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ARTFAB: FABIOLA BERACASA
TALKS WITH ROBERT
LAZZARINI

Find out why the gallery co-owner calls Lazzarini a "very cool artist."

BY FABIOLA BERACASA | APRIL 17, 2013 2:30 PM

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works?

Robert Lazzarini: So, all of the objects in (damage) relate to a kind of broken landscape, each suggesting a different kind of site — the highway, industrial park, suburbia, etc. And of course within that, something has happened to these objects — a broken-in window, a blown safe, shot-up street signs. However, by eliminating details of a specific event, I was attempting to emphasize the site as a kind of archetype. So these objects are definitely shaped by events, but events that are indeterminate.

Gallery co-owner and creative director, Fabiola Beracasa bridges the worlds of art and fashion. Always chic, always fun, and more knowledgeable about art than, well, most of us, she's brought her own unique eye to the gallery, The Hole.

Beracasa has also taken on the burning questions we have about the art world—mainly, who do we need to know now? Read her regular interviews featuring the best new artists, curators, authors, and more.

Here, she interviews Robert Lazzarini, who she calls "a very cool artist." Find out why.

ELLE: In your most recent show, (damage), at Marlborough Chelsea in New York, was there a clear narrative between the

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ELLE: The first object you distorted was a Stradivarius violin, which differs from the body of work you're most known for i.e. guns, knives, skulls, chain-link fence, brass knuckles, etc. Did something in particular shift your interest?

RL: Well, violin was my first compound mathematical distortion. That object was the culmination of a lot of things I was working on up to that point. One of the things that interested me most about that violin was the fact that it had moved from this functional object to a static one. It had become a kind of three-dimensional image. The way that I approach subjects now is a bit different. For example, guns, knives, and brass knuckles are these violent tools, but all related to the grasp – so in addition

to having a physical experience of the work, it was a way to position the subject in relation to the body.

brass knuckles (iv), 2010

brass

5 x 7 x 4 inches

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ELLE: What has been the hardest work to produce?

RL: *chain-link fence* was by far the most complicated. There was a lot of engineering involved and not a lot of practical options to fabricate it. The piece was cast in over 350 parts. The ultimate difficulty in that was getting carbon steel to flow into all of the diminutive geometries of the distorted chain-link wires. Each section was hand finished and then welded together. We melted the motors of like 30 Dremels and went through a lot of Swiss files.

ELLE: Any failed works?

RZ: Ha. Uh yeah?! Next question.

chain-link fence (detail), 2012
steel, pigment
134 x 276 x 75 in.

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ELLE: When you distort an object, you replicate the material that it's made of, i.e. the skulls are made of cast bone. What is the relevance in keeping the material sincere?

RL: Well, the notion of eliminating material translation in the work is very important. It's a way of eliminating art-specific material as a mediating factor between the viewer and the work. So if the skulls were made out of, say, paper mache, the experience of the work would be totally different. It's important that they resemble bone as closely as possible. It's also a way to think about the notion of representation. In essence, the material representing itself. Eliminating art-specific materials in my work is also a way to allow

transformation to be emphasized in other aspects of the work, say, in the space around the object or in the forms within.

gun (v), 2008

steel, walnut

10 1/2 x 6 1/2 x 3 inches

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ELLE: There seems to be a gritty and dark undercurrent to all your work, which is juxtaposed by your friendly personality.

RL: *[Laughs]* Well the subjects in the work are based on the way I view the world. Of course America is obsessed with violence, and part of what I'm interested in doing is representing an aspect of that. I hope the work touches on something that is current in our culture, a kind of displacement, but that it is expressed in a different way than other artists or mediums. I try to be nice to everyone even though I may be thinking of strangling them with barbed wire. I'm kidding!

knives, 2008
steel, wood, plastic
36 x 60 x 24 inches

Photo: Courtesy of Robert Lazzarini and Marlborough Chelsea

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ELLE: What's next for Robert Lazzarini?

RL: Hmm. Well, I'm working on designs for two sculptures based on Attic Funerary lions, which will be an upcoming exhibition at the Wadsworth Atheneum, and collaborations with Exhibition A and Grey Area. Also, my second solo at Yautepec Gallery in Mexico City.

shotgun, 2011
metal, plastic
5 x 22 x 5 inches

Photo: Courtesy of Robert Lazzarini and Marlborough Chelsea

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target 607, 2010

mixed media, archival ink

46 304 x 32 104 x 2 inches

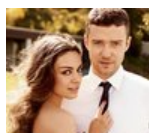
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skull (v), 2011
resin, bone, pigment
12 x 8 x 6 inches

*Photo: Courtesy of Robert Lazzarini and
Marlborough Chelsea*

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Fabiola Beracasa inside Robert Lazzarini's work, safe.

Photo: Stephanie Podasca

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