**+ the infinite – the infinite**

Notes on the works of Luvier Casali

… *Silencios, Ecorchés (Skinned ones), Ire, Changement de peau, Exit.*

*In a London museum there is « the value of a man » : a long box/coffin, with many divisions, where there are starch – match - flour – bottles of water, of alcohol – and great pieces of gelatin. I am a man like this.*

 *Stéphane Mallarmé*

 *Letter to Eugène Lefébure, Monday, May 27, 1867*

The bodies glide over the paper surface but they do not take off, the image is stuck in the brackets.

In the series of the *Ecorchés (skinned ones),* any mystical elevations – and in the mixing of shapes, of body extracts, the skull and bones are also here to remind us, in an implacable way, and to bring it all down to the surface.

There is no body and soul dualism. What is in the inside of the body appears red as blood. What it is hidden is still matter. The drawings are superimposed, if one could rummage deeper, won´t be able to find anything, and nothing more than the bones, the organs, muscles and entrails, sinews and blood, and the skin which wraps everything like a delicate wrinkled paper, lined by many folds and rough spots.

**The appearance of ptyx**

In his famous poem *Ses purs ongles très haut dédiant leur onyx…,* Mallarmé attempts an interpretation of the void, the nothingness. He took it to heart to construct rhymes in *ix*, and to formulate this famous hapax, which would be the apogee of this interpretation: The *ptix.* The linguists did not take long to find a meaning for it (in Greek, since the word does not really exist in French): the fold.

By chance, the fold has a very important place in the work and art procedures of Luvier Casali.

Are these interstices left virgin, or is the white on the paper the mould, the essence in itself of what it is drawn, it is split and explodes?

On the contrary, we see a revelation of nothing, of a new photography of the work, in …*Silencios.*

The lacerated shapes, immersed in their diminutive acrylic coffins, start a process of rot. Soon, paradoxically, micro-organisms are going to give life to a work, altering it, annihilating it. Everything is transformed, nothing is lost. The representation of the human shape tends to tear, to dislocate, and shall meet the same destiny as its model´s, along the process.

The truth is that the drawing by Casali, the bloating of the trace, of the inks and by extension, of the shape, is in complete affiliation with certain traditions of South American pictorial art, in which the human shape is, at many times, the core issue, and death is one of the natural preoccupations, freed from the mysticism predominant in the European iconography.

**Body-catastrophe**

However, in the representation of the bodies, the aesthetic and technical solutions and the reflection on the material, that change from one series to the other of the work, and in particular in two series that we have mentioned before, the artist does not indulge himself in a morbid show of the bodies, it rather has a sensitive, poetic, therefore complex, approach to this subject.

The photographic testimony of the sequence shown in video (as much as in the video work, on the other hand), *Changement de peau,* is a consistent example. The mix of the bodies, the pictured positions brings out memories of Hans Bellmer´s famous doll, but not of the *papier mâchée* and wood doll of the German artist; is a living thing here, made of flesh, a paroxysm of artistic expressiveness.

The work of Casali is ultimately expressive; the bodies are thrust into the living. Yes, what way out? The installation *Exit* tells us of an escape upwards. But...what?. Who can follow this way? There is an evident answer; our Judeo-Christian tradition teaches us that only the soul rises to the heavens and will be able to follow this way out. The body will remain stuck in the ground. We remain and shall remain, whatever happens, implacably stuck inside the space of the art gallery!

Which is the way out we can go through, between the gallery floor and its roof? There is this inaccessible corridor, the « fold » of the installation.

Once more through the fold, a corridor or the light, here life is stamped on the absolute void situated between the + the infinite and – the infinite. Two railroad tracks that never meet, only in our vision.

**The value of a man**

Perfusion bags, containing the necessary element for life, connected by long, translucent tubes through which the liquid flows; to some words, a poem. At the most essential, we are beings like these.

Life reduced at its simplest expression, single-cell, clinical, like in the state of brain death. Or like Jellyfishes. A phrase subject to perfusion. The words, the only relationship with reality; there is no death, only the word “death” exists, the word “death” is the reality, our unfailing relationship to the world is a word that suggests this detachment of ourselves with regards to the world, and elevates us towards the religious, in such an abusive manner.

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