

Artist Statement

Desiring Machine*

Dimensions: c. 38 x 10 x 10 meters

material: laser-cut 16- 24mm galvanized steel plate, sections welded and bolted together

Desiring Machine is a fallen tree/tower lying by the roadway. It is a crashed relic of machine-age desire putting down new roots into the earth and unfurling tendrils from it's architectonic radii and sections. To motorists speeding past it is an indeterminate blur, a silhouetted filigree that might be a decaying windmill or other piece of obsolete agricultural machinery memorializing the struggle of humans to co-exist with nature.

The cause of this optical confusion is a vegetal motif, a floral border from a 19th century pattern book that has been adapted to form the base unit of the modular system of this sculpture. It is composed entirely of three repeated modular units generated from the 'original' pattern.

Its recursive plant-like structure unfolds from a single stem five units long that branches into 4 stems, three units long which in turn branches into 9 stems, two units long and finally branches into 16 stems, each one unit long

It is too mechanical and perfectly symmetrical to be a tree and it is too ornate to be an industrial artefact. In *Desiring Machine* a collision of abstraction and ornamentation is played out. The ornament is the structure and an uneasy truce between opposed principles is struck. It appears vaguely utilitarian, logical, (masculine); it could have been left behind by the road builders or be a collapsed electricity pylon. If so, its structural logic is obscured by intense ornament as if it had been infected (feminized) by frilly net curtain, "toilet doily" or other item of domestic frippery.

These stereotypical and untenable oppositions are deployed in a playful critique of Modernism as a failed project, a neurotic and moralizing world-view that objectified nature as passive and mechanical to be controlled and made useful. Paradoxically, *Desiring Machine* suggests a pre-modern Aristotelian conception of nature as an animate libidinal plurality awash with purpose, striving and desire.



the modules from which the sculpture is generated

* My use of this title is in part indebted to by Deleuze and Guattari's use of it in *Anti-Oedipus, Capitalism and Schizophrenia*.

