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Autoerotica // end of the line

An art exhibition proposal



Background

In 1908 the very first *Model-T* Ford rolled off the production line at the company's Highland Park plant in Illinois, USA, starting a briefly fantastic but inglorious journey from invention to self-destruction in little more than a century; little more than a lifetime.

And so, just over one hundred years after the very first Ford was born, the death-knell ringing to mark the *end of the line* for traditional petrol and diesel-powered vehicles is getting ever louder; as these air-polluting, oxygen-sucking beasts that have given us such freedom are also, in no small part, responsible for choking our planet; and ourselves, to death.

According to a recent American survey it is estimated that traditional road vehicles are responsible for 32% of all GHG (green-house gas) emissions; from mechanical wonder to environmental pariah in a *historically-speaking* heartbeat is some achievement.

The concept

To present a body of work that examines, and reflects upon, our relationship with the petrol/diesel combustion-engined motor car and our dangerous, ill-fated love affair with these glorious, glamorous beasts. I am particularly interested in the way that we have fetishised the car, put it on a pedestal and worshipped it; and also ritually trashed it, beaten it up and taken out our anger on their *immaculate bodies*.

We have long seen the car as an icon of deep desire, as a sexually-charged object, borne at times, by our darkest fantasies. To quote J.G Ballard from his dystopian auto-fantasy '*Crash*' - car culture was "*a new sexuality, born from a perverse technology*".

The exhibition

Here are just a few of the ideas that I am working on for inclusion in the exhibition which will comprise thought-provoking, sometimes provocative but always engaging, unique artworks of various scale.

I want to use a re-programmed car plant assembly-line robot to actually trash and reform car panels into something different, into abstract sculptures with barely recognisable links to their automotive origins. I then want these distorted, twisted, malformed pieces of metal to be highly-finished with intense colours and high gloss in the manner we have come to recognise as being a product from the auto-industry. These will then be exhibited either as freestanding sculptures or possibly wall-hung should the final form allow (for example, imagine a flattened car door).

I propose to make a film of the whole production process of the robot reforming panels and finishing them immaculately and plan to show this as a central video installation feature of the exhibition.

I may also take a crashed car from a breakers' yard and have it refinished as new but with the damage in place - and then suspended upside down in space, or at an angle suggestive of a crash in motion, this major work would be visually spectacular.

It is also my intention to dissect a traditional car engine; to reduce it to component parts and present them as *biological organs*, relatable to the human body and function. These pieces will be presented suspended in oil-filled vitrines, taking on the feeling of natural history museum displays; the engine as medical *specimen of a dead species*.

There is much in a car's traditional combustion engine that is either analogous with the workings and function of the human body; or indeed highly physically suggestive, for example, tubes, pipes, valves, filters, etc.

There will also be a number of large-scale (2m x 2m) painted works on canvas, naturally using oils but maybe more mixed-media *combines* (in a Rauschenberg way) including photography, collage and objects too.

I have the idea firm in my own head as to how this will all look as a body of work in a gallery setting, however until the work is actually started one can never know precisely how it will all develop; that is, after all, the beauty of creating new and original artworks.

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