

Comparison Leads to Violence

In her dreams Hillary Clinton was funny and poignantly critical. In one such dream she found herself back in the dreaded and competitive atmosphere of parenting a child through a junior high school science fair. Where all around her were the co-labourings of father and daughter, mother and son, she had left her younglings to their own device to discover themselves as amateurs. The theme of this years fair, though not outwardly stated, was the crustacean-like-penis. Ebony and ivory sea cucumbers and oversized sandpaper red lobsters were coralled into little booths, pushing at the boundaries of their allotted space. In form, the exhibition resembled Mr. Toads Wild Ride but without the people movers and with a bit more moodyness. She viewed a few collaborators off past a huge stinking purple Amazonian stamen but was otherwise feeling remarkably alone. Though the complex aroma of the various displays was palpable the overall effect was decidedly mild, more akin to those strange new attempts by Hermes to produce pond water or sand scent. Hillary came to the end of an aisle and vaguely recalled that her children might need help but on turning the corner was confronted with the most profoundly disturbing presentation yet. While the preceding samples of grotesquery had lain still, this enormous horned obelisk cooed and gurgled and as she shuttered in amazement, that part of her body which she had forgotten existed, exited. It was sand colored as seemed to be typical of much of the exhibit but with highlights of rose and white around the peaks of its horny shell, it had black beady eyes set on what appeared to be bright white perfectly round tailed eggs which it gently grasped in it's giant pincer before giving her a brief glance and returning to the folds from which it had come. Hillary woke with the vanity of great dreaming, had some thoughts on her parenting skills, made coffee and pondered where America had gone so terribly wrong.
(Will Benedict)

If one is to believe the common descriptions of Will Benedict's works, their predominant motif is that of the "picture in the picture". Gouache on canvas paintings are embedded in hard foam panels, which are in turn painted or unpainted, life-size cut-out studio portraits are (sometimes) applied and set in aluminium and glass frames. This leads to hybrid structures that make use of just about everything two-dimensional art has to offer: painting, drawing, photography, collage. Even though Benedict's pictures are based on the method of collage, they do not aim at fragmenting the picture, but on the contrary appear surprisingly homogeneous. Grouped in individual series, they are dedicated to the various conventions embedded in global tourism, the private lives of dining couples, their postcards and tweets, their appreciation and reflections on nationalism in gastronomy and the cable newscasters waiting for them back at the hotel. This repertoire of pictures is the essential content of his exhibitions, a starting point from which a sequence of shifts and disentanglements takes place.
(Stefanie Kleefeld)