

Maclean - Arts plastiques / Plastic Arts

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From ESSE magazine; text by Dominique Sirois-Rouleau

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Born out of the accumulation of plastic in space, as in every other sphere of modern life, Maclean's Arts plastiques / Plastic arts project aims to transfigure scraps via the act of staging. Collected, sorted, and organized by the artist, plastic items are upgraded far beyond their material value through spatial arrangements and aesthetic compositions. With this ordered and systematic approach, the artist transforms this disposability overkill into artefacts speaking to the condition of our civilisation.

Composed of plastic containers filled with small accessories, toys and refuse, also made of coloured plastic, *Colonne* (2010-2019) and *Pyramid (The Grand Scheme of Things)*, (2019) occupy the center of the room. These impressive multicoloured structures use the playfulness of colour and composition to dispel the drama of their own existence. The chromatic arrangement of the objects reflects the artist's painstaking triage, like a call to order in this exponential, plastic filled chaos. By borrowing the recognizable, characteristic shapes of Egyptian and Greco-Roman ruins, these sculptures oppose the indestructibility of their materials to the fickle nature of the culture that created them. Maclean thus identifies consumption and waste as the cornerstones of our era. In the same regard, T.A.R.P. and C.A.S.H. (2019) display the green-themed amalgam of money, ecology, war and outdoorsy pursuits by showcasing pieces of tarp, painted green or covered in a camouflage motif, piled up like dollar bills. The everlasting quality of the material offers a sharp contrast to the volatility of world markets and the brittleness of the environment, both in a precarious state, as heralded by the painting *Panneau de vente's* tongue-in-cheek message " WHILE SUPPLIES LAST " (While Supplies Last, 2020). Subjected to the reliability of its sources of revenue while, paradoxically, remaining oblivious to their inevitable demise, industry continues to steamroll forward in a falsely bountiful commercial potlatch, as made plain in Maclean's work.

Pain quotidien / Daily Bread (2005-2019) underlines the tension created by the passage of time, the availability of resources and the permanence of their refuse by presenting a complete annual calendar composed entirely of dated plastic bread bag tags. The title itself refers to prayer and beliefs, as much as to our basic human needs. To a large extent, the continuity of the living world depends on repeated food intake,

as illustrated by the dozen of twenty-eight to thirty-one tag iterations. However, subsistence is insidiously linked to a certain superstitious candor. Regardless of belief, the tags will continue to exist long after the food and the individuals ingesting it have disappeared.

The pastel-hued compositions of elegantly arranged tags beautify the unassuming environmental tragedy underpinning daily life. Without indulging in anxiety-inducing catastrophism, *Arts plastiques* prefers to shine a light on the mindful rehabilitation of plastic debris. The sheer imbalance of each discreet gesture and the formidable and continual production of plastic goods establishes the former's necessity.