

VALLOIS

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Winshluss

«La Fin est proche!»



9
March
—
7
April
2012

OPENING

Thursday 8 March
from 6:00 p.m.



Pulication forthcoming:

Gilles Barbier
L'Emmentaliste

Book cover and 4th:
Winshluss

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La Médiathèque de
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You might say there are two kinds of artists. The ones who spend their whole lives working on a specific question or a style, and those who blow apart all too soon, in mid-flight - in which case, picking up the pieces calls for an atlas and a good GPS. The map shows the great Winshluss deflagration saturating a territory extending from sculpture to drawing, from comics to the movies, from art-ifacts to joint creation of a supermarket. The fragmentation's there in his drawing, too: a mishmash of styles, colour work and references adding up to a brilliant global demolition job. You're tempted to acclaim him as the prince of pastiche - a sampling whiz - and leave it at that. But there's still a lurking, sardonic something...

While his scathing line foregrounds black humour, irony and withering cynicism, there's also a background buzz that can't be ignored. Winshluss Art is a gallery of rejects, defectives, reprobates, parasites, radiation victims, has-beens, halfwits and losers. They're violent, relentlessly bent on staying alive and invariably naive, even when utterly perverse. But there's one realm where their marginal humanity rules supreme: junk. The junk dealer, the black economy, scrap, trafficking, stolen goods, shady deals, car cemeteries, old iron. Winshluss is to finance what antifreeze is to cooking oil, but his junk culture keeps the wheels turning for his outsiders. And he's got class: that culture is implicit in his line, genres and references, and in styles whose interlocking dispenses with speech bubbles.

Obviously there was a place for Pinocchio on this netherworld Olympus from the very start. Out of respect for the purest junk tradition, of course, he's not made of wood: the bodywork is Z-series robot, all tin and rivets that gleam better in the light of Hades. Collodi's puppet has morphed into a misfit, a stateless discard, a member of that 19th-century community birthed in the ditches of nation-building, industrialisation and capitalism; the embodiment of people written off in their time as the underclass and destined for the apocalyptic end we all know about. It was by a curious quirk of history that between 1939-44 Benito Jacovitti turned out the first comic-book version of the story - with no bubbles, since the censor didn't allow them. Winshluss's Pinocchio is speechless too, in this graphic novel with no bubbles, or almost: the coveted chatterbox role falls to Jiminy, his conscience, back from Disneyland dressed as a cockroach and living as a parasite on Pinocchio's mechanical brain.

Pinocchio's silence versus the chatterings of conscience: a face-off that typifies the Winshluss spirit. If ever our artist decided to do Melville's Moby Dick, you can bet Ishmael would come out Shitmail.

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PROJECT ROOM

Adam Janes «Hunter Gatherer»

The characters in Adam Janes' drawings have the faces and self-assurance of comic strip heroes - except that they're rarely finished, being caught in an escalating swirl of fragments and colours; in an intense magnetic whirlwind that scoops up everything in its path and gives the result an oblique, non-narrative coherency; in interacting accumulations that don't exclude separate harmonies defined by the edges of the paper.

Janes is a sculptor too, his work driven by the need for an occasional break from drawing. As if the latter - too intense, too immediate a medium - demands pauses for building things manually, for working like a craftsman and leaving ideas the time they need to take shape. The consequences include machines for cutting off hands (*The Unbeatable Handy Poor Los Manos*, Galerie Vallois, 2007), making waffles in the shape of Texas (*Delicate Balance Country Buffet*, Tim Van Laere Gallery, Antwerp), and illegally distilling alcohol (*De Stijl Life*, China Art Objects Galleries, Los Angeles). Each time his installations offer us not only the outcomes of his experiments, but also the production systems that made them possible. And Janes rarely shows his sculptures alone: as in the drawings, meaning emerges out of the accumulation of bits and pieces.

During the three-year lead-up to his exhibition *Candle Chantry* (*psycho killer qu'est-ce que c'est?*) here at Vallois in 2010, Janes turned out candles as a mass-production alternative to sculpture. Then the candle workshop his studio had become gradually wound down, ultimately coming to a complete halt. This was when his "black drawings" appeared.

Pure products of outer space, these drawings show the page up for what it is: a black hole, a strange attractor for the imprints and transcriptions of creative streaming, a channel straight to the artist's brain.

The new cycle initiated by Janes' *Hunter Gatherer* exhibition reinforces the links between the drawings and the sculptures. In a deeply cerebral grappling with the unknown, his drawing acquires concrete form in space, like tangible proof of the universe's existence. The point being a hunt that involves gathering only what you need. As said by the artist: "Everything, for me, starts with a question. Then I create an activity or a situation [...] to think the question through. (I usually do my best thinking while doing something else.) Sometimes I get an answer to the question, sometimes not. More importantly, I usually stumble upon another question—and that's when I know I'm done with the last one."*

* Alma Ruiz, « Interview with Adam Janes », in cat. exp. *From and About Places: Art from Los Angeles*, The Center of Contemporary Art, Tel Aviv, 2008, p. 72.



UPCOMING

BORIS ACHOUR

project room **DAVID CONROY**
14 April-15 May

ART BRUSSELS

19-22 April

ART 43 BASEL

14-17 June

