

PRESSBOOK

Wim DELVOYE

Robb Report

March 2015



Robb Report
March 2015
Dionne Bel

NO HOLDS BARRED

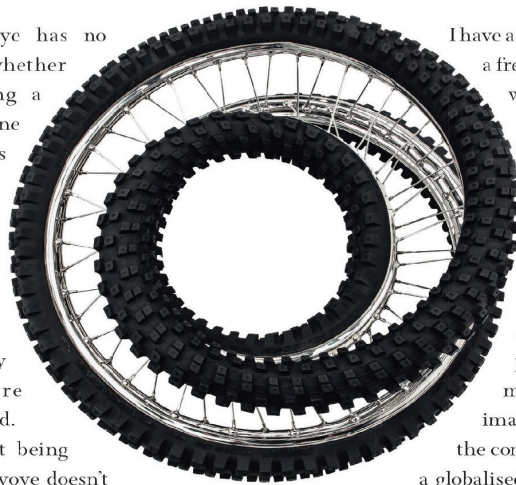
Wim Delvoye's work may shock people, but the cheeky and subversive Belgian artist is making a statement on the art market.

By **DIONNE BEL**



Wim Delvoye has no taboos, whether it's making a bio-machine that mimics the digestive system by transforming food into human waste or positioning an 11m-tall Gothic spire resembling a steel corkscrew suppository under the Louvre Museum's glass pyramid.

Not worried about being politically correct, Delvoye doesn't



I have a twisted mind, but I feel I have a free mind. I'm not very afraid. I want to make fearless art. Most artists are afraid. You have to overcome your fears."

Born in Wervik, Belgium in 1965, Delvoye is now based in the UK.

Perhaps best known for tattooing pigs in China with hearts and skulls, Disney princesses, the Louis Vuitton monogram and religious images – his way of questioning the commodification of artworks in a globalised context – and his filigree,

“The art world is like a religion, so I have to change my views every day, but my interests are very broad.”

hold back. His company logo is an effigy of himself as Procter & Gamble's Mr Clean with his entrails showing. He says: "The art world is a very dirty house and I feel like I'm Mr Clean coming in sometimes. This is one reason why I like Mr Clean. The second is it's not Mr Clean. I've made him very dirty, transforming his legs into his bowels. I also like that he's a global brand that you cannot avoid. Wherever you go, you see Mr Clean smiling at you. So I like the daily reality of Mr Clean. The art world is like a religion, so I have to change my views every day, but my interests are very broad. My views are a bit different from most people, a bit sicker. They say

From above: Dunlop Geomax motorcycle tyres; aluminium Rimowa suitcase embossed with Persian motifs.



laser-cut steel Gothic cathedral trucks displaying expert craftsmanship that eschews minimalism in favour of complexity, Delvoye is not one to rest on his laurels and feels the need to move on, although the conservative art market would want him to continue this work, producing the same things for collectors. At an arts school in Ghent, he had learnt that showing skilful work incorporating traditional crafts was frowned upon in the art world and relegated you to the status of a "lowly" craftsman, but that didn't deter him. Debuting his career in the late 1980s, his early works with carpet weaving and tapestry perturbed people because it infringed on the sphere of artisanship. Today, his works continue to reveal



the talents of traditional artisans: weaving, tattooing, carving, embossing, stained glass-making and steel-working.

Not wanting to be an artist making variations on the same theme for the rest of his life, Delvoye believes it's imperative to be flexible and wants his work to evolve, while freeing himself from the art market.

He notes: "I want to see a difference every year. If you say I'm this type of craftsman or

Above from left: *Suppo* (Karmanyaka) is a giant medieval-styled marble tower twisting upwards from a tree's roots; Delvoye's company logo.



Delvoye believes it's imperative to be flexible and wants his work to evolve.

I'm a painter, then you define yourself already by a technique. I prefer to wait for an idea, then the technique will follow. It can be marble, aluminium, anything. First, you need the idea – you want to know what you want to do and why and, if you solve this, the other things are easy and fun. With my work method, you don't define yourself by a material but by a way of thinking and working. This allows me to be very free and to do very different things. Many people who are maybe more commercially successful cannot change their work. If they change even the size of their paintings, they're in trouble because the market is conservative and always wants to reference the past."

www.wimdelvoye.be



Robb Report
March 2015
Dionne Bel



ART & DESIGN

March - 2015

125

Delvoye uses pigs at a farm near Beijing that he bought in 2004 as his canvas. The animals are not harmed and the skins of those that die of old age are sold to interested buyers.

