

Pretty People

rien (nothing). nier (deny). crystal clear.

A park. Shade trees. Some food. Two men. A woman. An enigmatic smile. She's looking directly into your eyes. Careless. Stripped, not naked.

"Le déjeuner sur l'herbe" was shown for the first time in Paris in 1863. Napoleon III chose Palais de l'Industrie as the main venue where Édouard Manet had been segregated for the Salon des Refusés. An *opaque* architecture where a monstrous feminine body deserved to be hidden. The building that saw for the first time a woman stripped before her ablution was demolished 34 years later to make way for the Grand Palais. Two kilometers away from the Louvre: the *transparent* building. Cour Napoléon. More years, more light for the rejecting past. The Louvre Pyramid was built by the Chinese-American architect I. M. Pei, 126 years after the *burial* of that scandalous body.

language—at times—is not enough.

Same city. Fashion week. Prêt-à-porter. Shocking colors. Nymphs as light as the air. Fast as a breeze. Thierry Mugler's Fall/Winter collection "Les Infernales" premiered on the Parisian fashion week in 1988, the inauguration year of the Louvre Pyramid. Same year, different natures. A black full gown slithers on the catwalk. A kick in the air and a thigh covered in *sheer* collant comes out, revealing a red-blooded lining. A blue spotlight, another shocking discovery: a zigzagged black fabric hiding a vampiric breast. Carefully placed on a *chiffon* heart, that little piece of textile had a mission. Lift the veil. Reclaim desire. Redefine *transparency*.

I wish I knew.

Loneliness' curse. Secularization of love. Perpetual danger. Destructive utopia. Falling empires. The epistolary novel "Dracula" was published in 1897 by the Irish author Bram Stoker, who foisted the vampiric archetype as a lonesome, shapeshifting and feminine men. As far as the Count's love never dies, the only way to win his forced segregation is through razor-sharp fangs penetrating a *thin* layer of skin. Inversion technology. Aggressive consumption. Out—in, in—out. A body whose integrity got lost, mixed with blood, fear and the will to shape the future. Is death the only price to pay for a desire under the *mask* of monstrosity? One thing's for sure: gothic creatures are not that different from an un—loved soft toy or an un—desirable scarf, nor from a dusty papier mâché sculpture or torn magazines.

I wanted to say it—that I loved you—. Gridalo. C'est tout. Let's start again.

Text by Davide La Montagna