

Eberhard Bosslet

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ROME - EBERHARD BOSSLET – SALA 1

Eberhard Bosslet's works evoke extremely strong emotions. Here, his works were installed in spaces wrested from an architectural complex where construction had been interrupted in the '30s, and which had been intended to accommodate the faithful visiting the adjacent Scala Santa, or holy staircase, one of the most popular Christian sites in Rome. The extremely high, powerful walls were left unplastered, the stones and bricks clearly visible. This naked architectural structure surrounding Bosslet's technological objects almost neutralized their dangerous, disturbing aspect. But then one realized that the intrinsic quality of the emotions they evoked was actually reinforced by their juxtaposition to the setting, to those bare and „sacred“ spaces. For the construction of his objects Bosslet used hard, industrial materials, devices and equipment from the world of engineering and technological production. He turned them into a provocative montage, which simultaneously confirmed and transformed their original nature. Black cushions inflated with compressed air were squeezed between steel clamps taken from pieces of a forklift. He allows the viewer to sense the forces at work in nature, materially, almost physically, the directionality of the weights and thrusts, the violence of the action that industrial-technological operations exercise upon objects, along with the counteraction what one might call the feedback that is inevitably triggered. It was as if these objects (from which the viewer instinctively kept a distance, half-fearing the pressure under which they were kept) might suddenly explode. The viewer, ignorant of industrial equipment, wouldn't know what they were, wouldn't know what to call those cables, those tie-beams, those metal structures. But one could intuitively grasp the objects' references: one could immediately sense that they alluded to the world of technology.

The work entitled Gegenstände I (Objects I, 1990-93), was particularly impressive in its stature imposing, not just physically, but also semantically and conceptually. An enormous rolling metal shutter, five meters tall and four meters wide, descended to the ground, held in place by the two side walls of a long corridor. A system of cushions filled with compressed air was still connected by tubes to the air tanks, left out on the floor. Bosslet thus showed us both the finished work and the action that led to its construction the object and the process. It was as if he in some way wanted us to become aware and to remember that technology must remain at our disposal, and not vice versa. And he did so precisely by positing its esthetic, imaginative, and nonfunctional use. In this process of alienation and diversion, of what one might call the „suspension“ of technology's utilitarian meanings, lies, perhaps, the possibility of using technology to establish a relationship of freedom rather than constraint.

Massimo Carboni

Translated from the Italian by Marguerite Shore.