



WHAT IS (STILL) NATURAL IN AN EXPERIENCE ECONOMY?

I propose this question both in regard of Nacho's work as in the face of cultural frames of conception, production and commerce. These frames are reflected in two terms: 'experience economy' and 'biopolitics'.

by Freek Lomme

It is good to start describing the practical aspects of these terms by simply taking on the two elements of which both words, that as we will see we are all familiar with, consist of. 'Experience' and 'economy' assembled into 'experience economy' designates how the sale of 'experiences' to consumers became a major

economy. As long as it sells its products of wellbeing –somewhere in between functional usefulness and decorative styling, our economy's welfare will feed upon wellbeing and will not get hungry.

It is within this very economy that luxury can nurture our nature. Here, the form acquired is often highly stylistic, often made of inorganic material. This is a consumption culture of 'tactility'. In practical life, tactility is mostly sold at shops in the format of '1 euro stores'; offering luring chandeliers, ashtray's, glasses, cushions and so on, 'for all ages'. Meanwhile, this popular side of tactility also has other sides such as the 'exclusive one', noticeable at millionaires fairs, selling 'the best natural products for her' or the most fancy oak wooden boats for him. Finally, there's a 'high-cultural' tactility; one that takes on a rather material-based fetishist attitude, either based on natural scents of technological possibilities. In all cases, it is a combined manifestation of matter and form that lures us into a 'rich' life.

It is exactly this lure brings me to the second term, consisting of 'bio' and 'politics'. As illustrated above, we all fall victims to the fashionableness of tactility. In a way, we are all aesthetes. If indeed so, then we would have to acknowledge it is simply part of our human nature: it is our natural being! Even before we can become reasonable consumers, we are aesthetes of tastes, guided by our senses. Now, as this tactility plays upon our nature's immanent being, we cannot refuse the temptations of all capitalist firms offering these goods.

Now, it seems to me like Nacho Carbonell knows as he scenses the 'new' like the prophet he should be, given the fact he's a 'talented designer', and processes this 'material experiment' into a very luring state in between life and scene.