

The Graphis

"Graphic inferno of Davor Vrankic"

Nov/Dec 2001 by Laurent Danchin

This then would be the philosophic value of the generalized piercing in Vrankic's work, a process meant to be tied in with all the accessories of the perforatio universalis summarizing Vrankic's inspiration. In a previous series, closer to a comic strip, he conjured up monstrous scenes of debauchery where-against a background of towers of Babel-outsized buildings, men, women and androgynous bird-headed figures locked into all sorts of embraces, performing a sort of boundless, erotic cannibalism. Illustrating what could be termed "The Enigma of the Nail," his most recent series presents something of a Eucharist in reverse: a ritualistic sharing of cruelty where all former sexual aggressivity has been reduced to the mechanical idea of penetration, a manic rite pursued by humanity in its idiotic obsession with its stingy exploration of Evil in its most varied forms.

Vrankic's world is a world of men, mostly past their prime. The women who do appear are young and beautiful, usually centered and bearing a halo of light. Of a fragile or protective nature, they sometimes bestow a blessing as they stand flooded by music hall spotlights that turn the stage into a "meeting" scene. Or else, naked and grotesque, they are shown being crucified against a rowdy fairground atmosphere. It would take pages to describe the images, to enumerate all the artistic devices the virtuoso uses to such brilliant effect: bold centering, high angle and counter-angle shots, distorted wide angle and perspective effects, and even photographic out of focus, Vrankic's latest invention, the best to underscore the foregrounds.

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For two years now Vrankic has at times left aside the saturation of his images to explore the almost abstract landscapes of giant heads, often arranged in rows. In these monstrous close-ups, he accentuates all the pseudo-photographic image distortions, giving the appearance of simple changes of scale, as if zooming in on a detail of some former universe. The images thus achieved afford him the stillness of vast expanses in blacks and grays, where the dilated nostrils have become deep caverns, the teeth strange blocks of stone, and the glassy eyes lakes or disturbingly motionless planets. One sees a desert of pure materials, which, in the interest of his hallucinatory quest of texture, the artist has left devoid of any narrational concern.

Major aesthetic revolutions often seem to be making a detour in the form of what could be taken as a regression, in order to give birth to a new stylistic combination, a novel mixture of modernity and deliberate archaism. As the stunned witness of the generalized excess of his century into which a depraved humanity continues to sink, as an attentive and visionary observer amidst his crowds of humanoid monsters, Davor Vrankic belongs to those creators who blaze new trails for the history of art. As delicate and discreet a person as they are provocative and cruel, his visions announce a new classical baroque to come for the mad era that lies ahead. The most frightening visions are sometimes dreamt up by the most sensitive and pleasant artists.