

reviews: international

Xavier Veilhan

Emmanuel Perrotin

Paris

In this exhibition of works related to his recent film *Furtivo* ("stealthy" in Italian), Xavier Veilhan, the inventive French artist-engineer, presented intriguing sculptures and photographic installations that provoked questions about how we perceive movement, weight, and time.

The spectacular centerpiece was the stylized form of a shark some 16 feet long, its angular, silvery surfaces beveled in a way that indicated speed à la Umberto Boccioni or a stealth bomber. It also referred to Damien Hirst, of course, and in its sleekness evoked Brancusi. Created with a high-tech design process from a special type of stainless steel and hovering at shoulder height, the sculpture seemed both heavier than water and

lighter than air, perpetually frozen yet about to slip away. Nearby, on a motorized air-hockey table, silver pucks slid around silently.

In contrast to this cold installation in the main gallery, Veilhan's poetic series of candlelit transparencies called "Lithophanies" (2008) imbued the dim annex with a cozy, dreamy aura. Ghostly film stills were encased in flat resin-and-wood screens backlit by flickering light. Their images of cloudy skies constantly shifted and seemed about to fade away. This sense of evanescence mixed with



Xavier Veilhan, *Shark*, 2008, polished inox, 6'6¼" x 16'5" x 7'2¼".
Emmanuel Perrotin.

nostalgia in *Chandelier* (2008), a wagon wheel suspended on its side from the ceiling, supporting a ring of lit candles.

With its harsh angular distortions, *Amish Vibration* (2008), a small sculpture of a horse-drawn buggy, gave the homey subject a high-tech representation. The strange, shifting planes of the piece looked almost like a three-dimensional rendering of a television image in which the horizontal lines were out of sync. The various works in the show seemed to have been pulled from some larger narrative, but each in its own way was intentionally, captivatingly disorienting.

—Laurie Hurwitz