

CHASSEUR QUESTIONS:

How would you describe yourself as an artist?

I assume that my intuitive mind is my biggest treasure. It is joined by the interest in the world at many different levels together with a playful and childlike orbiting around the disturbing.

Your work evokes multiple urges to your viewers such as touching, observing, riddle-solving and finding deeper meanings. Do any of them serve your original creative purposes?

I think the purpose is to find an expression for all the things for which you will not find words. I have a little daughter and when she gets a new tooth, there is something very special in it. On the one hand there is a certain disconcertment or fear and on the other hand there is pride and joy. So one could say that my paintings or objects are like the dangling tooth. It's a junction of different and often opposite urges.

Your technique is undoubtedly intricate and eye-catching. Was it easy achieving your signature 3D style?

It is not my intention to impress people by my technique. The way I am painting belongs to the necessity that is required to express not only the idea (intellect) but the sensuality, like e.g. the bodylanguage which allows direct but non-verbal levels of communication.

And therefore, one needs a certain way of exact interpretation of all surfaces. The surfaces have a meaning beyond their pure materiality. and coming back to your question, it requires severe discipline to achieve that.

The feeling of lingering between realism and surrealism is evident in your works. Would there be a winner, for you?

Maybe it's a neck and neck race. But for quite some time, one could not refer to the word surrealism as it was kept being paraded and accompanied by clichés of mass-compatible poster crap. Meanwhile, I am relaxed about it. I am close to the surrealism as the unreal is a connecting factor. But dream interpretation is not an issue for me. My art is based on intuition.

Let's talk about inspirations. What is on your list?

Everything which is some kind of an interface or a blank.

Things that contain the two poles, black and white. We live in a paradox society and my way to deal with that is to paint. It's like keeping a diary. It doesn't solve problems but you feel much better.

Humor runs through your work with 'The last string' and 'The coffin decomposition' being great examples. What do you want to pass on to your viewers? Is it food for thought or just the artist's inside jokes?

In "the last string" for example, there is a deep fascination for Wilhelm Busch's illustration of the last scene of his story about the two boys Max and Moritz ("A Story of Seven Boyish Pranks"). They end up in corn which is to be pecked up by the gees.

There is no blood, no cry, all is very clean. this is a picture which was one of the most impressing ones when I was a child. Today, I think this is a perfect picture for the inconceivability of life and death. I am very thankful for pictures like that.

200 years ago, Kant said that humour is one of the most important ways to deal with fear.

On 'Contenance' we see elegant hands coming out of a vase and ending up breaking it to pieces, a very intense interpretation of dual nature. Are all things coming down to that – destroying and being destroyed?

Destruction belongs to life and so to us. Sometimes, we don't see that the destruction can also bear the germ of something new.

I'm a doubtful optimist.

During your career, you had several sellout exhibitions. Do you agree or oppose the idea that commercial aspects can eventually damage an artist's creativity?

It's the same for all of us. If one does one's job only for reaching a certain status in the society, this will mislead him or her. For an artist, it can be translated as follows: When the fact that a museum will show your paintings becomes more important than the work itself, something is getting wrong.

The fact, that people love your work so much that they will spend money to buy it, should not disturb an artist or he or she should not do this as a profession.

What are your hopes for the future?

That my family and I will keep well and stay fit.

Interview Yannis Tzannis

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