



MAISON MARGIELA

WICKERHAM & LOMAX INSTALLATION ON VIEW AT MAISON MARGIELA'S FLAGSHIP

CR SPEAKS TO WICKERHAM & LOMAX ABOUT THE THEORY OF THE BAG AND THEIR SERIES OF WORK PRECEDING ITS DEBUT AT MAISON MARGIELA'S SOHO STORE



BY RYAN WILLIAMS OCT 27, 2021

Starting Thursday, artwork created by art collaborative Wickerham & Lomax will be on view at Maison Margiela's Crosby Street location in Soho, New York.

The Baltimore based duo started working together in 2009 creating works that speak on identity, subculture, marginality, and connectivity to disrupt what is usually seen in art. Working in mediums like digital imagery, sculpture, CGI, video and the web, the collaborative don't stray from exploring and deepening their use of new technologies to create. Known for their chaotic yet intimate compositions, Wickerham & Lomax compliment the mentality of Maison Margiela and the fashion house's desire to deconstruct what is known to birth something new.

The series of work centers around depictions of bags from as simple as an everyday tote to a luxury handbag. The UV prints on mirror, housed in handmade wooden frames, utilizing metal handles to reference the bags themselves, are each named after a closed gay bar in the artists' home town of Baltimore.

Before the opening of the installation to the public, *CR* spoke to the duo of Wickerham & Lomax about the work and teaming up with Maison Margiela.

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CR: Tell me about the process of teaming up with Maison Margiela, what was this collaborative process like?

Daniel: "Yeah. Um, I wish we had a really fun story about this. Malcolm, how did this start?"

Malcolm: "Our gallerist in DC kind of put the offer on the table about us doing a project for them in their flagship. Daniel and I had created these images for Artforum. And we wanted in some way to kind of physicalize them. They were in print before, and a huge part of our practice is translating these things into the printed thing, into an object based thing. So once we got this project with Margiela, we had some ideas about trying it on different kinds of surfaces and mirrors and building these specialty frames for them. And figuring out these frames, a lot of it was trying to take something like artisanal codes and stuff that they use in their own creative process. They use a lot of repurposed things. And so in the frames, we bought a bunch of things and kind of reassembled them together in a way that they all coalesced, but they all kind of, you know, retain their own identity."

Daniel: "Yeah. I think Margiela had always been, you know, since a decade ago, had always been really important to our practice. We really sort of understood how he thought about clothes, how he thought about the representation of a garment into a physical garment. And that had sort of been similar to our thinking about images, turning into objects and the way that we were making things. So, we were excited to even find out about the potential of the collaboration because he had been sort of inside of our thinking for so long in the practice already. So it was very exciting."

CR: In Ursula K. Le Guin's essay "the carrier bag theory of fiction" that had a hand in the inspiration for this series of work, she defines many things as bags from books to houses – what is your definition of the bag?

Malcolm: "Oh, that's an interesting question. The counterfeit purse is a kind of thing that we thought about for a long time. It is kind of an interesting representation of brands like Balenciaga or in this case, we'll take Margiela. The counterfeit purses would be a representation and not really the actual thing, but it's an actual object that people buy and use. We also love the file folder. Like the file on the computer and that kind of exchanged back and forth between having to put your things in an actual folder on a computer, but you don't really have to do that. When I think of a bag it's like that kind of the exchange or back and forth where it like becomes both representation and thing."

Daniel: "Yeah. I mean, there's this line in the original, in the kind of proposal a long time ago, that was like "the container was humans first invention." And you could take the purse as one of our first inventions as sort of the smaller thing, and then the house being sort of the larger thing. And so to think about the work that's in Margiela, I was thinking about Margiela's label, which is always kind of inside out, and you can always be it on the outside of the clothes based on how it stitched on the inside. And so the images that we made for the show these purses that take on these domestic appliances, but then they're put back into excavation sites that might be gay bars. So, you have this kind of inside out purse rendering. And I always thought that seems very similar to the Margiela label. A clear purse we are interested in for a long time. And it's just the kind of portrait of the person, you know, the way a desktop might be a snapshot of one's life or something. Our definition of a bag is secure it."

CR: In certain ways, Le Guin might define art as a bag. What is inside this series of work?

Malcom: "It's funny cause I was thinking about what Daniel was saying about a bag that's clear because it's kind of a supervised version of the x-ray. And we've been going through the airport so much. That's the only thing I can kind of think about. Let me see my version of an art, art bag. I agree with Dan. Secure it would be a great answer."

CR: When creating such dense compositions do you have an idea what a piece will look like before you begin working on it, or is your process more additive?

Daniel: "I think Malcolm and I work pretty opposite. Malcolm plans, everything, and then executes his plan. And I sort of fill it up over time by just sort of pounding the pavement and hitting the computer pretty hard. But this thing of working with mirrors has been great because it's allowed the image to get removed without a kind of void, you know. I mean, because the materiality of the mirror as this illusion back into it or space back into it, but I don't know. What do you think Malcolm?"

Malcom: "At the beginning there is a lot of conversation. But then I'll come up with certain things that need to be touched on, certain things kind of need to be compositionally there. And then there's like a kind of process of building images and sending each other images. Not the ones that we're building, but we kind of reference images. And then I draw for a long time. Dan, you kind of draw for a long time."

Daniel: "Yeah."

Malcolm: "And then we let collapsed them to make it. And it's never enough so we kind of load the things up so much, and then we start taking stuff out. But it is a pretty additive process, but now it's becoming

“refine it more, take my stuff out, reduce it.” The newer projects we worked on too is like really subtractive in a way due to the mirror, more kind of controlled relationships with the subject.”

CR: What was considered when setting up this installation in a retail space?

Daniel: "That art can finally become décor."

Malcom: "Too, it's kind of unusable utility. Like they're kind of mirrors that don't really function well for what you would use a mirror for in a retail space, but they're still there."

Daniel: "Yeah, this also was such a fun process because the work had been made for prints. And then it was made as a smaller object, about two by two feet, and then it got remade and readjusted again for this final iteration at Margiela. And it reminded me so much of when we did this show at Artist Space in 2011. It was based around three Margiela jackets that he sent down the runway in 2008, I think. Which is like an old jacket, a print of that jacket, and then a cast of the jacket that was open in the back. That's like a process that we're always like so interested in. The thing that is a representation of the thing, that we've touched on a bunch. The way this work got made was kind of the first time where we got to repurpose a preexisting thing and retool it instead of having to building something from scratch when Margiela called. It was really fitting. I thought that worked out well."

The installation will be on view to the public at the Maison Margiela store on Crosby Street in New York from October 28th to January 7th.

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