

G A L E R I E

C H A N T A L

C R O U S E L

TROTTOIRS - SIDEWALKS
[PROMENADES EN MARGES]

October 17 - December 15 2002

NOBUYOSHI ARAKI
ED VAN DER ELSEN
ALBERTO GARCIA-ALIX
HASSAN KHAN
ENRIQUE METINIDES

An exhibition curated by Galerie Chantal Crousel at the Poste du Louvre

BEING TOGETHER

Must quotidian always be associated with humdrum?

Rather, it is perhaps the quotidian~the everyday, the banal~that, in the long run, heroically insures the survival of the individual and the group as a whole.

In this respect, it is worth recalling the origin of the word "banal": in medieval France, a "banal" baking day was one when the bread that came from the oven was not owed to the lord of the manor. It was a day of common bread, a day of quiet celebration when life was not owed to the powers-that-be.

It is precisely these innocuous activities and daily little rituals that constitute the eternal bedrock of "being together." We should remember that when nothing is important, everything assumes importance.

The interlude represented by the "modern period" is coming to a close. It has been a period of closure~of closed identities, shielded by the walls of private life. A period of the individual as master and owner of self and the world. Of the individual as a powerful yet solitary figure.

The world is now reclaiming its right to center stage. The street is back in circulation, as is the etymology of "trade," which once meant to tread the path or road. There,s trade in goods, of course, yet also trade in feelings and ideas. Public sidewalks serve as a fine metaphor for this commerce, reminding us that what was unduly privatized is now back in collective circulation. Sexuality, for instance, is nothing less than individual, yet is also a subterranean lode of collective eroticism.

Urban theatricality is now demonstrating, in various ways, that the individual is an indeterminate thing. None of us have any worth unless we are an integral part of a social context.

Genius, don,t forget, is above all part of a collective "genius" in the sense of Œ,a prevailing spirit." It is part of the spirit of a place, one moment in a whole that transcends it. That is how we should understand Hassan Khan,s "I am a hero / You are a hero."

This equation is reversible, moreover: a fragment of crystal exists thanks only to the heterogeneous rock from which it is extracted.

Indeed, the compact, mundane framework of the quotidian stresses an eternal present, lending meaning to all the intense, brief "snapshots" so typical of everyday life. Postmodern life, echoing premodern life, reminds us that existence does not become meaningful in some yonder world, but is embodied in the here and now.

Transcendence becomes immanent in a kiss rendered tragic because it is so fleeting, in a "quick coffee" elevated to a daily ritual at the café, in a tattoo that marks the sharing of bodies. All things remind us, as Nietzsche pointed out, that sometimes depth can hide on the surface of things.

Paths on the fringe are converging into a main path, reminding us that all existence, individual and collective, is one long undertaking. The street is a path with no end other than itself.

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PRESENTATION OF THE ARTISTS

NOBUYOSHI ARAKI

Nobuyoshi Araki (born 1940) is known by a larger audience for his emblematic images of young women, prostitutes or schoolgirls ^ dressed or naked, bonded, suspended from the ceiling, or languishing on a floorΣ During over forty years of a career devoted to an intimate revelation of daily life, this artist has however since the very beginning brought to the foreground lesser known aspects of Japanese society. For the occasion of « Trottoirs ^ Sidewalks », the b/w photographs are chosen from his first body of work : « Sachin and Mabo, (1965). In the post-war Tokyo, the sidewalks reveal the entangled levels of crisis the capital of Japan struggles with : urban, social, identity. In these series, Araki's love for life reveals the resurgence of joy, tenderness and innocence.

ED VAN DER ELSKEN

Ed van der Elsken (1925-1990) reveals himself as a photographer towards the end of the forties. Like many of his fellow artists, fed up with the post-war atmosphere in Holland, van der Elsken moves to Paris in 1950. The city is effervescent with artistic and intellectual avant-garde. He soon becomes part of a group of young existentialists, who spend their days in the cafés of the Quartier Latin, drinking, smoking and enjoying life. Immersed in this population, Van der Elsken catches privileged instants of the life in Saint-Germain des Prés. In the bars, the cabarets, the street.

ALBERTO GARCIA-ALIX

The photographs presented in « Trottoirs ^ Sidewalks », have a.o. contributed to Alberto Garcia-Alix, reputation as one of the most prominent Spanish artists of the last quarter of the 20th century. Born 1956 in León, in a bourgeois family, the adolescent Garcia-Alix gets durably immersed in the milieu of bikers and of the exploding movida. Through his work with stars and starlets, fashion people, designers or artist friends, intellectuals or porno-stars, or other people on the streets, he offers us a warm and sensitive look on the Spanish side-walks.

HASSAN KHAN

Whispered sentences, projected images of « Sometime, somewhere else », (Egypt), « Transmission », constructs an audio-visual system integrated in a public space. In order to set up a cultural relationship in a place like the Louvre Post-office, it is necessary to elaborate a new relationship between the subject and the audience. The choice here has been to re-formulate the action, to interfere discretely with the space given. Especially conceived for this situation, the work of this young Egyptian artist (born 1975) is a response to the social environment and to the language of the media (TV). Operating in the meeting-zones of the oriental and occidental civilizations, Hassan Khan promises to develop into one of the most talented artists of this upcoming generation.

ENRIQUE METINIDES

Since the age of 12, the Mexican Enrique Metinides (born 1934) initiated himself to the photographic experience by focusing on accidented cars with the camera given to him by his father. Since then, he has not stopped documenting himself on the theme of catastrophies, where bad luck and human neglectance merge. It is mainly in the urban structure of Mexico that the artist has immortalized earthquakes, floods, fires, car accidents, etc. Enrique Metinides, work strikes us by the intelligence of the composition, his obsession of the catastrophe, his capacity of giving form to disorder.