

Tobias Radisson On Appropriation

In the beginning of may 08 i stole a flag from the Radisson Hotel in Basel. The flag is blue and says „Yes I Can!“ I named my first solo show „Yes I Can!“ This was the press release:

„Yes I Can!“ training program delivers As part of its focus on total guest satisfaction, Radisson offers one of the hospitality industry’s most dynamic guest relations training programs called „Yes, I Can!“ This program translates the core of the company’s service philosophy for hospitality excellence to the front-line service employees in Radisson operations worldwide. Celebrating its 20 year milestone this year, „Yes I Can!“ has become a central part of the Radisson culture, creating a point of difference for the brand in the manner with which customers are served.

Then i started stealing more flags from Radisson Hotels. I put them on a wooden stretcher to make them look like canvases. One of them is quite big (240 cm x 180cm) so turned it 90 degrees. I had to cut it with

a knife, so the edges are torn. They shiver through the surface. It looks like an abstract expressionist painting. Maybe a Mark Rothko. This was the press release:

„Yes I Can!“ training program delivers As part of its focus on total guest satisfaction, Madison offers one of the hospitality industry’s most dynamic guest relations training programs called „Yes, I Can!“ This program translates the core of the company’s service philosophy for hospitality excellence to the front-line service employees in Madison operations worldwide. Celebrating its 20 year milestone this year, „Yes I Can!“ has become a central part of the Madison culture, creating a point of difference for the brand in the manner with which customers are served.

I replaced Radisson with Madison.



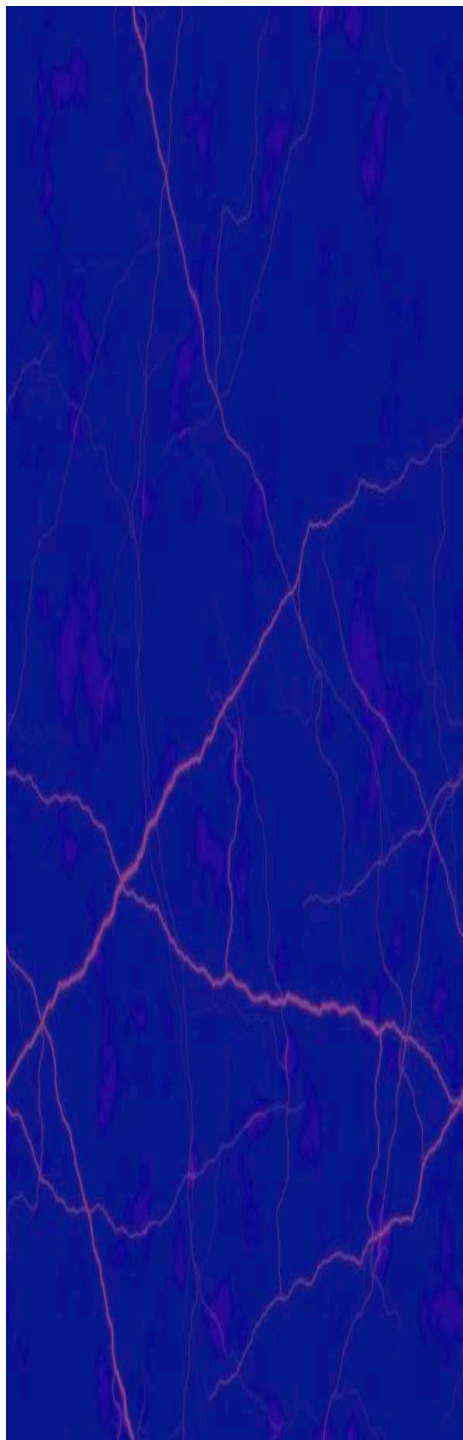
Several of my Pieces are called Yes I Can! I dont care too much about titles, i just use those i like. My System of Titles works like this:

There are untitleds.
There are Yes I Can!
There are All the ... on Sunset Strip (I know that the Ed Ruscha Piece was called Every Building on Sunset Strip, but there were so many references like Some of the buildings on Sunset Strip, None of the Buildings on Sunset Strip etc., so i decided for All the ...)
There are titles i find somewhere
There are numbers or letters
There are switched words
There are combinations

Recent titles were:

Silver Surfer / Yes I Can! / XXX / DuraBrite
Hacienda / Yes I Can!
Office Tropique / Untitled / All the Palms on Sunset Strip
Untitled / 813 / Mayday
All the Moebius Strips on Sunset Strip
All the Sunset Strips on Moebius Strip

For the future i want to laser-



engrave „Yes I Can!“ on all the plastic parts of my work. (i. E. Plexiglass in frames, glassboxes) Along with gestical lines, mimicking artist signatures.

I wrote an email to Radisson Hotel:

Dear Radisson,

i already enjoyed a few stays in radisson hotels all over the world and i was always completely happy with it. so no feedback from me, except for positive. during my stays i discovered those beautiful blue flags saying „Yes I Can!“ promoting the radisson service philosophy, which i can totally agree with. now i was wondering if i could buy or get a few of those, since good friends of mine have their marriage in april, and the line „Yes I Can!“ was always a key sentence of my friend, since he had a tough time in his life. But with this sentence he always believed in himself. it would be really great to wave the flags at the marriage, as a total surprise to him.

i would be really happy about this. please let me know if this is possible.

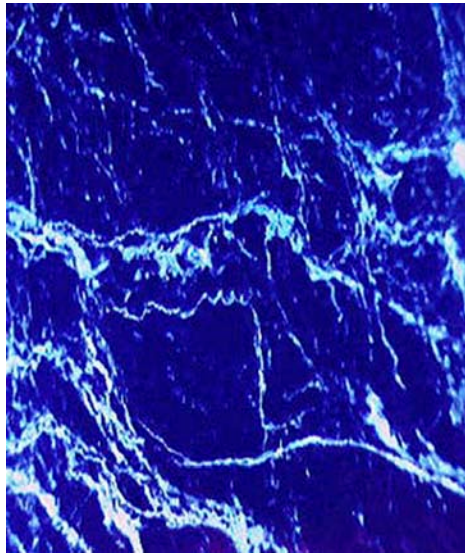
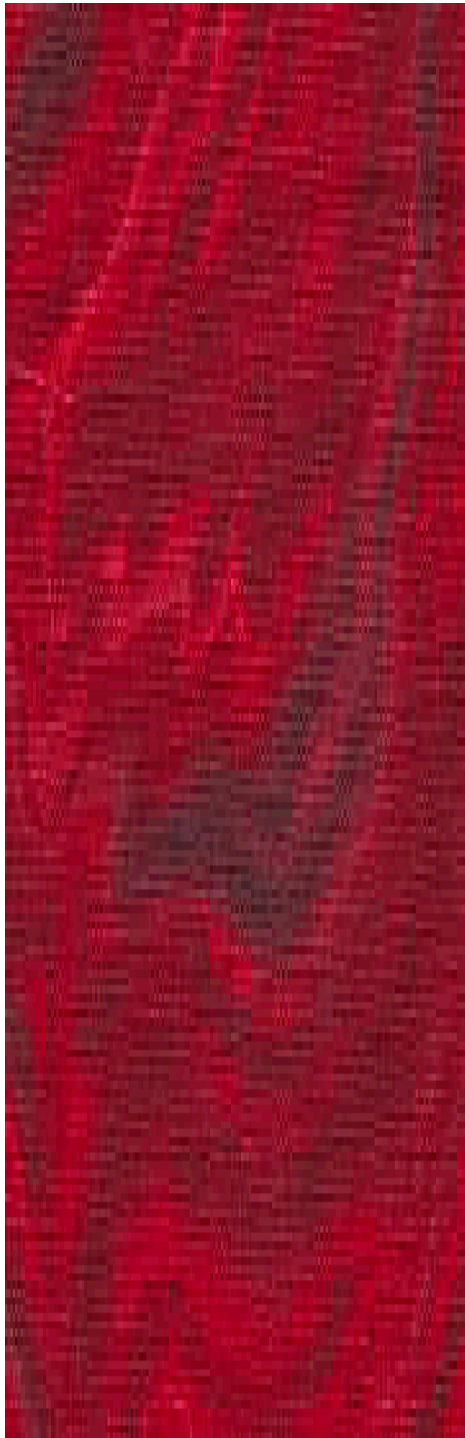
all the best

tobias madison

It worked out. I only have to pay shipment from Kopenhagen to Switzerland. The Flags are for free. There is one condition: Ill have to send a picture of the marriage to Radisson. So im going to stage a marriage, with people carrying „Yes I Can!“ flags along the wedding couple through a french garden. Maybe ill have a confisiseur bake a nice blue „Yes I Can!“ cake. Ill definately have a wedding photographer document everything. Conditions cleared and another piece for me.

I wrote an email to my friends



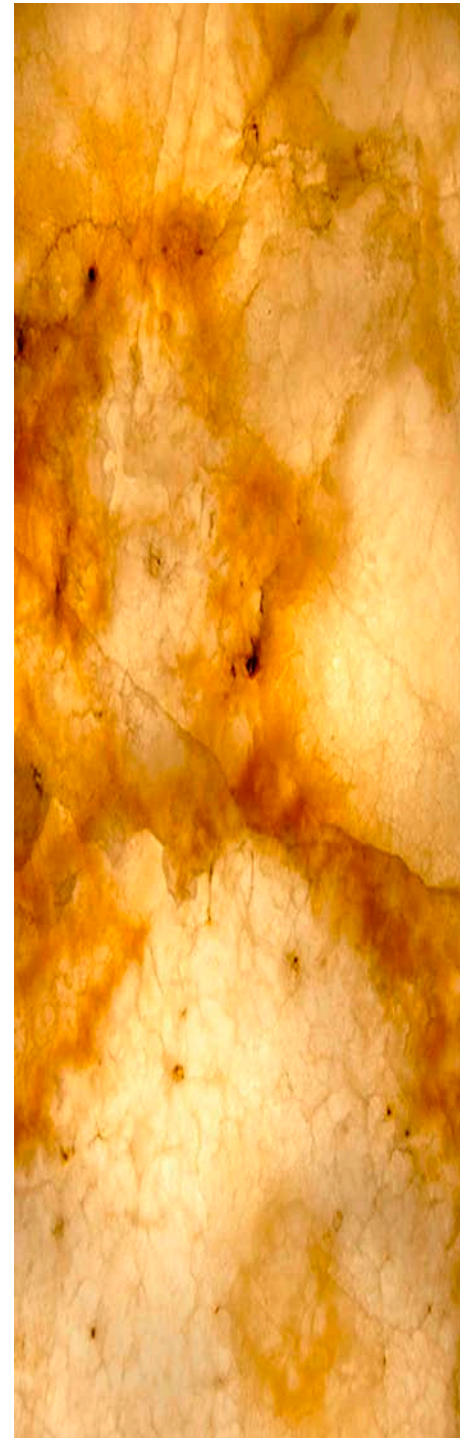


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I created an email account on gmail.com with the email address tradisson@gmail.com. The name is Tobias Radisson. I wrote an email to my friends, introducing Tobias Radisson, the person.

On nikeid.com you can design your sneakers. I kinda like the idea of two companies fusing on one product. So i designed a Nike Sneaker with the „Yes I Can!“ Slogan on it. I wrote an email to my friend Julien who is working for Nike:

hey julien, how are you? are you in portland? long time no see. im gonna be in paris from



april 15 to april 22 and i have an opening. would be cool to meet you if you are around.

hey i have a question:

about a year ago i started stealing flags saying „Yes I Can!“ from Radisson Hotels to produce artworks. you can see some pictures of them on my website:

<http://www.daskonkret.com/madison>

i started to incorporate the slogan for my own work (like using it as a title for shows or for works, for press releases etc..) and created a fictive person called Tobias Radisson. now following this i wanted to produce an edition of 5 + 1 nike id sneakers with the Yes I Can! slogan on it as an artwork (i attached you a picture). what do you think about this? i was wondering if it would be possible to get them sponsored from nike and if you knew who i should ask for this?

thanks man, all the best tobias

Just got a phone call from Nike. I get everything for free. Now you tell me stealing doesnt pay.

On the 1st of March i got an invitation to the Istituto Svizzero in Roma by Salvatore Lacagnina. One Week later i sat in a plane with Emanuel Rossetti. The night before the flight i took a promenade to the Radisson hotel with my charming partner-in-crime Isabelle.

So when Emanuel and I arrived in the beautiful gardens of the Istituto Svizzero we got introduced to The Swisscube by Salvatore: „An artist designed a space, and on my request he made to big squares on the walls (white squares). Almost every week, I invite two new artists to work into the squares. Each intervention has to dialogue with what the previous artists did.“ I arrived as stage 2 in the Sala Elevantica, the exhibition space, which is by the way a very contemporary answer/ solution to the white cube debate. It is situated underground, with big fake marble steps as the entrance. There is a built-in cinema in the space and an operators chamber, separated by two glass windows from the exhibition space. The ceiling of the Sala Elevantica is a complicated rack system to fix all kinds



of technical gears (projectors, lighting, speakers etc.)

So this is what i did:

In recent times i mounted the „Yes I Can!“ flags on stretchers to make them look like paintings, canvases, as a direct reference to painting, the appropriated image. But this kind of bored me this time. For the presentation of my fresh-stolen „Yes I Can!“ flag i chose a system of lighting fixtures by the italian company Cosmolight, located in the suburbs of Rome. A tripod, clamps, a long metal pipe manufactured for the project. All of this is originally used in studio-photography and movie/ television productions. Artifacts for image production, for the generation of fake and semi-real tales, mythology, surface. Now this stand is used to fix the flag in position. I made it look like a banner in ancient roman battles but in the same time it looks like a canvas for corporate presentation, movie projection.

From the beginning i wanted to break up the layering system that would come along with the concept of The Swisscube. So using the cinema projector was unavoidable. A layer that is pro-

jected and can be used as lighting for the following artworks and in the same time will always be the top layer.

For this i chose a collaborative work by Emanuel Rossetti and Mathis Altmann. They collected digital images of marble surfaces from the web, books etc. and created an archive of them. Now they are interested in the redistribution of these marble surfaces. The video that is projected is a slideshow of marble, in which one surface fades to the next through the use of a Water Drop Fade, a built in effect of the newest version of iMovie. The projection goes all-over the original square and over the flag. It makes the flag look like it is waving in the wind and exchanges the original patina of the fabric.

In the end it's a win-win situation: I help Emanuel and Mathis with the distribution of their marble surfaces and in exchange get lighting and a top surface for my own work. Metaphysics is outsourced to this document.

Love

Tobias Radisson

P.S: Since i founded The Ettore Sottsass Museum along with Martin Jaeggi and Emanuel Rossetti, the work entitled XXX / Chopped and Screwed / Yes I Can! / Cosmolight is dedicated to Ettore Sottsass, the Memphis Group, Memphis Associati and their wonderful design and architecture, especially furniture laminated with vinyl patterns.

