

Fanatics... Rafael Doctor

Published in catalog "PREMIERE", Enrique Marty, for the exhibition in Kunsthalle Mannheim, Mannheim, Deutschland, 2010, Kerber Art.

Hardly any other artist with a language as defined and a personal universe as unique as Enrique Marty's is to be found in the Spanish arts scene. As a result, he has, without a shadow of a doubt, become crucial to understanding the development of contemporary art in a country with a peculiar iconic history and a tradition of constructing and understanding images that stands apart in the context of occidental culture. It was a long process that took shape during the Middle Ages and reached its pinnacle in the Baroque, later leading to the development of the unique universes of major figures such as Goya, Gutiérrez Solana or Buñuel.

Enrique Marty creates his personal world by assimilating that tradition into his art, which is characterised by a high level of non-verbal communicative tension - we can certainly talk about visual intensity in this respect. For this to be understood, we have to imagine the world as a big stage where the complexity of life unfolds, but which always harbours "another" space as well: a parallel space far in advance of each era's conventional perceptions.

Fanatics is one of the principal works in Enrique Marty's already extensive oeuvre, where he has condensed his peculiar world and unchanging discourses based on a reappraisal of the sinister in the history of human representation. The works combine allusions to Mediaeval retables, ecstatic Baroque sculptures, the Mediterranean tradition of the festive mask, B movies, contemporary fantasy literature and generally anything derived from the non-canonical aspect of occidental representation: the sick, the perverse and the monstrous.

Using 60 clone-like figures all bearing his own face, the artist recreates a large procession of people dressed in camouflage gear - a real army of fanatics, people driven to ecstasy by something intangible, turning blindly towards that belief, bending the knee before a higher power that transforms them into its subjects. Sixty clones depict a world that still runs on blind faith, deadlocked beliefs, alienated ideologies, projections onto others and other things that will eventually abrogate humankind for once and for all. Sixty dead bodies litter the entrance to the temple; 600.000 march towards the border; 6.000.000 fans at a concert; 600.000.000 faithful: all abstract numbers that we read in the news every day, incomprehensible but incredibly powerful. In a world that tries to make the restoral of a human being's individual dignity its fundamental aim, everything seems in retrospect to boil down to the duality of people/numbers we are used to living with. However, at the same time, these numbers scare us because we know there are thousands and thousands of soldiers and millions of fundamentalists. Those kneeling at the temple square cannot be counted, nor can those who enslave women or kill those who do not conform. And when we realize how many they are, we break into pure panic. Whilst a single fanatic is one who prays in the desert, a lot of fanatics form a sea in which we drown and that we can never cross.

Employing his obsession to constructive ends, Enrique Marty creates a picture of terror in "Fanatics" that seems to cling to the human soul: the threat of the group that forms almighty entities - ones which can not only move mountains but, in particular, can also compromise human integrity. With his idiosyncratic style oscillating between the grotesque and the Baroque, the artist builds a magnificent bridge between antique and contemporary sculpture. As in all of Enrique Marty's works, we are confronted here with an open-ended story, to which we only need to add our own feelings and, above all, our own fear.