

Lost in the Supermarket

AUTHOR: JEAN-MAX COLARD

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- Lost in Consumerism

Inspired by the title of a Clash song, art critic Jean-Yves Jouannais's thematic exhibition asks artists to reimagine sites of mass consumption: department stores, supermarkets, warehouses, etc. Jouannais considers this gesture to be a response to a "certain ideological instrumentalization of culture," the reappropriation of commercial spaces for other cultural possibilities. In the video triptych *Un rêve—en marchant avec précaution* (A dream—walking with caution), 2000, Jean-Baptiste Bruant presents the critical theses of the show's curator literally: We see the artist moving around at night in the deserted aisles of the French department store Galeries Lafayette, trying all the sofas and mattresses in the bedding section, abandoning himself, bare-chested, to a lyrical choreography. While the art collective Buy-Sellf exhibits a few of the nonindustrialized products that constitute its catalog *Vente Par Correspondance* (Mail Order), the "Corporation" AWS, founded by Gilles Touyard, presents visitors with rolls of wallpaper fabricated by artists ranging from Daniel Buren to Bertrand Lavier. Timothy Mason offers a long traveling shot in the video *Land of Plenty*, taken with a camera placed at the back of a golf cart: a road movie in present-day America. At bottom, these works argue, the landscape of mass consumption is utterly homogeneous today: The proof, it seems, might be found in the photographs of Véronique Elléna, who has friends or family members pose entirely absorbed in the purchase of a fishing rod in the sporting goods section or a container of Haagen Daz ice cream. Finally, Francesco Finizio presents letters that consumers have sent to the management of large stores: spontaneous requests for employment or letters of thanks. In one, a young man who likes to decorate his room with advertising brochures thanks one retail chain for "bringing sunshine into his life." Similarly, in this show, the department store becomes a place where one can dream of another way of possessing things that are mass-produced.

Translated from French by Jeanine Herman.