

Exciting the gaze

Olivier Millagou on Riccardo Previdi

Because the contemporary image is created by constant manipulations in its very realization, the conditions of the contemporary gaze have changed, and impose upon us a questioning as to the contents of sensorial and visual perceptions. We should not do this by systematically doubting the truth and intrinsic quality of received images, nor, on the other hand, should we approach the latter without critical detachment. We will favor a more “neutral” attitude combining distance, an open mind, and curiosity.

Riccardo Previdi has perfectly integrated this last position in his installations, like “Tatami + Melnicov” (2005), which offer a receptacle for images that are not his own, a projection surface that significantly modifies their quality and impact. The “screen” becomes an object whose consistency and nature have been shambled, in this case by punctuating it with holes.

By altering with great simplicity the container rather than the content, the means of diffusion rather than the image, Riccardo Previdi stands in a sort of “in-between,” giving to the image a completely different texture without actually manipulating it—an achievement, which, in this digital era, would appear practically impossible.

Hybrid object par excellence, since it has become simultaneously support, object and sculpture, Tatami succeeds in questioning the act of looking in a novel manner. More than anything, it confers, through curiosity, a new form of excitement. And this is what we will remember above all else.

Frédéric Bonnet for Olivier Millagou

English translation by Paula Cook