



In former times towers, pyramids, candles, milestones and even trees had a phallic significance, and for Bouvard and Pécuchet everything became phallic. They collected swing-poles of carriages, chair-legs, cellar bolts, pharmacists' pestles. When people came to see them they would ask, 'What do you think that looks like?', then confided the mystery; and if there were objections they would shrug their shoulders pityingly.

*Gustave Flaubert *Bouvard And Pécuchet*¹*

catalogue of errors

by robert leonard

HANY ARMANIOUS'S WORK used to perplex me. I was unsure where he was coming from. Was he making fun of superstitious neo-pagans, quaint crystal-gazers and Raelians, or was he one of them himself? I couldn't tell whether he believed in his elven foundries, psychedelic mythologies and new age cosmologies, or not. If he was sending up his occult sources, how had he become so *au fait* with them? I was afraid of discussing this with him for fear of getting it wrong and committing some dreadful gaffe, presuming him to be a believer when he was not, or vice versa. Now I realise that my confusion is central to his work.

ONE OF THE most persistent features of Armanious's work has been his fascination with the process of casting. It has become the backbone of his inquiry, as both method and subject. He seems obsessed with its practical as well as its semiological and metaphysical implications, which have become conflated in the work. His grail-quest has unfolded and deepened in successive shows without finding any ultimate resolution. Nothing is really explained or cleared up, and we get mired in complexity, elaboration, digression.

In 1993 Armanious discovered 'hot melt', a liquid petroleum-based vinyl that can be coloured and cooked up on a stove top, and which sets quickly to form a rubbery cast. It became his muse. He experimented with it, sometimes casting it into found objects, using them as moulds, or dropping it, molten, into water, where it would instantly congeal. Without a mould, the hot melt forms blobs and folds that betray its nature – its viscosity and the speed at which it sets. Armanious took liberties with the stuff, revelling in the diverse inchoate forms it would take, his efforts recalling wobbly viscera, blubber, toxic chemical residue, sump matter, blobs, dribbles, flanges, ectoplasm. One might imagine that the artist lacked control or that the material had a mind of its own.

In 1994, for the first solo show at a new dealer gallery, Armanious arranged the lurid technicolour products of his experiments on four basic workshop tables. Collectively, they suggested the yield of an

archaeological dig; a fabulous landscape of fragments to pick through, play with and compare; an out-of-control chemistry experiment; a kindergarten wet area. Armanious titled the show *Snake Oil*, advertising his beloved hot melt as an elixir, a Wild West cure-all (perhaps imagining it to be a quick fix for all his sculpting problems). The title also suggested a hoax, something bogus, having the wool pulled over our eyes, making the artist – the work's peddler – a charlatan. True to their name, Armanious offered his abject lumps for sale by the pound, inferring that their value was in the material rather than what he had done with it. *Snake Oil* seemed to make light of the new gallery's business and its congregation.

Despite the suggestion of a hoax, *Snake Oil*'s shapes remained fascinating, magical. According to Armanious, the title was a nod to Carlos Castaneda, the popular hippie-period author who introduced peyote-inspired quest philosophy and shamanism into popular culture. Castaneda's informant, Don Juan, the Mexican Yaqui Indian shaman, had explained to him that we are possessed by predatory reptiles that control our minds from their subterranean realm. 'There are no more dreams for man but the dreams of an animal who is being raised to become a piece of meat: trite, conventional, imbecilic', reported Castaneda, complicating the theme of human gullibility.²

Later, in 1998, Armanious created a neat and tidy sequel, *Untitled Snake Oil*. He poured the candy-coloured vinyl into drinking glasses, casting the space that a magic potion would fill. He turned out the solidified volumes like mousses and jellies, perching them triumphantly atop their inverted moulds, making them into dainty plinths, directing us to consider the oddness and variety of the glasses' internal spaces. It was as if, after the botched forms of *Snake Oil*, the alchemist had finally got it right. His upraised casts became a phalanx of curious comic characters, each with a different personality: some blunt, some pointy; some graceful, some squat. His variations-on-a-theme suggested abstracted figures (like chess pieces), Disneyland architecture (towers, domes, minarets), mushrooms and toadstools (with all their pixie-



psychedelic implications), and silicon breasts and sex toys.

If *Snake Oil* was fleshy and deranged, *Untitled Snake Oil* was shapely, perky and prim. While *Snake Oil* recalled viscera on a mortuary slab, *Untitled Snake Oil* was civilised; like teacakes on individual stands. The two states implied polarised brands of pleasure: the *jouissance* of the rude, excessive and meaty on the one hand; the discrimination of the refined, discrete and nicely-done on the other. And yet each state also seemed to imply the other. *Snake Oil* looked like a collection of failures produced on the way to making a successful casting, while *Untitled Snake Oil* looked like watercolour pallets, waiting to be dissolved. This dialectic of form and *informe*, of making and unmaking, has become a constant feature in Armanious's work.³

SNAKE OIL AND *Untitled Snake Oil* were like art-wares on display, but with his room-scale installation *Selflok* (1994-2001) Armanious looked behind the scenes, into the artist's studio, or rather a fantasy of it. 'It is almost as if we were witness to a primal scene in the life of the work', wrote Eve Sullivan at the time.⁴ A rig of cauldrons, alembics and steins rested on a makeshift platform of fake-wood polyester shelving crowned with a pergola. A frozen river of hot melt nectar descended a channel, coming to rest in a little pot. The scene suggested Santa's workshop, a hobbit foundry or elven distillery, a Middle Earth drug lab. The machine was littered with bits-and-bobs, like a giant mantelpiece. A collection of found ceramic tehotchkas, suggesting a gingerbread-house view of medieval Europe (the domestication of some distant woodcutter memory), communed with lumps of hot



melt, many of which appeared to have been cast in the ceramics, Armanious promiscuously dribbling his favourite substance into the hollows of upturned vessels and figurines as if to see what would happen. The result: a plague of 'abject "bunnies", gnomes and other anthropomorphic beings'.⁵

Selflok was fanciful. Much of it was produced on a Moët & Chandon residency in the French countryside, in idyllic Champagne country, at a time when Armanious was notoriously haunted by rustic stereotypes, explaining that he saw pixies in the texture of the wallpaper in his chateau. Like many of Armanious's works, it was an allegory of art-making. It was a classic illustration of *bricolage*, the French word for 'do it yourself'. Unlike the engineer, who is systematic, the *bricoleur* cobbles things together in a make-do fashion, using materials to hand in a provisional way, for purposes they were not designed for. Certainly



Selflok 1994-2001

Selflok was improvised from bizarre elements: a ceramic in the form of a hardcover book simultaneously propped up a shelf and provided a channel for hot melt, which dripped from it into a vase; there was packaging for two Elf Shelf Kits, the kitset shelving unit which had sparked the work; and a framed found photo of a strongman, standing before a huge woodpile, bearing a stove on his shoulder.

Selflok was sheer kitsch: a whimsical evocation of a supposedly pre-industrial artisanal past. A bowdlerised Teutonic fantasy, like something out of Walt Disney, it seemed to revel simultaneously in nostalgia and debasement. Back in 1939, in his classic essay 'Avant-Garde And Kitsch', Clement Greenberg railed against kitsch, which he saw as pretend-high-culture, marinated in sentimentality to make it palatable for the plebs.⁶ But *Selflok* suggested something else again if read in relation to 1980s contemporary art's 'high culture', those German neo-expressionists with their celebration of folk-nationalist traditions: Anselm Kiefer, with his preposterous occult beliefs (frequently passed off as weighty historical engagement), and Georg Baselitz, with his love of woodland tropes (his preference for the gnome over the angel). *Selflok* didn't add something bogus to high culture so much as make explicit something already bogus within it, as if flagging high culture's unadmitted truth.

AN AGE-OLD PROCEDURE, casting remains the basis of contemporary manufacturing. Just about every mass-produced thing made of plastic or metal is made by casting. Its role in art is more specific. Traditionally casting has not been a primary medium, but a means of reproducing fragile carved or moulded forms in durable metal. In the second half of the 20th century, however, artists were drawn to casting as a process in its own right, often treating the world-as-they-found-it as a mould.⁷ Art's interest in casting-as-process was keyed to a shift from representation to literalism, which became most apparent with conceptual art in the 1960s and 1970s. In her famous essays 'Notes On The Index', Rosalind Krauss argued that conceptual artists preferred

collecting impressions, traces or measurements of the world to picturing it.⁸ A textbook example was Richard Serra repeatedly casting molten lead into the edge where floor meets wall in the Leo Castelli Gallery in 1969. Armanious engages with the literalism of ‘process art’ while also aware of artists who were attracted to casting for its occult appeal, its potential for contagious magic.

Armanious called a 2004 show *The Cult*. A cult is a small community of believers at odds with the mainstream, galvanised by conviction. We share the same world, but for the cult members it is animated by altogether different meanings. Armanious’s show featured three still-life arrangements, collections of similar-looking objects. One had the sense of looking at an obscure ethnographic-museum display where, lacking context, one couldn’t tell whether what one was seeing were mundane utilitarian objects or primitive religious fetishes. Although the objects seemed modest, the titles hinted at a grand obscure ‘cultish’ significance. Then again, the titles also seemed to strain plausibility, as though mundane objects had been mislabelled, wilfully or cluelessly. There was a sense that they could be viewed or valued either from within or from without a framework of belief, appearing radically different in either case.⁹

The symmetrical bulbous forms in *Finding The Assemblage Point (Clay Pipes From ARABBA)* looked like they had been turned, either carved on a lathe or modelled on a potter’s wheel, but in fact all were cast. Recalling peppermills, lamp stands, lightbulbs and Arabic instruments, they were made of wax, suggesting ex votos; some were formed around wicks, making them candles. *Forging The Energy Body (Swegypt)* featured castings of bells and horn speakers in aluminium and pewter; perhaps making an analogy between speakers and bells as sound-generators. Amanda Rowell stressed magical links, noting that: ‘Bells are employed in shamanistic rituals, and the material – pewter – has a connection to fortune telling in the northern European practice of casting molten pewter into water at New Year’s Eve and reading the resulting form like tea leaves in order to learn what the coming year

holds. Pewter is also a classic material of trinkets and lucky charms.’¹⁰ Of course, bells and pewter have just as many banal applications.

The groupings also suggested practical issues for casting. In order to cast the interior spaces of the bells, Armanious had to remove the clappers, which were cast and exhibited separately. Continuing this chain of logic, he found a related formal dilemma in the task of filling a peppermill with peppercorns, a process analogous to casting:



the spindle got in the way. This was illustrated by a short video on a monitor incorporated into *Forging The Energy Body (Swegypt)*. Armanious's concern with the 'problem of the core' seemed to relate to the way many of his objects were formed around central wicks, rods or voids. Armanious focused on this 'problem of the core' as if freighted with huge metaphysical import, although how or why it was a 'problem' was a question left hanging.

Armanious also stretched the idea of casting. *Scaring Away The Human Form (Death As Adviser)* involved the most primitive casting technique. Forms were made by pouring two-part polyurethane into a sack of peppercorns. The fluid traveled through the peppercorns until it set, bonding with them, forming peppery poo-shapes. The work



Forging The Energy Body (Swegypt) 2004

exemplified Armanious's obsession with casting as 'the exploration of a cavity by a viscous substance'. 'In the case of the peppercorns, the cavity did not exist prior to the introduction of the casting medium which permits the discovery, retrieval and revelation of a form that could not otherwise have been known.'¹¹

THE CULT, WITH its small objects, was modest and underwhelming at first glance. By contrast, Armanious's follow-up show *Centre Of The Universe (Central Core, Soft Core, Hard Core)* (2004) was unduly grand. It elaborated on his growing preoccupation with the core. It took the form of an orientalist folly, a 'sheik's tent'. Within, a circle of vaguely Middle-Eastern-looking Axminster carpet was littered with peppercorns, whose aroma filled the air. On top of it, a foot-operated potter's wheel was hoisted up on saw horses, with peppercorns in its slop tray. On the wheel stood a turned phallic form, like a gigantic Brancusi-esque peppermill turned in clay. It rose magisterially to the roof, where it penetrated a horn speaker at the apex of the tent like a trumpet mute.

From the horn blared Armanious's *Arabba* soundtrack, of ABBA pop songs covered cheesy muzak-style on synthesised Arabian instruments. As Jason Markou observed, 'The key is changed to a minor scale and the tempo slowed. At this key and speed, *Arabba* aspires to the hypnotic and somber musicality of Islamic devotional song.'¹² *Arabba* conflates the Nordic ABBA and Arabia, blue-eyed Scandinavians and swarthy moors, dancing queens and whirling dervishes.¹³ As we were at 'the centre of the universe' perhaps Armanious was hinting at a cosmic 'singularity', as occurs in the vortex of a black hole or at the birth of the universe, when the laws of physics don't hold and relativities collapse.

Around the 'central core' were two C-shaped tables. Inscribed on one was a 'double C' Chanel logo, marked 'crop circles', perhaps reminding us of the theory that crop circles are formed from the air the crop circle being simply a cross-section of a bell-shaped field of emanation. On the tables a variety of turned-looking cast objects were

displayed as wares. Some suggested take-home souvenir versions of the big peppermill. The selection was rife with formal puns (a burnt-out lightbulb-candle) and dysfunctional simulations (peppermills that can't grind, bells that won't ring). Armanious's objects were also sexually evocative, suggesting variants on elemental Hindu *lingam* (phallic/male) and *yoni* (vulval/female) forms, and recalling Marcel Duchamp's rude sculptures of the 1950s, which played on male and female sexual organs as mould and cast.¹⁴ There was even a glass bowl of castings of keys – an obvious reference to swingers' 'key parties' as well as being another variation on the lingam-yoni theme. This pornographic twist was echoed in the subtitle: 'Central Core, Soft Core, Hard Core'.¹⁵

Centre OfThe Universe looked back to a pre-scientific time, when people resorted to rustic metaphors to explain the universe (indeed, numerous early cosmologies were based on the potter's wheel). As with *Selflok*, we seemed to have strayed backstage, this time into the cosmic engine room. Armanious's 'central core', however, proved to be a mixed metaphor of dubious explanatory value, combining three different devices – wheel, mill and speaker – whose relationship was compelling but unclear. For instance, it was impossible to know if the potter's wheel was there to shape the mill or drive it. On the one hand, a flattering analogy was made between the artist and God, the unmoved prime-mover. On the other hand, recalling the scurrilous implications Duchamp drew from chocolate grinders, the work also suggested a giant masturbation machine, whose absent operator could enjoy turning a giant peppermill between his (or her) legs. It was an ego-trip: artist-wanker as centre of the universe, with those peppercorns underfoot exactly like prodigiously spilt seed.

BUILDING ON AND deranging the logics of *The Cult* and *Centre OfThe Universe*, *Turns In Arabba* (2005) presented a curious selection of Armanious's fake artefacts – many now familiar – in a large freestanding cupboard. It recalled a *Wunderkammer* (a cabinet of curiosities) or a cargo-cultist's closet. It also recalled those quaint museum displays



still preserved at Oxford's Pitt Rivers Museum, which throw together similarly shaped or purposed things from vastly different cultures hinting some underlying shared significance. There, one sifts through the displays trying to work out how the pieces are related, trying to understand both the cultures that fashioned the objects and the culture that grouped them together. The contents of Armanious's case exemplified and conflated apparent opposites – chic Scandinavian modernism and Arabian bazaar kitsch. Armanious seemed to revel in the fact that these objects, which represent diametrically opposed tastes, share uncanny formal similarities. He was also playing on a coincidence: Arabia is the name of a Scandinavian brand of ceramics.



While *Snake Oil* and *Untitled Snake Oil* were collections of variants, all of their members having a number of qualities in common, the objects in *Turns In Arabba* were more of a family.¹⁶ The collection seemed to exemplify the idea of 'family resemblances', in which family members share characteristics but don't necessarily all have any one thing in common. But was it a real family? Things can share characteristics and not be related. Armanious's objects seemed linked through a variety of qualities: their shapes; their materials; the processes by which they were made; and their purposes or, indeed, the lack of them (lightbulbs and candlesticks that don't make light; bells, a wax radio and a peppercorn microphone that don't make sound; a bongo drum whose skin has been replaced with a loudspeaker). Many pieces appeared to have been made from one another. Armanious cast replicas of a classic Swedish Orrefors cast glass ashtray (which has an uncanny resemblance to a lingam-yoni with its draining lip). He fused two duplicate ashtrays face to face to create a mould (the depressions for resting the cigarette joining to form a sprue), which he then used to cast pewter spheres, which were threaded onto a length of dowel to suggest a classic Scandinavian designer candle. So the objects in *Turns In Arabba* not only suggested fertility fetishes, they were also sexualised at the level of their morphology, their manufacture: everything seemed like it could be cast out of something else – crossbreeding, morphing, mutating, in relays of begetting.¹⁷ 'Turns' here implied less the turning of a lathe or potter's wheel than successive complications or generations of an idea.

As much as it was about new life, *Turns In Arabba* also carried strong funereal overtones. The works looked like tomb booty. The extinguished candles and sooty-looking case suggested a vanitas. The wax objects suggested ex votos, and the moulds sarcophagi and Canopic jars. Those ever-present peppercorns might here even refer to the ancient Egyptians, who used peppercorns in the embalming process. On the back of the case hung pewter keys (cast from decorative key-impressions in a found Scandinavian lamp base, one of the objects

in the case). With their evil-eye fobs, Armanious's swingers' keys now revealed their true purpose: to unlock doors to the afterlife. Sex into death.

ARMANIOUS'S UNRULY WORK has always had a provisional logic. Pieces get radically reworked. Old works are cannibalised for parts to make new ones and titles get changed (much to the despair of art museum registrars). Projects seep and resonate into one another materially and conceptually. New works derange the interpretations demanded by old ones. The whole oeuvre seems to be 'grist for the mill', available to be melted down and recast.

It is often noted that Armanious's work is marked by its playful use of analogy; links based on resemblances of material, form, function and process; word plays, homonyms, anagrams. There are rhymes within works and rhymes between works. An habitual category corrupter and cultural recaster, Armanious uses rhyming to connect and conflate opposing values, sometimes with seriousness, sometimes with humour. He exploits our tendency to see links between ideas due to arbitrary superficial resemblances between their signifiers, as if these affinities underpinned a deeper connection – a classic fallacy called 'isomorphism'.¹⁸ Thus he infects process art with hippy-trippy values; he morphs high-minded modernist formalism into rustic neo-paganism; he confuses Scandinavian modernism with Arabian bazaar kitsch; and he short-circuits Bauhaus 'intelligent design' with fundamentalist Christian 'intelligent design' and Raelian 'intelligent design'. Armanious points to the turns of mind that generate these miscategorisations.¹⁹

Armanious's works, and his casting works especially, can be read in counterpoint to contemporary art's alchemists, the late Joseph Beuys, his disciple Matthew Barney and their ilk. As Mark C. Taylor attests: 'For Beuys and Barney, art is a religiomythical quest to overcome social, political, and psychological division and conflict and to recover the unity once enjoyed but now lost. In pursuit of the dream of

recovering lost unity, they both return to Celtic mythology and occult spiritualism...'²⁰ They may contrast aesthetically – Beuys's grunginess being at odds with Barney's ad-man aesthetic – yet there's much more they have in common. They are alchemists, assuming that the elemental material transformations they preside over have metaphysical implications. Casting plays a key role in both artists' practices. Much of the power of their work is generated through complex symbolic systems which mix up 'engineering' (metaphysical formulas and geometric



schemas) and *bricolage* (the contingent stuff of life).²¹ Both conjure with huge swathes of intellectual and cultural history. Like a shell game, we become entranced but never get to the bottom of it.

Armanious shares much with Beuys and Barney: the alchemy idea, conspiracies of art and occult knowledges, fantasies about the artist as the centre of the universe, a preference for arcane complexity and deft equivocation, and a passion for casting.²² But his work couldn't be more different. Beuys and Barney frame up their endeavours as deadly serious and deeply consequential, suggesting some grand synthesis while holding it tantalisingly at bay. By contrast, Armanious's works suggest late-night studio epiphanies, which he or we might well reconsider in the light of day.²³ Rather than masterful, his persona has more in common with the old literary trope of the 'unreliable narrator'. While he engages us in the seductive idea of art as a transformative or transcendental project, the deeper we get into it the more we become mired in mixed metaphors and conceits. This is why, unlike Beuys and Barney, Armanious is ultimately not really an alchemist. Alchemists conflate the physical and the metaphysical – framing their desire to transform base metals into gold as a spiritual quest, say – but ultimately they invest in a distinction between high and low as real, as something *out there*. Armanious instead revels in high and low as states of mind. His work is psychological and phenomenological rather than cosmological or religious. He sponsors metaphysical inquiry *and* pulls the rug out from under it.

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1. (trans. A.J. Krailsheimer) Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1986, pp114–5.
2. Carlos Castaneda *The Active Side Of Infinity* HarperCollins, New York, 1999, p223.
3. The play between formed and unformed is there in Armanious's *Muffins* (2003), which combine a moulded base and an overflowing 'muffin top'.
4. 'Hany Armanious: Prostrated Offerings From A Twentieth-Century Alchemist' *Art And Australia* Vol. 39, No. 2, 2001, p231.
5. *Ibid.*
6. (1939) *Kitsch: The World Of Bad Taste* (ed. Gillo Dorfles) Universe Books, New York, 1968, pp116–26.
7. After centuries of cast figurative sculpture, artists began to cast directly from the body. In the 1950s Marcel Duchamp made cast-like studies of genitalia (with the pery thought that a cast of the inward female organs suggested outward male organs, so one might use vaginas to cast penises and vice versa). Through the 1960s and 1970s, inspired by Duchamp's example, Jasper Johns and Bruce Nauman

- developed a penchant for casting from real body parts. Casters were also drawn to found spaces. In the 1960s Bruce Nauman cast the space under his chair in concrete and Richard Serra cast the meeting point of floor and wall with lead. Joseph Beuys made many cast works, notably *Tallow* (1977) (casting the massive void beneath a Münster pedestrian underpass in fat), and *Lightning With Stag In Its Glare* (1958–85). In the 1990s, drawing on Nauman, Rachel Whiteread would make an entire career from casting neglected spaces, under chairs and within buildings awaiting demolition. And, Matthew Barney, following Beuys, has made casting a staple of his practice. He recently used the tearoom set from his film *Drawing Restraint 9* (2005) as a massive mould, casting it in Vaseline.
8. Rosalind Krauss 'Notes On The Index: Seventies Art In America' Parts 1 and 2 (1977) *The Originality Of The Avantgarde And Other Modernist Myths* MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1985, pp196–219. The idea of 'resemblance by contact' was elaborated by Georges Didi-Huberman in his exhibition *L'Emprunte* (Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, 1997).
 9. Compare the way utilitarian objects and ritual objects become equalised in ethnographic displays.
 10. Amanda Rowell, press release for *The Cult*, Roslyn Oxley 9 Gallery, Sydney. www.roslynoxley9.com.au
 11. Amanda Rowell, op cit.
 12. Jason Markou *Turns In Arabba* Michael Lett, Auckland, 2005, np.
 13. Elsewhere Armanious refers to 'Swegypt', his fantasy amalgam of Sweden and his homeland of Egypt.
 14. The *lingam* (phallus) is one of the most common Hindu objects of worship. Erect, stylised and austere, it represents the cosmic pillar and emanates its all-producing energy to the four quarters of the universe. As the symbol of male creative energy it is frequently combined with the bowl-like *yoni*, the source of all that exists. Duchamp's trilogy of erotic objects are *Female Fig Leaf* (1950), *Objet-Dard* (1951) and *Wedge Of Chastity* (1954).
 15. Elsewhere the logo refers to Carlos Castaneda and to the *Central Core Component* (Armanious's potter's wheel / peppermill conjunction). It's as if Coco Chanel, Carlos Castaneda, crop circles and Armanious's *Central Core* shared some deeper connection betrayed by their shared initials. By calling his giant-phallus-machine *Central Core*, Armanious was surely connecting with Judy-Chicago-school feminist artists, who had earlier used the term to describe their vagina paintings.
 16. For instance all the casts in *Untitled Snake Oil* were made of hot melt, were cast in drinking glasses, and sat on top of the glasses they were cast in.
 17. For a close reading of this see Jason Markou *Turns In Arabba* op cit.
 18. See Rex Butler 'Hany Armanious: The Gift Of Sight' *Art And Text* 68 2000, pp66–70. The problem of isomorphism is especially pronounced in Australian art today, where Aboriginal desert painting is habitually read through its resemblance to modernist painting.
 19. Just like Armanious's cast inflatable alien staring quizzically at something that could be mysterious high-technology but is in fact a pants hanger (*Rabbit* 2006), we might mistake his clogged sandpaper for the heavens.
 20. 'Forgery' *All In The Present Must Be Transformed: Matthew Barney And Joseph Beuys* Deutsche Guggenheim, Berlin, 2006, p107.
 21. Consider the way Barney's relatively arbitrary choice of the Saratoga Raceway as a location in *Cremaster 3* (2002) or of Ursula Andress as a star in *Cremaster 5* (1997) attain the appearance of sheer necessity.
 22. In Barney's 2005 film *De Lama Lamina*, his character, the Greenman, coats the drive shaft of a logging truck then masturbates against it. The scene uncannily recalls Armanious's obsession with phallic turned objects and particularly *Central Core Component From Centre Of The Universe*, his giant masturbation machine.
 23. Here one might compare Armanious with another slapstick DIY cosmologist, the German sculptor Georg Herold. 'What makes Georg Herold's works particularly conspicuous is their ineluctable banality and excessive self evidence. Their banality is so striking, so precisely conventional and familiar, that it simply can no longer be consumed, ironically for instance, but instead draws threateningly close to the viewer; and their vacuous clarity is so overly lucid, so tautological, that it can no longer be categorized in the field of conventional stupidities and platitudes, but instead develops a threatening enigma-like quality and impenetrability.' Johannes Meinhardt 'Underfulfilment In Overabundance: Georg Herold's Process Of Subversion' *XTOONE* Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, 1996, p110.