

Fierce Connection

Stefan Heizinger, like Toulouse-Lautrec, has a knack for making the hideous beautiful and vice versa. In his world, paint is a religion. There is a purge and a great burst of energy on the canvas. The paintings sing. I don't know if he listens to Beethoven or the Butthole Surfers while he's painting but the work seems exquisitely on the verge and alive with sound. Heizinger, like Mapplethorpe, makes us see the beauty of the other. There is a flood of images painted with energy, size, precision and emotion. The work occupies a space between realism and imagination where I can project myself, my fears and desires.

There is a game-ness, a playfulness to Heizinger's work. Like Fassbinder, he is a very smart trickster. In *Turning Point: A Company of Men*, powerful politicians odious acts are made visible. They are covered with their victim's handprints and blood. The politician's satisfaction is juxtaposed with the visualization of their crimes against humanity; like a devilish whirling dervish that is defacing, erasing, cartooning, and accusing. Political corruption is political corruption wherever you are and a serial killer (*Gender Serial Killers*) is a monster no matter the language. The painting is an anti-Warhol. The work is not snarky or detached and I'm grooving on the fact that O.J. is included. Where are the bodies hidden? Some of the killers seem tortured by their nature, others gleam and glisten with an evil satisfaction. It seems like the blue shape up right is making space for the next killer and is that Hitchcock making the film industry complicit? I am truly disturbed by this work and I love that I am having such a strong reaction!

Drawing is an important part of these works and Heizinger has a big set of balls setting up comparison with Caravaggio, Durer, etc. The entire history of art is fodder. The works are large and testosterone filled but they never succumb to the high cheese-ball factor of Schnabel. There is the grafitti-ness of Basquiat, the steady hand of Warhol, the palette of Matisse, the realism of Fischl, the politics of Tuymans. In *After Caravaggio*, Jesus is no longer our focus; in fact, he's disappearing in the modern world with animal as witness. The other end of the brush is also important in Heizinger's painting. There are many lines and they become different elements in different works; in some, a prison, in others, delineation. I dig the Live, Love, Laugh figures imprisoned by wealth. Her face grotesque – as if her numerous, various facial surgeries are made visible. His eyes engorged with success; look what getting ahead has done to him!

To Dr. Freud Exaggerated is psychedelic, the blow job from hell with dog (again) as my witness. His face seems to be exploding? Imploding? Melting? She is impaled, choking on a radioactive cock. Dr. Freud indeedy do! In *Society Medicine (Praying)*, painting becomes the anesthetic. The surgeon's hands offer instruments of healing or death. Fear is limned, made visible. I'm not sure about "first do not harm." It seems like a nightmarish breach of the Socratic oath. I'm afraid, very afraid.

In *Body of Thought Pose*, flesh seems to ooze. The reddish pinkish ribbon of heat stripes the canvas like a crazed Matisse. That was some messy gay sex. And what is up with those sinister moustaches? One figure splayed out in all his Leigh Bowery glory whereas the other's shame resonates out of the frame.

In *Twiggy Weeping Knut*, there is again a fierce connection to the animal world. The hope of the future, our children, commune with a bear in captivity. The little girl is unreadable with her adorable hair ornament but the reflection of the boy is sinister on the glass. The polar bear pleads for his life. The work has a Richter look but with emotion blurred in. *Hunting, Company, Game* shows a deer getting fucked by a lion cub. Or eaten? Either way it is not a happy time. It's an assault. The section of blue sky painted up right promises a peace coming when animals again rule the world. There are many definitions of love and, like a lover; Heizinger's work demands active participation. Dive in. Heizinger's canvases are vivid whirlwinds of living paint. Look and make love with your eyes.