

THE DESERT

Orsten Groom about the CHROME DINETTE Ensemble

«We are all in a desert. No one understands anyone»

Flaubert

«The mosaic stalks the obscure image within himself.

It discovers it, confuses it, leads it, and illuminates it with all its fire.

Its elements emerge, but, in this brilliance, it succumbs and burdens it with its desert. »

André Rouveyre

«The lack of foreboding with which we, as humans, walk into the future is a strange thing»

Sigmund Freud

Mouth, soft and black stone, horns

by mistake desert crow

on the sand of your lips, red-

ornament, day and night, concert

of syllables under the soot, the heavy one, not in circles - almost -

but carried by a breath, a beat from which aborted faces like arise,

more or less the same, - stammer, open, try again

to spawn nothing but the shadow of a bush

greyish and without image, - if

you see it, listen to what comes

and the sound, earthy, binds to the sound.

André Markowicz - Sonnet for Orsten Groom

DESERTING

I have abandoned painting.

A little more than a year ago, I gave up, as a vermin exhausted by sacrifices and high solitude, crushed by color («Between the light and the mirror, one feels horribly visible, like a louse between two blades of glass»¹), siphoned by History.

Vocation is a kind of vengeance exercised against oneself.

This was followed by the most splendid year of my career, crowned by a retrospective. But an apostate career - completely Unheimlich: a disquieting and paradoxical flight from home, from the people of the paintings.

Defection functions as a fixed idea, an obsession, and I have searched in vain for colleagues in literature of those who renounce their vocation: to my amazement, there are no stories of deserters of the self.

Except for two very strange ones: Alfred Jarry's last book, *Days and Nights* (a novel by a deserter) , where the deserter duplicates himself and plays with his double ; and Hugo Von Hofmannsthal's monstrous *Letter from Lord Chandos*:

«My mind compelled me to look at all things at an unusually close distance: just as once I had seen a piece of my little finger's skin in a microscope, which looked like an open field with furrows and cavities, so now it was with human beings and their actions. Everything was decomposing into fragments, and these fragments in turn were fragmenting, nothing could be enclosed in a concept anymore. Words floated, isolated, around me; they froze, became eyes that stared at me and that I had to stare back at: whirlpools, that's what they are, staring into them makes me dizzy, and they spin endlessly, and through them one reaches emptiness. «

THE ORIGIN AGAINST HISTORY

Moses takes his people into the desert, but does he desert? Because, what exactly does «Deserting» mean? What is it to make a verb out of such a thing? Is it «to make the desert » out of something? to flee it? to go there? And above all: what becomes of the desert in the « to Desert » verb?

If that's what you have to go through so as to get there, then that is the way of History. But certainly not the regression to one's dirty little personal annals cradle. This isn't the Nativity crib.

It's the whole world that raves in painting, the natural powers and the gods, not a sandbox the size of an ego. And it's the whole History that one outshits - the common as well as the personal.

But then, what is History? Where does this filthy business come from? Whose fault is it? God's, of course, but which one if there is only one left, whose name is unpronounceable and who has deserted in turn?

There is no history of good things, no history of natural authorities, no history of Sun or Sleep. There is no history of Art.

History is only the disaster of human time's inventory. The catastrophe of power.

Time being a flat circle - a desert - art reigns there like a beast-headed deity among those of Play, Breathing or Libido (in short, all that really matters), in the mode of Origin.

As everyone knows,

«Origin has nothing to do with the genesis of things. Origin does not refer to the becoming of what is born, but to what is being born in becoming and decline. Origin is a whirlwind in the river of becoming, and it drags into its rhythm the matter of what is emerging - on the one hand as a restoration, a restitution, on the other hand as something unfinished, always open. The origin does not emerge from the observed facts, but touches on their pre- and post- history. »¹

It is pre-history that calls. The pre-writing. The Genesis Caves of Painting and their 40,000 years of perpetual advance. There are no literary stories of surrendering one's own vocation - except those of the prophets, where speaking turns into writing and becomes History. But the prophets are not so much vocational buddies as ventriloquist fugitives. All of them try to escape from the Word they are charged to utter - to « Vomit on the banks of Nineveh », like Jonah's fish.

By the way: In Jonah, there is the Voice, the divine saying the prophet refuses to transmit, to go and disclose, who flatly tries to scam by boat to finally get swallowed by the whale (or who knows what). But, within all this mouthly network, no one knows what is going on, or rather what was said INSIDE the mouth of the fish. It's very weird, especially since it's the ideal context for psychoanalysis.

And sorry to say, but the mouth of the fish is plain parietal matter.

The myth throat that ebbs the whole world, beasts men and gods altogether - on which the jaws of History sets in motion with the monotheistic Exodus, until a lamentable end in 1939.

1 Walter Benjamin, Origin of the german tragic drama

SIEG MHUND: MOUTHS OF FREUD, MOÏSE, ZAPPA AND TOPSY

Before history, there is prehistory.

Before writing, there is the anal stage.

Before the anal stage, there is the oral stage, and the oral spurts of the mouth.

There is a war between orality and the mouth, what goes out and what comes in, between the Word and the prophet. Between the unpronounceable God and its ventriloquists.

Sigmund Freud publishes his testament book in 1939:

The Man Moses and the Monotheistic Religion.

At a time when the Jews were being persecuted and on the threshold of extermination, he sets out the explosive and obscure theory that Moses was never Jewish, but a maniac emulate of Akhenaten, whom the Hebrews murdered and replace with a double - a replica cobbled together by appropriating a local god of the volcanoes: a certain Yawheh.

Throwing the baby with adding fuel to the fire of a People that's already accused of Deicide - for whom this is no time to joke - and putting off his own situation as a Jew (himself forced into exile), Freud disappears, tortured by the jaw cancer that will terminate him within the year, along the collapse of History.

The Patriarch of Psychoanalysis (the cure by the Word) dies of a decomposed mouth after having consecrated his will-opus to the stuttering prophet - from the constitution to the destruction of the Jewish people.

Now, The Man Moses is not Freud's true testament. Sigmund adored Chow-Chows (a kind of poodle), and his final essay is a lyrical ode to his favorite one: «Topsy Chow-Chow», that suffered like him from jaw cancer and on whom he contracted a genuine identification transfer - right down to the grave.

«These are really the reasons why one can love an animal like Topsy, with this simplification of life freed from the conflict with civilization. »¹

On top of what Frank Zappa devotes a whole cosmogonic suite to the SOFA (it's like a divan) as a divine appendix, which bestiary is heavily populated by poodles. Well, well, well...

« Ich bin der Autor aller Felgen / und Damast-Paspeln / Ich bin der Chrome Dinette
Ich bin Eier aller Arten / Alle Tage und Nächte / Ich bin hier / Und du bist mein Sofa »

Fascinating!

The CHROME DINETTE was to become the Sphinx's snout, the bark of the burning bush, the canine verb of the return to painting.

For as the language says - «Mund» meaning mouth and «Hund» meaning dog:

SIEG MHUND!

Victory over history and civilization.

1 Sigmund Freud, Letter to Marie Bonaparte



THE IMAGE AND THE EXIT

I am not my own psychoanalyst, I thus came out of my crossing of the desert through the Exodus, by tuning a recapitulative countdown of my existence as a traitor to that of the image and the origin - through an interposed poodle mouth.
In other words, a hallucinatory and grotesque archaeology of the phenomenon of figuration.

Archae means both origin and commandment, and painting is this origin flow that carries everything away, regulates everything, commands everything.
Its whirlwind brews more than 5000 years of forms that replay the previous 35000 prehistoric years, which result in the evacuation (if not the forbidden?) of the figure.

Indeed, more time separates the Chauvet cave from the Lascaux one, than Lascaux from us. But this panorama is enough to trace a true fundamental elimination of the human form, followed by the abandonment of animal totems, which leads to the abstraction of the «unintelligible forms» and geometric symbols that conclude the prehistory of art.

As a result, Egypt reaffirms the figure, human and animal mixed, with the explosive wick of hieroglyphic writing - and founds a true religion of art: a society entirely regulated by and for art (the greatest there is) and a cosmic mythology backed by a joyful and vital Afterlife - an *Exit to the Day*, to use the title of the Book of the Dead. Those were the days... until Moses and his Exit from Egypt. Or the invention of history, of politics, of catastrophe, of the « Civilization and its Discontents », by what Jan Assmann calls a «Counter-religion,» relegating the pantheistic recognition of the mysteries of the world and the Great Beyond to the common pit of history - for a single one true authoritarian, iconoclastic and unreachable god.

The current resurgence of the hatred of images is an obvious historical symptom of the Quarrel of Images that tore the world apart a thousand years ago, the age-old problem of art that human history cannot digest and vomits up, like any repressed thing it obstructs - due to a lack of vision, lack of summoning spectres and, paradoxically, lack of gods to rave with. Figuration is the cyclical hallucination of the world ages, the Tohu wa-bohu of visions, the alienation of men in front of art.

FIGURATIVE HALLUCINATION AND EGYPTIAN BAS RELIEF: THE CHROME DINETTE

The phenomenon of hallucination is often described as blurry, vague ethereal visions of soft, hazy ectoplasms. It's quite the opposite.

On the contrary, hallucinatory vision is saturated with sharpness and excessive precision. Everything bombards the delirious with an unbearable closeness to an infinite focal length, a flat and bottomless winter light, strewn with flares that overflow the visible.

In relation to the painting, this means no perspective nor hierarchy of any kind (of shapes, colors or narrative) - all planes on the same plane, centrifugal and centripetal, with no point of entry or exit (outside Egypt, towards the day or wherever).

In a word: to not make an image - according to the mosaic commandment.

But the picture - as apocalyptic analysis - is a summoning machine of the figures of history in the mode of recapitulative delirium, in the turmoil of their origin.

The painting as a hallucinatory non-image is what Walter Benjamin calls «dialectical image»: that in which the Former meets the Now in a flash, and forms a constellation. «The dialectical image quotes the immemorial past of the myth and stops in the recent event, in a «fireball that crosses the entire horizon of the past». It lights the wick of a device that lies within what has been. The accumulated ruins of history must therefore be collected, and explode on the flat desert of the pictorial table into a gleaming, mosaic-like feast: the *CHROME DINETTE*.

Between the Freudian corpus and the biblical narrative, painting sews together five millennia of history and images, of unconscious tension - from ancient drawings to medieval engravings, Japanese monsters, the madmen Henry Darger or Louis Soutter, The Wolf-Man etc... According to several series of Witz, wordplays and homophonies in all languages, which fold Picasso's Dora into Picasso's, or totems on the Isle of the Dead (« TotenInsel ») - for it is in the Big Mouth that one loses one's tongue to speak that, inhuman, of painting.

The pictorial stake of this return consisted in reinventing, breaking my grammar and to experiment the inscription of this immensely patterned sarcophagus - according to the laws of Egyptian Bas-relief. The first is that each figure is isolated on the flat surface.

The enclosure of the individual by the outline protects his integrity from the becoming, from death, from chance, from the corruption of this world of putrescible appearances: the Historic Here-by. The relationships of space are thus conjured by ones of planes: there is no more surface, because all planes are crushed and equidistant on the same plane: the Beyond.

The form and the background must be on the same plane, both «infinitely near and infinitely far». No shadows, no shaping, no encroachment of figures: what a delight.

Now, of course, this is what it is all about to confronting and play.

For since history and the chaos of the world, form is no longer related to essence but to the accident, the calamity, the trauma of the event - from the 1939 rotten poodle-jawed Freud to Moses' deserted stutter.

This «return of the repressed» has thus recapitulated and telescoped onto this Egyptian plane an immense renewed variety of mural techniques (from fresco to graffiti), from the hyper-realistic thinness of transfer, spray and felt pens to the original peat of full-paste oil paint from which all figures emerge like so many wounds that engulf the cradle of all things - So as to start all over again.

Judaism says that the Aleph is not a letter, but the sound of the glottis of a man about to speak.

It is for this regression to the ornate glottis stage that I have returned from the desert.

Osiris recomposed as a scapegoat on the couch of history where to conjure up the nightmare of one's own, I had to go up the Nile, the Origin, the Exodus, the end of gods and images, the plagues of Egypt and a few poodles to find back my table of Law, my Golden Calf, my bush and Afterlife feast: the L'Cheimlich vocation of painting.

«No mortal can keep a secret.

If the lips remain silent, it is the fingers that speak.

Betrayal oozes through every pore of his skin. »¹

1 Sigmund Freud, Dora