

Man o man o man: forget me not.

Clare E. Rojas

Museum Het Domein, Sittard, The Netherlands

Until the 19th of August.

www.hetdomein.nl

The innocent can radiate its power over there the guilty, can posit himself above him and reflect on his position. Sometimes it sobers the guilt, putting it's heaviness in perspective. It thereby gives the guilty one a more human, friendly face. The sole fact that the innocent can posit himself above the guilty, since the innocent is not to blame, makes him arrogant, makes him a character whom the guilty one would like to cause harm, not in the least since the innocent is a divine one, someone who just doesn't do any harm, who always plays safe, playing on routine an such boring, dull matters. A surplus of innocence makes one itchy and sometimes this itching soaks into ones veins, towards further body parts like hands. Sometimes these hands form fists...

Museum Het Domein is a place where high art and street art meet. They exhibit ex-skaters like Mark Gonzalez on a regular basis. This flirt with popular culture also suits Clare E Rojas (Columbus Ohio, 1976). Rojas makes music, booklets, films and wooden panels by using different techniques. She is inspired by the sphere of American folk-art. Her images appear innocent. As self acclaimed contemporary juvenile, quilts and banjos do feel itchy to me at first instance.

Nonetheless, Rojas displays her presentation of folk-art elegantly, fitting and adding to the sphere of the DIY¹ (craft) movement. She displays her aesthetic style in a visual dialogue with popular culture and adds an extra layer of content. She does this eclectic and amicable, as collector amongst friends.

A number of motives return in her work. These motives are purely visual and almost mimetically represented. They are a. natural scenes/landscapes, b. pastel colours and c. man on itself, man as he is. The first aspect, landscapes, is not disputable: they are present. The second point, pastel colours, gain my personal interpretation as being not vivid, not primarily

¹ Do It Yourself

coloured and not heavily loaded with contrasting black-white. The pastel colours make the works negotiable; they reach out their arms to the viewer, modest and tender. The last motive is the most dubious: man as he is.

By presenting man –as he is- Rojas plays with the matter of innocence and guilt in an amicable manner. She presents the male as a silly prick (literal and figural) and does that mostly by displaying them truthfully as thin, mostly bold, naked man. She plays with the ideal image of male persons, as it exists in the media. It seems as if Rojas wants to claim that males are less aware than females of their failure to fit the ideal profile as posited in the media. Females do know by now that Kate Moss is unhealthy thin, as Dove soap products know that there exist a market for fatter ladies. Males, on the other hand still shout out loud and like to drink beer simultaneously, wear black, simple and boring clothes and so on. Nevertheless, males do cherish a sly hope for love whilst they hide behind their male dogma's. Rojas reveals this fragile site of males by displaying the honest, one on one relation of males with females.

Males and females are presented in a truthful relation. She makes both genders aware of their submission to role patterns, still it is mostly the male whom she confronts. Through her art Rojas shows that males are just males and females just females. She might display a bit too much that males are bound to females, even be submissive to them when it comes to their personal, one-on-one relation. Nonetheless: I claim this whilst being a male....Nevertheless: her work did make me more aware of my male hood in a realistic, truthful matter.

Freek Lomme

Freek Lomme (NL) is active as curator, writer and poet. He works both for Onomatopée as for the Van Abbemuseum.

www.freelomme.com