never rot due to the sheer amount of preservatives and lack of natural ingredients. The same can be said of the glass gooseberries and other vegetal representations, or the syrupy peaches and pallid asparagus pressed up against the walls of a jar, both circumventing and highlighting the passing of time.

Dedobbeleer is moved by the way objects, anecdotes, images, texts, and artists interact, influence, and gain meaning from one another and from their surroundings. To circle back to the word "ambulatory" (shifting, not permanent), *To Consider Colour Like a Great Variety of Shades of the Same Colour* sees the artist once again playfully posit artworks as complex containers of histories which shift and change according to their juxtaposition, contexts, and modes of display.

To this end, the opportune moment to view the exhibition might just be as the day shifts from the late Autumn afternoon light to dark, each lamp progressively confirming its presence and gently oscillating between sculpture and utilitarian beacon.

**Koenraad Dedobbeleer** (born 1975 in Halle, BE) lives and works in Brussels.

Solo shows by the artist have been held at Culturgest, Lisbon; Contemporary Art Centre, Vilnius WIELS, Brussels; Kunstverein Hannover; Kunstmuseum, St. Gallen; Kunstmuseum, Winterthur; Kunsthalle Bern; Museum Abteiberg, Mönchengladbach; GAK, Bremen; Haus Esters, Krefeld; Le Crédac, Ivry-sur-Seine; De Vleeshal, Middelburg; Extra City, Antwerp; and C L E A R I N G New York / Brussels; etc.

His work was included in the Luxembourg Pavillion at the 17th Architecture Biennale in Venice; Liverpool Biennale; the Bienal do Mercosul, Porto Alegre and group exhibitions including Centre Pompidou, Paris; Musée des Arts Décoratifs de Paris; Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna; Bozar, Brussels; MHKA, Antwerpen; S.M.A.K., Ghent; TANK Museum, Shanghai; MMOMA, Moscow; Redcat, Los Angeles; Reina Sofia, Madrid; and Fondazione Giuliani, Rome; etc.

Koenraad Dedobbeleer's work is part of the collections of Museo Reina Sofia, Madrid; S.M.A.K., Ghent; MHKA, Antwerpen; Extra City Kunsthall, Antwerpen; Mu.ZEE, Ostend; Kunstmuseum St. Gallen; Kunstmuseum Winterthur; Lafayette Anticipations / Fonds de dotation Famille Moulin, Paris; Fonds national d'art contemporain, Paris; Centre National des Arts Plastiques, Paris; Fonds régionaux d'art contemporain (Ile de France / Bourgogne / Pays de la Loire / Basse-Normandie); Le Crédac, Ivry-sur-Seine; and V-A-C Foundation, Moscow.