

SYLVIE FLEURY

SWITZERLAND

Sylvie Fleury is one of Switzerland’s best-known artists and has been working for three decades, questioning consumerism and, in particular, its relationship to the feminine. Her feminism and politics are ever-present but in no way presented in a didactic way. Instead, she supersedes the objects and brands in fashion, beauty, cars, and other areas of advertising to highlight how desire is constructed. Her take on capitalism is as much “pop” as it is conceptual. Her installations about shopping are perfect examples. On numerous occasions, she has clustered together bags from high-end luxury labels in a way that these icons of fetishism begin to appear empty and false. She satirically points out in these works that content is irrelevant when what we are really being sold is a branded idea. Seduction does not need to be rooted in an actual thing—and, arguably, it never is. She has said, “I don’t think of my work as appropriation. I see it more as customization,” a statement that equally plays with the language of advertising as it does with cars—one of the earlier motifs in her work. Here she played with hot rods and created videos of women walking in heels against a car backdrop, making the misogyny of branded advertising and objects all the clearer. Fleury questions the gendering of many things—mushrooms, spaceships, make-up palettes. At the same time, her work in a wider way looks at the role of aesthetics and their systems of value in art and culture. The accessibility of Fleury’s work has sometimes meant the intelligence and politics of what she is doing get overlooked. Yet, undoubtedly, she is challenging fashion, make-up, brands, and

1
Gucci Gold Leather
Handcuff (red)
2003, silkscreen
on gold leather
38 x 77 cm each (Diptych)

2
Insolence
2007, mixed media,
shopping bags
with content
Dimensions variable

3
Fétiche (Numéro 18,
novembre 2002)
2002, photograph
mounted on aluminum
125 x 162 cm

