



Angel Vergara (Mieres (Es) 1958)

Studies for Chandelier made of hats and tin cans, 1994

Watercolor on paper

14 sheets, each 420 x 298 mm

Title page with autograph text in pencil, 420 x 298 mm

The drawings are part of the project *L'idée, L'oubli, La fragilité (Chapellerie haute)* from 1994, that Vergara himself describes as 'installation, painting, performance'. In a store-like space, hats and caps are presented on shelves; on a shop counter, next to a pile of newspapers with a hat on top, the artist sits under a white sheet, like a ghost in a comic book, a camouflage he often uses for his public appearances as Streetman; the whole is illuminated by a chandelier of hats and tin cans. The title, which he repeats on the big price-list behind the counter, situates this project within a series of actions that call into question the behavior of spectators in public, usually commercial spaces. In 1992, Vergara transformed a gallery in Brussels into a café – *L'usage, L'échange, Le Récit* (Café de la Galerie des Beaux-Arts) – and in 1993, in Calais, he installed *Le travail, l'œuvre, l'action* (Salon Public). In these interventions, Vergara harks back to the 'distancing' methods of both Magritte and Broodthaers to draw spectators' attention to the large measure of routine in their daily lives, but compared to these artists he makes a more direct appeal to the public, he hopes it will encourage participation and dialogue. With banal reality as his starting point, in a non-provoking way Vergara wants to focus attention on the social and liberating role that this art can play despite the constricting economic context it appears in. – The preliminary studies for the chandelier of hats and tin cans show that here Vergara is not interested in making an ecological gesture like recycling, but rather in producing a slightly confusing pictorial-sculptural presence. In the case of one watercolor the objectives are well recognizable – in cheerful colors, floating like frisbees or seats in a carnival ride – but most often we see patches of color like we'd see if we looked into the chandelier, or like the light we'd like see festively scattered around, not in terms of its wattage, but as art itself.

Artist description:

Angel Vergara grew up and lives in Brussels. His artistic vision strongly fits in with the Belgian surrealism of René Magritte and Marcel Broodthaers, mixed with his own bottom-up approach to reality and art. In his work, Vergara often starts from everyday life and redirects art back to it, which creates a cross-breeding meant to sharpen our social consciousness and our view on the art world. His body of work contains a wide range of media and spans across several disciplines, including drawings, paintings, videos, installations, and performances. Vergara's work reveals the essential tension to which the artist exposes himself to from the moment he starts to create. He functions in a world in which he needs to define his own position, in the sense of making it secure without it becoming absolute. Through his frequent performances in an artistic context and interviews of other figures in the world of art, Vergara reveals himself as a chronicler of the Belgian art scene, paying considerable attention to local participants. Vergara represented Belgium at the 54th Venice Biennale in 2011. *Chapellerie Haute* is a reproduction of a live performance installation by the artist from 1994.