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Tom Claassen, Untitled (Cars) as case study for DIAL

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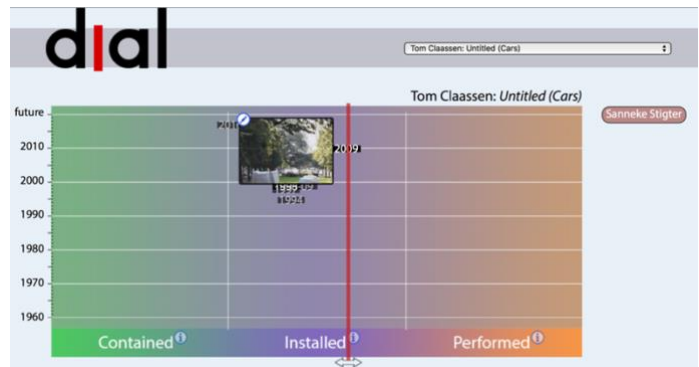
Tom Claassen, [Untitled \(Cars\)](#) as case study for [DIAL](#)

Untitled (Cars) (1994) by Tom Claassen is a spatial sculpture of three battered cars that are tilted and distributed randomly. The life-size cartoon-like cars are, however, impeccably bright white. The artwork is intended to surprise and alienate, a playful form for a grim scene which looks like the aftermath of a car crash.

Using the DIAL showed that the interpretation of the work depends on the available information and personal interpretation. The original inventory photo showed an outdoor installation, whereas the work has been restored for indoor installation. How did this change the artwork?



Tom Claassen working the surface of *Untitled (Cars)* in 2016 for acquisition, making it suitable for indoor display only. © Susanne Kensche



In 2009 the character of Tom Claassen's *Untitled (Cars)* has shifted more to 'performed' in an urban environment during the outdoor sculpture biennial ArtZuid in Amsterdam. © Sanneke Stigter and Wiel's Simple Solutions

In 2009, during the outdoor sculpture biennial ArtZuid in Amsterdam, it was as if the cars had just rolled off the motorway, providing the work a more performative character. The decision to restrict future display for indoors only was, therefore, initially considered a more conservative form for the installed work. Later it turned out that the artwork had originally been made in an art gallery and has been shown indoors more often.

Knowing this, the shift from outdoor to indoor installation has had a somewhat less dramatic impact on the life of the artwork than assumed before. For the development of the DIAL-tool this insight of shifting opinions about a work's character lead to the decision to integrate this layering of interpretations in the DIAL application. By making the opinions of different users visible better insight is given into the choices that have been made over time. Moreover, it makes clear that there is no single truth about an artwork, which appeals to each professional's sense of responsibility to carefully deal with everything that the artwork entails – the aim of the DIAL-tool.

Sanneke Stigter

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