



Raffael Waldner
Car Crash Studies
2001–2010

Program
Monographs & Artists' Books

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Artist's book

Zurich-based artist Raffael Waldner (*1972) has been developing an extensive and complex body of work called "Car Crash Studies" for ten years. The object of his artistic research is the world of sports and luxury cars. He is interested in the relics that are left by accidents in these expensive vehicles. Using his camera, he systematically documents the results of such chance accidents, the wrecked cars as well as the places of their occurrence.

This activity has led to an entire series of photographs, currently over 300 subjects in all. Caught on camera, his arrangements of scrap can be understood as nature mortes—the cruel still lifes of a society that puts its faith in technology and mobility, symbols of loss and death.

Waldner's oeuvre is not that of a chronicler but of an object researcher. "My focus is on the impact of violence," he says, "and the way it changes the product. I'm interested in the typology of the remains." This typology, researched and documented through numerous nighttime forays into the scrap yards of vehicle breakdown services, is a contemporary interpretation of the Vanitas theme. The piles of scrap metal—now functionless and desecrated by crashes—speak of the transitory nature of material power and also a little bit of the loss of the erotic in society.