

## Paris

### Dorian Gaudin

PACT

70 rue des Gravilliers

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The revoltingly twee pleasure of watching a slam-dunking cat in GIF form can unleash all manner of anxiety. Dorian Gaudin, a French artist based in New York, occupies this space of tension in “Second Offense,” his self-deprecatingly titled second solo exhibition, which explores the social and political unease he feels in his home and adopted countries.

We encounter a trio of slapstick, *Mad Max*-style objects: a chair, crudely soldered in aluminum, tricked out with a number of vile contraptions that could send a sitter careening into a death drop, along with a waist-high aluminum slide, rigged with a coil at its end so that it can feebly bounce off of a wine bottle

(*Probabilities at Stake*, 2016); and the pièce de résistance, a 2016 work that shares its title with the exhibition: A steel wall, nearly ten feet high, programmed to rise and fall at erratic speeds, from slow-mo to lightning quick—a pathetic performer, frankly, much like the aforementioned kitty. In these pieces, Gaudin drolly references kinetic artworks of the 1950s and 1960s to darkly yet comically highlight contemporary life’s more vicious edges. Gianni Motti’s *Revendication, Terremoto, Rhône-Alpes* (Claim, Earthquake, Rhône-Alpes), 1994—a newspaper with a photo of the artist holding a sign claiming that he caused a 4.5-magnitude earthquake in eastern France, along with a seismograph sheet and an *Agence France-Presse* dispatch—undergirds and undermines Gaudin’s more labor-intensive works. Here, Motti’s conceptual violence contrasts starkly with the real violence of which Gaudin’s art is capable.

Motti’s earthquake caused no fatalities, and, hopefully, neither will Gaudin’s cruel, destabilizing mechanisms (a gallery attendant is hypervigilant about each visitor’s safety). But if we end up in a Brave New World with Trump and Nicolas Sarkozy at the helm (indeed, the latter wants another go at it, come 2017), getting fucked up by one of Gaudin’s torture devices will be the least of our problems.



View of “Dorian Gaudin,” 2016.

— *Jo-ey Tang*