



THE ART CAR

MAKE: FORD
MODEL: MODEL T
BUILDER: XAVIER VEILHAN

Before he started on his Model T, the closest French artist Xavier Veilhan had come to building a car was the time he strapped a rocket on to some wheels for a piece called *LeVehicle*. But when he decided to create a piece exploring the point in industrial history at which craftsmen stood back and the production line took over, a car was the obvious subject. Thus the idea of this project was to build a Ford Model T, the first car to be mass built and marketed, using only techniques available to artisans: no production line, no heavy machinery and no world-conquering ambitions. The engine, steering and tyres are all that are original: the rest, Xavier and his team made from whatever they could find. The steering wheel is cut out of plywood, the running boards are made of folded metal sheets, each part shaped around the original engine. 18 months and several thousand

Euros later, when it was finished, Xavier took it out for a test drive around the studio. "It does go, but only just," he reports. "It has almost no brakes and it's very difficult to drive, but we did manage once around the block." But for Xavier, that was enough: he had proved that anyone, if they put their mind to it, can build a car. "We were quite impressed that it went at all. The point, and the most exciting thing, was that we'd actually built it. There's this feeling of re-appropriation of industrial knowledge – this is something left to big companies, when really, anyone can do it if they try. After a hundred years, cars are still really just four wheels and an engine."

Photography Xavier Veilhan

Text Imogen Wall