

PIERRE MOLINIER ŒUVRES INÉDITES

Collages & photomontages

11 February - 6 March 2010

In 2000, galerie Kamel Mennour held a Pierre Molinier retrospective and published a catalogue in conjunction with it. In 2005, a second, more intimate exhibition was organised to coincide with the publication of the artist's essays, *Je suis n  homme-putain*. This third exhibition accompanies Jean-Luc Mercie's book, a 400-page monograph, published jointly with *Les presses du r el*. The work analyses the procedures and retraces the genesis of the photomontages and sets out a new biography drawing on unpublished correspondence.

Pierre Molinier is a stranger of worldwide notoriety. No book or exhibition on the body, or the blurring of gender, or sexual deviancy would be complete without a work by the man whose "genius" Andre Breton admired in a memorable essay of 1956.

Yet his work remains largely inaccessible. Certain paintings have never been exhibited and only a meagre corpus of 160 photographs has been published. Now, the painter's archives have allowed a much larger, up-to-date collection to be put together: numerous working proofs for finished photomontages, evolutive prints given to friends, but also personal diaries, notes and letters. Clear links emerge between the painter, the photographer and his scandalous existence. The myth, carefully established by the artist, begins to fall apart when confronted by the reality of the works.

Inveterate seducer, staunch fetishist, unapologetic transvestite, accidental bisexual, Molinier seemed to be preoccupied throughout his life with two obsessions: "reaching orgasm" in order to experience the instant paradise of the "petite mort" and "leaving a mark on the eternity of time". The current work follows the aesthetic incarnation of his passions. 800 photographs are reproduced, most of them previously unpublished: they reveal his methods, shed light on his procedures, and inform us about the genesis and chemistry of the underlying or composite images. A long chronology, established using his letters, sets out a new biography of Molinier. Here, in the secret of his correspondence, is where the heart of the shaman beats closest to the truth.

The exhibition focuses on an unknown section of his work, more extensive and varied than had been thought, and in particular on the collages, kept secret until now, and which formed the "matrix" for the photomontages of *Le Chaman et ses cr atures*. We also discover sketches, negative prints and one-off proofs enlivened with pencil, as well as photographs published for the first time.

The installation evokes Pierre Molinier's universe. It consists of a collection of furniture, paintings, drawings and objects taken from his apartment in Bordeaux. An easel, a cheval glass, mirrors, a screen, a stool, whips, masks, a make-up bag, silk stockings, dildos and a revolver leave little room for doubt. Without claiming to be a reconstruction, these highly fetishistic objects are proof of an unmistakable presence. We are well and truly at home with the shaman of rue des Faussets. In the half-light of the workshop, a large doll admires itself in the mirror, provoking the visitor with its air of haughtiness.. An allure and a gaze that are unforgettable.

Jean-Luc Mercie has spent fifteen years in academia and twenty years in publishing. He has written works on painting and photography. This monograph is his fourth book devoted to the master from Bordeaux.

Pierre Molinier «Œuvres in dites: collages & photomontages» is on show at galerie kamel mennour Tuesdays to Saturdays, 9am to 7pm.

For further information, please contact Jessy Mansuy-Leydier, Marie-Sophie Eich , and Emma-Charlotte Gobry-Laurencin.