

Through a glass darkly
By derek beaulieu

From its origins in the medieval Catholic church, the chandelier has been a pointed marker of class & privilege. Through the 18th & 19th Centuries, with newer techniques of glass-making, the chandelier became increasingly aligned with the ruling & merchant classes, & continued to remain a classist signifier of wealth & power. The bourgeois decorated their houses - & found their way in the darkened rooms of their own homes - by the light of purchased, crafted, ornate, cut glass.

The chandelier, with the advent of electrical light, is increasingly an antiquated form of lighting, now even more associated with excess - even the very structure of classic chandeliers require reinforced (& higher) ceilings - necessitating specifically designed rooms to house these devices.

With Eric Sauv e's *Yield*, we are no longer presented with a vision of privilege & safety; he has d etourn ed the chandelier through a series of material & contextual interventions. Instead of finely cut glass shimmering safely above us, our heads are threatened by clusters of broken beer bottles emitting the vomitous-green glow of the evidence of an ideological bar-fight.

Hanging slightly too low for functionality & just above the height of injury, *Yield* disturbs the scale of the gallery space, making the viewer hideously aware of her own body; we move with a slight cringe through a space defined by the jagged edge of the proverbial glass-ceiling. Our own bodies betray our place as class interlopers - we do not belong around these structures. Their nauseous colouring belies the threatening fragility of emptied & shattered remains restructured as a *memento mori* - a reminder of the temporariness of celebration, uprising & insurrection.

These chandeliers reconfigure cultural & economic bottlenecks; for while the bottle's necks themselves are intact, their bases are missing, no longer containing or restricting flow. The jagged edges of potential Molotov cocktails are hoisted to the ceiling in clusters hanging just beyond reach - suggesting both an ease of distribution, & a commemoration of the glassy-eyed stare of excess.

Sauv e gathers our refuse, our garbage - these broken beer bottles - & presents them as a threatening reminder of their previous function. Sauv e's *Yield* is as much as a silent, illuminating symbol of the power of class as the traditional chandelier is. The reference here, however, is not to the hand that cut the fine crystal glass, but rather to the hand that gripped the bottle by the neck.

What once held ales, liquors - the very spirit of classist debauchery & celebration - are now raised to the ceiling (mimicking the bottles being raised in a toast) & hanged in a glorious, eerie revolt.