

GALERIE CRÈVECOEUR

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Present Future Section

Xavier Antin

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Xavier Antin is interested in the moment where industrial tools become widely accessible and enter the private sphere. 'The idea is to take the tools of industrial graphic design and put them in my office printer', he explains. His love of books and his training as a graphic designer have shaped his interest in image and text reproduction technologies and their modes of functioning, which his earlier works aimed to undermine through protocols of errors, creating little strands of freedom in an increasingly perfect global production system. For Artissima, Antin has conceived a specific project that manifests his fascination with reproduction – the fabrication of the same –, and most notably the impact of the latest technological developments on our perception of images and objects. Although it has been used for more than thirty years on an industrial scale, so-called 'additive manufacturing' or 3D printing has recently become available to the general public. Antin bought, assembled and customised a 3D printer which he then used, among others, to produce the series of strictly identical crates presented here, which contain ad hoc tools he has devised for his own artistic production.

There is something absurd about using advanced technologies to copy an object which more than any other epitomises the merchant society – an object which is neither aesthetically pleasing nor long-lived yet resists obsolescence because its production is so simple (a few strips of plywood stapled together) and cheap. As high-resolution prints from low-resolution scans of crates, Antin's 3D prints translate this incongruity into sculpture: 'It's as though I had chosen the option "high quality print" but my master file was rotten', explains the artist.

On the wall the artist will present casts of printed sheets of paper. While he used an ancestral, traditional technique to produce them, they obey the same logic than the crates in that their production entails a separation between the images and their volumes, and therefore stress the fact that every image, but the virtual image, has a thickness.

This permeability for the intrinsic characteristics of images and objects lies at the heart of the artist's works which, by combining casts of impressions and 3D prints, highlight the disappearance, in the course of this process, of the physical world and its replacement with a world of floating images where objects are formed in order to house these images and evidence the deeply artificial nature of matter.