



Roman Signer, *Stühle (Chairs)*, 2007. Installation view, Hauser & Wirth, London, 2008, 15 chairs and an electric lawn mower. Courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth, Zurich and London. Photo: Andrew Smart/A. C. Cooper Studios.

ROMAN SIGNER

HAUSER & WIRTH

It came to greet me, and for a second I considered letting it out onto Piccadilly, but Roman Signer's little red robotic lawn mower quickly reversed into the gallery for more play on the parquet with a gathering of 15 chairs. I got the best view of *Stühle* (all works 2007) from the mezzanine, but even from there the choreography didn't make much sense: Was the lawn mower's sensor programmed to avoid, corral, or crash into the chairs? The machine did a little of each, and when it got stuck, a gallery assistant gallantly came to the rescue.

Perhaps this was another manifestation of the incalculable forces between order and chance that have obsessed the Swiss artist for the past few decades. Constantly shifting the furniture, the mower devised its dance as it went along. Because Signer's sculptural work tends to be the residue of filmed actions, the temporal aspect here seemed fresh, even though the humor, so often extracted from explosive high jinks on-screen, was subdued. What tickled was a trickling of details: the boy-racer redness of the lawn mower and its matching house positioned near the gallery desk; the obscurity of the single-malt whiskey used in *Flasche*—the bottle, suspended above an upturned electric fan, dancing a woozy circle in the breeze. In *Old Shatterhand*, the sort of vibrating slimming belt last seen in 1970s sitcoms was resurrected so that, slung around the artist's waist, it compromised his shot as he aimed a revolver at a tin can. Signer, of course, missed the target. Which was precisely the desired result. —MARTIN COOMER