

MIGUEL BONNEVILLE

Morgue

13 JAN 2012 – 18 FEB 2012

For the first opening exhibition in 2012 at 3+1 Arte Contemporânea, Miguel Bonneville (1985) presents us with his latest body of work *Morgue*; a series of drawings and sculptural works. In these new works, the performative aspects of his practice are evident, both from previous characters as well as newly developed ones. A mourning of identities ensues, while creating a personal and intimate arena for us to commiserate and gain retrospect with them.

We are privy to Bonneville's personalities which once existed, and to consider the still life and their remnants. The exhibition is to be staged as though we have been invited to a "wake", to pay homage to the various figures that are all a part of the artists' diverse personages. An investigation into the facets that constitutes our individuality by comprehending the array of roles played out daily by each of them.. In various appropriated images, the drawings appear almost diaristic, since the portraits have been replaced by his own, and by doing so, awaking a familiarity within the audience.

'In this exhibition I can finally commit suicide without dying. It is a suicidal privilege', it is also recognition of these various facets of Bonneville, a staged farewell, while hinting at nostalgia in drawings such as 'Block encounters Death' – a doppelganger encounter of the temporal and past. Fausts' poodle is visited in 'He appeared to me' not only as one of Bonneville's experiences however as a reference to Catholic beliefs between Heaven and Hell. In the drawing 'Still Life (Hunting Trophies)' there is a smorgasbord of carnage and carnal pursuits, as the figures are composed in states of expiration amongst lucidly predatory types. The latter a suggestion of continuance and representational of survival with the embedment of what has passed.

Aesthetically the drawings have a two dimensionality to them again reiterating the lifelessness of the figures and objects portrayed. They stand as embodiments held within lines of their former selves, encapsulated within the confines of their existence. As shown in 'still life' paintings which were initially painted to show others the wealth held, due to the fact that they could commission a painting of a bowl of fruit when most people could not even afford such luxuries. Bonneville takes this liberty of complimenting this also with the diversity of his different lives explored, playing on the diversity of them not often recognized by individuals.

Alongside the drawings are the costumes and props as shed skins, packaged for archive or as though we are witnessing a deceased one before us, alluding to a crime scene at a criminal investigation in a morgue, after all the cause of death(s) is not established. Bonneville's works although suggesting that something sinister has happened, he is more concerned that our attention is drawn to these personalities which existed, somehow becoming archived in our own consciousness also, remembered but not forgotten, kept and consciously accessed phenomenologically.

Michael Landy infamously destroyed his entire home and contents in 2001 citing the project as 'way of getting rid of ' himself and materiality, much in the same as Bonneville has approached this body of work. By paying homage to the remnants we are invited to partake in the martyrdom of them. Therefore, questioning not only our ability to incorporate our past but also our attachment to it and to material possessions.

Here in Morgue, beside the fairly sombre tone to the works, there is a catharsis to them as well as the artists' approach - in that clearly something has ended, yet remembered and kept. A period of cleansing or a time for reflection is suggested, not only for the artist in saying adieu to these identities, but also a realisation of the path forward.

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