



An Anti-Narcissistic Auto-Reflex

The Art of Sandra Kunz

The work of Sandra Kunz divulges two central themes: one of didactic narcissism and identification, another, individuation and the fragility of the “self”. The portraiture of 22 selected Sandra Kunz reflects an individual quest for self, self-intimacy and revelations of the absurdity of attempts to elucidate upon identity.

The process? A random pre-selection of alias Sandra Kunz, namesakes drawn at random, the later criteria of acceptance of a restricted formal constraint in technical and formal aspects & considerations, and the super-imposition of the original Sandra Kunz upon the static faces of the subjects.

The quest has led the artist to more than question self-representation, rather, the re-examine the process of identification, the demarcation of the “The Other” (akin to Antonin Artaud) and the anomaly of typological approaches in the presentation of a narrative series.

The artist reveals the incredulous and the intimate, refracting her own trajectory, life experience and subsequent, projection of assumed or “predetermined” beliefs of the self in the process, the final ensemble of images serving as an extenuation of an otherwise narcissistic fascination. What remains as a lucid & objective critical study lies in the manner of self-reflexive automaton of the lens, the debate of portraiture of over a century. Narcissism is in effect countered or at least subdued as a closer examination of the series divulges an inherent “abandon” of self, in truth, and a further exploitation of the selected criterion and medium. Is an image of the self at all possible? Wherein does representation die and derivation begin? In appreciation of the trajectory of the series, Sandra Kunz manages to avoid the pitfalls of a fixed hypothetical stance. The observation of the series leaves one asking, rather than a forceful or intellectual confine determined by a less insightful or egocentric artist.

While the series is representative of the artists overall orientation, intimacy rebounds in examination of her other projects.

The photographic compilations of dust, hair, skin and other human debris remind of the organic & essentially transient character of a life & one’s experience. To document the mundane intimacy of urban refuse, the minutiae of the routine, is at once appealing and revolting. Yet, the objectivization of the commonplace places an emphasis on the artists innate sensitivity to matter, to the importance of the “small”. Bound and compiled, each photographic series allows for a unique “chapter” of the subject, and in effect, serves as a mirror to the organic function as an intrinsic aspect of the day. Poignant work in reflection, a counterpoint in an era of orgiastic consumerism, vanity and virtual distortions towards the creation of an “irreal”, fictional cosmopolitan “being” of modern manufacture.

Questions remain on identity, the artists mentions that the work not only allowed her to better examine the process of identification while in practice, demystifying conceptual ideas and what is perceived as the “self”. In the creation of the series, she experienced the challenge of fallacy vs. truth, of herself and the myriad selves dubbed “Sandra Kunz”, the drastic differences revealed in examination of the work and the inherent characters of the random selection of women offers an at once humorous and insightful portrait of women.

In contrast with the predominant theme of intimacy, in truth there exists a detached objectivity. The externalization of the preconceptions of self have left Sandra Kunz the artist abandoned and transformed, equally, the subjects (while without distortion) face a loss of identity as a coherent whole, the grafted neutral demeanour & expression of the original Kunz

subalterns the Other Kunz in plural. Less a mirror than fragmented Looking Glass wherein the spectator may traverse to Other Side.

Beyond this series, Sandra Kunz has demonstrated her talents in spatial creation. Earlier works, sculptural installations, using felt and fabric reveal organic pieces either assembled or as a constituent whole. What appears is simultaneously strange and intriguing in the work is the proximity of concepts of fashion and garments to her creations. Some resemble directions in conceptual fashion, some act as “hydra”. An industry gone amok, compounded in the hands of the artist? No. The materials in application and accompanying photographic series are less pornographic, less concerned with the market. An ironic commentary on the body and the industry, a laughable series epitomized in a video installation where we see the artists engulfed by successive layers of clothing to the extent where she is devoured, rendered entirely sexless and abstract by the same fabric of vanity and complement in the commercial and popularized industry of contemporary fashion. Also of interest, the life size photographic work with amorphic, formless clothing photographed independent of a body or supporting frame. Hyper-extended sleeves, elongated and narrowed hemlines, flattened against a stark white background seem to target and depict the confines of the industry as much as the garments, and perhaps, ourselves.

Attention is drawn to the immediacy and multi-dimensional facet within which the artist has approached the medium of corporate sculpture. The interaction between the corporal element, the “real” body of Sandra Kunz, the deviations from a static representation in offset video monitors of the “irreal” or derived visual “self” of the artist and the impass of physical confinement and restriction in her bearing the insurmountable weight of her pliable, soft sculptural adornments impact the audience in a visceral manner. The dramatic consequence of an environment of cast off and thrown objects and landscape of still objects juxtaposes the kinetic with the fluid. A manifest extemporalization of the self in myriad physical embodiments.

What is behind the fascination of self? Sandra Kunz is an artist who occupies and is occupied by the intimate, the personal demarcation of experience in a consumerist society. Her work varies wildly in practice, yet while encompassing diverse materials and medium in practice, remain coherent in the breaking of formal constraints and pre-limitations borne of the self. In an era of rampant consumerism, mass industrialization and the alienation of the self to absurd proportions, the dress of identity has been challenged with an adept intelligence & elastic wit in the hands of “The Seminal Kunz”.

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