

David Cotterrell: Prototype II

Date: 15th July 1998

Dimensions(m):0.5, 0.8, 0.5

Materials:

De-Commissioned Magnum .357 Revolvers, Cams, Crank and Housings

Two Magnum .357 Revolvers shooting into each other's barrels

Mao Tse Tung said Change must come Change must come Through the barrell of a gun Staurt Staple, Mao Tse-Tung Said, 1997

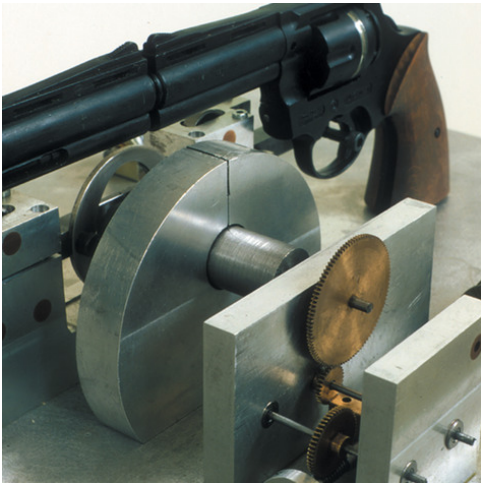
Sharing more in common with Maillardets Automaton than Apples G4, Cotterrells Prototype II is a mechanical device of finely honed gears, cogs and wheels made by the artist in the London workshops of the Society of Model and Experimental Engineers. Driving a crank at painfully slow speed, the machine cocks the guns, the muzzles of which face directly into one another. The machines slipping pulleys continuously spin the chambers until the cocking mechanism traps the chamber in preparation for firing. A complete cycle involving the cocking and subsequent firing of one blank round into the partnered revolver takes 5 minutes. The visual impact of two revolvers staring down their barrels at one another is both chilling and humorous: there is a certain sense of glee in watching a gun shoot one of its own. Essential to the piece is the time it requires of its audience. As the minutes creep past, we begin to feel jumpy. What will happen? Will the whole apparatus come crashing to the ground? Will it blow up and take us along with it? In order to know first hand, we must wait and while waiting, we are forced to look. The machinery is displayed on the exterior of its plinth, inviting study from its audience. Like the internal workings of a clock, Prototype II fascinates with its process: it becomes easy to focus on the movement of individual parts, forgetting that, somehow, these movements will all culminate in an act which is potentially lethal.



Installed at Shillam+Smith 3 Credit: David Cotterrell (1999)



Protective Laminated Glass Case Credit: David Cotterrell (1999)



Steel, Aluminium and Bronze Mechanism Credit: David Cotterrell (1999)