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**February 5, 2016**  
**‘Ballet Mekanique’**

By Judson Harmon



*Courtesy Richard Taittinger Gallery, New York*

Inspired by the avant-garde experimental film, ‘Ballet Mekanique,’ released in 1924 by french artist, Fernand Léger, the show revolves around the relationship between nature and machine. “Modern-day living contains a machine-like rhythm: maximized efficiency with production-based values.” -- *Richard Taittinger Gallery*

‘Ballet Mekanique’ forces you to jump into the mind-set of the 1920’s in the midst of the industrial revolution when man was being replaced by machines, which they had built. Shot almost a century ago, the film is still very much relevant today.

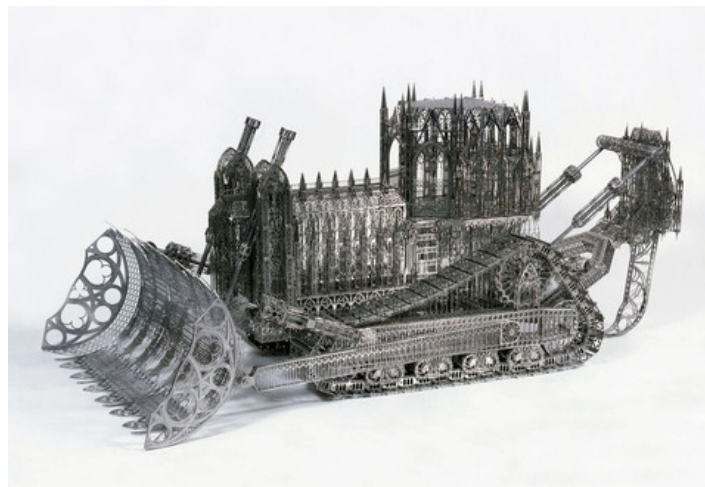
Walking into the show, the viewers eyes are immediately drawn to the fur draped sculpture, strategically placed between two rooms, in the midst of a body of work that teeters between the natural and artificial – ‘The beast with two backs.’



**Courtesy Richard Taittinger Gallery, New York**

*Théo Mercier, La bête à deux dos, 2011. Fake fur, resin, shoes, socks on lacquered wood, 100 x 66 x 55 in*

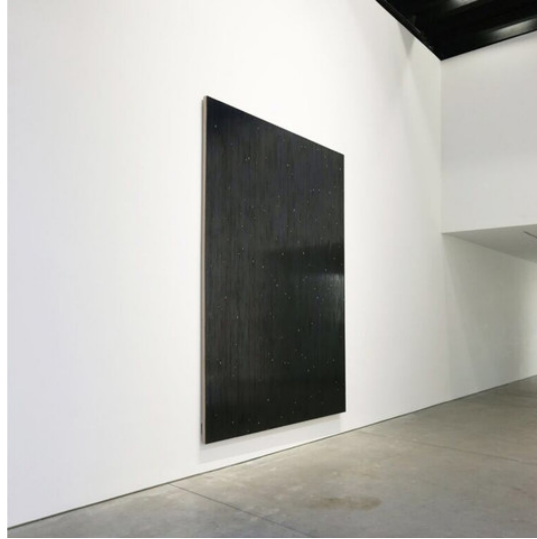
In the first room you are greeted by an aggressive bulldozer made of laser-cut stainless steel by artist, Wim Delvoye, but as soon as you begin to approach the transparent piece you will begin to notice the fine and delicate details that humanize the initial destructiveness.



**Courtesy Richard Taittinger Gallery, New York**

*Wim Delvoye, D11 scale Model 2.0, 2008. Laser-cut stainless steel, 38.25 x 87.75 x 48 in.*

Working with cassette tape chosen for its obsolescence, artist, Gregory Hildebrandt, stretched musical ribbons across a large canvas and paper - sometimes tearing away pieces and painting over the remains.



*Courtesy Richard Taittinger Gallery, New York*  
*Gregor Hildebrandt, Running up the Hill (Kate Bush), 2010. Magnetic bands on canvas, 119.6 x 82.3 in.*

Artist, Nassos Daphnis, chose to use enamel as his core medium; which is typically used for cars and machinery. Using a compass to create mechanical lines and a paint roller to fill in desired space, he creates the perfect blend of nature and machine.



*Courtesy Richard Taittinger Gallery, New York*  
*Nassos Daphnis, 4-A-78, 4-B-78, 1978. Enamel on canvas, 75 x 168.75 in.*

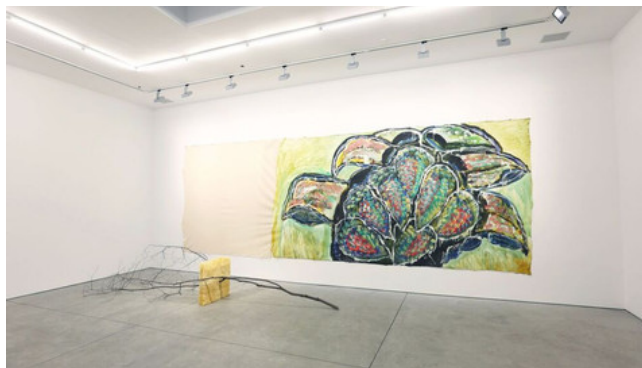
As you pass the 'The Beast with Two Backs,' it signifies the transition between the industrial and the natural; a hyperrealism piece that plays on the ideas of the seen and unseen; created with techniques from the film industry.



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*Théo Mercier, La bête à deux dos, 2011. Fake fur, resin, shoes, socks on lacquered wood, 100 x 66 x 55 in*

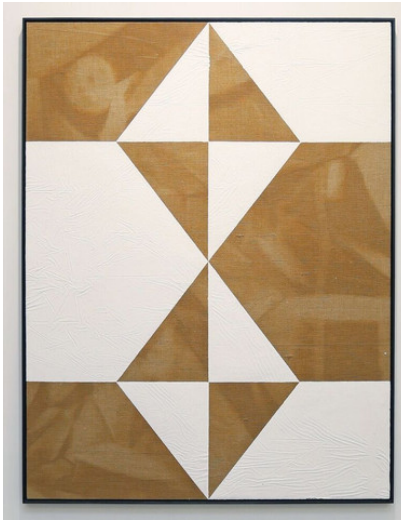
The second room immediately greets you with warm colors and tones. A piece by Mario Merz lays on the floor in front of a large scale painting of an abstract bird on unstretched canvas. Using a found tree branch from Broome Street, he punctured through sculpted beeswax, reclaiming nature and transforming it to something man-made.



**Courtesy Richard Taittinger Gallery, New York**

*MARIO MERZ, Wandering Songs I (Canti errabondi I), 1983. Beeswax, tree branch, acrylic and oil on canvas, 113 x 306 x 40 in.*

Mark Hagen placed a pile of burlap in the sun for several months - lightening the exposed and leaving the unexposed darkened. Using casting and molding, his work becomes symbolic of upholding the man-made process.



*Courtesy Richard Taittinger Gallery, New York*  
MARK HAGEN, *To Be Titled (Additive Painting #72)*, 2010. Acrylic on burlap, 88 x 67.5 in.

Using pyrography on plywood, Tom Sachs used his hands and natural elements to achieve a primitive message - a message that we are primitive creatures conditioned to conform with society. Let this be a reminder to awaken our suppressed animal instincts, to break away from the machine and get in touch with nature.



*Courtesy Richard Taittinger Gallery, New York*  
TOM SACHS, *Hours of Devotion*, 2008. Pyrography, gold leaf on wood, 49 x 47 x 5.25 in.

**ARTISTS//**

**MARIO MERZ  
TOM SACHS  
THEO MERCIER  
NASSOS DAPHNIS  
MARK HAGEN  
GREGOR HILDEBRANDT  
WIM DELVOYE**