

rodolphe janssen

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Thomas Lerooy

Braindance

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With his sculptures and drawings, Thomas Lerooy poses a number of essential questions regarding historically developed trends within the visual arts. He achieves this through an imaginative play with images which are inspired from, amongst other things, classical sculpture and 17th Century Vanitas style painting, as well as from illustrations in books, anatomical drawings, grotesque pictures , ...

The four new bronze sculptures which he presents in the Rodolphe Janssen Gallery create a very intense dialogue in the way that they communicate with each other and with the spectator. Thomas Lerooy has used classical busts from the realms of the sculptural art combined with disproportional torsos. The busts of these wise men emit a self-satisfied conceit, but they are not the less subject to the force of gravity in so much that their skulls are distorted into an amorphous mass. On the other hand, their torsos display a young and platonic handsomeness, although they are totally subjected to the massive stubbornness of the busts they carry. While one torso puts up a heroic but hopeless and ludicrous resistance against its far too heavy bust, another simply dangles languidly by ...

The technique used by Thomas Lerooy, i.e. the disproportional enlargement of the head, is a typical trade mark of caricatured humour. However the result he creates, reaches much further than that of a stereotyped joke. In a highly intelligent way he plays with a number of visually contradictory propositions. By applying an almost maniacal solidity in both production and finish, as well as the use of a plinth to emphasize the artistic pretensions of the statue, he places his sculptures within the highest traditions of the sculptural art, while conversely he purposefully undermines other conventions – such as proportion, symmetry and balance. Moreover, in his hands, Thomas Lerooy moulds the monumental tradition of the sculptural art by combining a static portrait pose with captured movement, through which he creates extreme contradiction and grotesque tension. The torsos strive to represent a powerful or elegant posture, however, ultimately their poses become pathetic due to the passiveness of their busts.

By dividing an entity into two different parts which are then reunited, he creates a new entity with its own logic which is alienated from our concept of reality. The image that he develops thus is not just an abstraction full of ridiculous humour, but the creator of a new mental perspective for looking at and experiencing sculptural art. Thomas Lerooy bends the original aura existing around monumental sculptural art, towards a lasting tension with a sense of drama and theatre. The impossibility of the bronze statues to be in movement, both mentally and physically, fills the gallery with a constricted and existentialist aura, and by doing so, confronts the spectators with their own 'condition humaine'.

Tanguy Eeckhout