

VIE DES ARTS ARTS

LAURENT CRASTE: LA CHUTE

[These vases hold no flowers](#)

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By Dorota Kozinska

Montreal multidisciplinary artist Laurent Craste has taken the medium of ceramics into a truly uncharted territory and his exhibitions always provide a little frisson of je ne sais quoi... For how to react to a perfectly stylized and executed porcelain vase with an axe through it? Or one doubled over with scissors stuck in its 'back'? No less intriguing is a ceramic bust with a brick smashed right into its face. Ouch!



His latest show, in the magnificent new space of La Guilde, continues Craste's brutal interventions under the title La Chute (The Fall). It is his first collaboration with the gallery-cum- museum, and the opening was packed. A nerve-racking time for the director, I imagine, with so many fragile sculptures on display. In addition to Craste's signature assault- with-a- tool pieces, there were vases decorated with applied scenes and antique designs, in colour and in black-and- white. These decorative motifs carried a darker message, as some of the images turned out to be scenes of concentration camps for example.

Fragility and violence, pain and pleasure, Craste casts his net wide and deep. In excising his vessels from their utilitarian and/or ornamental function, distorting and damaging them, the artist, according to his statement, is attempting to reflect the human condition, no less.

"... I am inspired by the original porcelain models of the 18th and 19th centuries found in the indexes of the great European manufacturers and I use these models, submitting them to a form of deconstruction, violently altering their formal structures through acts of vandalism perpetrated with workers' tools, through stagings evoking corpses, martyrs or even suicides."

Ouch, again!



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La Guilde
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