

DOMOBAAL

Haris Epaminonda

Engaging with the fragility of memory and its permeability by fantasy and imagination, the exotic photo-collages of the Cypriot artist Haris Epaminonda offer us a synthetic world created from the perforated, interwoven and layered fragments of documentary photographs. Sourced from '50s French Lifestyle magazines, these reinvented, shimmering layers of images offer transmuted realities that resemble the nostalgic afterimages of revisited dreams. Frequently swarming with people enmeshed in scenes whose dissected and reconstructed events barely cling to credible pictorial reality, these works might be best described as having the mien of a latter-day Bosch influenced by Surrealism.

Epaminonda manually dissects, manipulates and rearranges these monochrome photographic images transforming them into a series of implausible events and scenarios wherein participant's identities are often concealed through intricate facial transplants. If engagement with identity is currently an important trope, then Epaminonda's work cuts sharply across that particular zeitgeist, her trysts with fantasy opening up infinite possibilities for the undermining and deflation of identity. The style and execution of the cutting and layering varies as the different ontologies of the different images drive the creative process. Unlike the photocollages of John Heartfield, there are no satirical or political overtones in Epaminonda's work - anarchic perhaps, ideological definitely not.

These classless and timeless aggregations of people synthetically gathered in narrative-defying, anonymous rucks act as catalysts for the more eccentric, oblique regions of the viewers imagination. Tropical palms framing icy wastes provide just one sample of a whole range of tantalizing tastes of places that don't and could never possibly exist. They nevertheless offer surprising and bizarre parallels to the often flawed ways in which we recall events and scenarios from our own lives, while the closest analogy maybe those hypnagogic visions that waylay our senses on the threshold between waking and sleeping.

Roy Exley, Sussex

review of Haris Epaminonda's first solo show, at domobaal gallery
Flash Art, July September 2006, page 120.