

URS FISCHER
Elton John?

01 Dec 2004 - 15 Jan 2005
private view, 01 Dec 6-8pm

'Each work begins with a quick sketch, but as soon as I start to work with materials, something goes wrong. For example, the thing won't stand up and my irritation about that then leads to something else. My work never ends up looking the way I had intended. [...] I don't consider those sculptures unsuccessful. Something else just developed while I was working. It's a two way street. Your thoughts determine the images, and it is the images, in turn, which determine your thoughts.'¹

Fischer's interest lies with the everyday objects of our surroundings – food, drink, tables, chairs, cats. Instead of using and reconfiguring ready mades, Fischer makes objects. As his comments above highlight, the production process is organic and experimental, embracing both construction and destruction. The traces of this process remain at the core of the finished work - a roughness in the end piece often bears testimony to these signs of evolution. And at the extreme, as in the works Fischer made for his last show at HQ, *What if the phone rings*, a triptych of three life size women candles, the works continued to transform without the artist's intervention, as the wicks were lit and the candles burnt down, morphing into new forms, beyond the artist's control. And even with other finished objects, there is somehow an, albeit largely false, impression that they retain the potential for further evolution. This is perhaps not least due to the artist's choice of riddle-like titles, a linguistic complement to the works, in which he combines common words into unexpected phrases, throwing out surprising verbal and visual connections. The finished works are unified by an upbeat feel.

For his show at HQ, a balloon provides an improbable support for a cast metal broom and an office chair is the unlikely ammunition fired from a small cannon. As Jorg Heiser observes, 'In Fischer's work, there are recurring flashes of a certain form of uselessness turned to productive use, the way drinkers in a bar will turn cigarette packets into origami-like creations, beer mats into houses of cards, and matches into matchstick men.'²

Urs Fischer was born in Switzerland in 1973. He has had solo shows throughout Europe and USA, including *Urs Fischer: Kir Royal*, Kunsthau Zürich, Switzerland (cat.) and Pompidou Centre, Paris (cat.), both in 2004 and has been included in numerous group shows including the Venice Biennale in 2003 and the Liverpool Biennial in 2002. Recent publications of his work include *Good Smell Make-up Tree* (Geneva, Switzerland: JRP/Ringier, 2004) and *Urs Fischer: Kir Royal* (Zurich: Kunsthau Zürich / JRP/Ringier, 2004)

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¹ Urs Fischer in 'Dominic van den Boogerd and Urs Fischer in conversation', Beatrix Ruf *Time Waste Urs Fischer Radio-Cookie und kaum Zeit, kaum Rat* (Glarus, Switzerland: Edition Unikate, 2000), p 11.

² Jörg Heiser, 'Of Cats and Chairs', *Urs Fischer: Kir Royal* (Zurich: Kunsthau Zürich / JRP / Ringier, 2004), p 54.