

LUCILE LITTOT **SUR UN AIR DE WAGNER**

Lucile Littot – To the Tune of Wagner's Music

Lucile Littot does exactly as she pleases: in a series of baroque paintings dressed in mescalized finery, feet set in red slippers hastily stolen from the Grand Hotel Palmes de Palermo where Wagner signed his last opera and Raymond Roussel uttered his last sigh in room 224, she dispels the presence of a prodigal animal. Half-lion half-tiger, a wildlife metamorphosis destined to be tortured, its speckled fur presides mercilessly over the salons of the Chantilly Castle or under the tropical gilding of Mar-a-Lago. Invisible cities, inaccessible kingdoms, Kythera lands or Las Vegassian mirages, one always enters into her re-enchanted worlds where destinies are squandered in a tragic light. Wax masks, precocious blindness, vanities burned at the stake/on funeral pyres, Hollywood cemeteries, a Faustian saraband dance where the maid becomes friends with the slave held in the basement of the palace, are given their place in staterooms. But the one and only director/producer takes his place behind the curtain of the family doctor, a brilliant surgeon operating from the heights of the city of quartz, redesigning ovals and sharpening the corners of lips into angels' smiles. Are you there Dr. B?

In a video that borrows from the pocket theater and the dollhouse, the artist makes herself up as the Countess of Báthory (Lady Dracula), a legendary praying mantis sacrificing the bodies of innocent virgins to retain her youth. The story goes that she who had only rare flashes of pity, tortured her passing prey, wielding the needle as a sword, the dagger as a dog bite. Her trial was resounding and the bloody lady was locked up forever in a single room, left in a vegetative state like a plant in the darkness of her castle with the only outlet being a crack, a slit where her meager pittance was slipped in to her. Her noble condition saved her from death as well as assured her an obscene posterity. Her most famous exegete/apologist was Valentine Penrose (1898-1978), a surrealist poet and black magic adept, celebrated by Bataille in *The Tears of Eros* (1961), who shaped her modern fame. She was vampirized on the screen by Delphine Seyrig in *The Red Lips* (1971), a dark Sapphic crime novel transposed to the gray beaches of Ostend, then played by Paloma Picasso in an immoral and sacrificial tale by the Polish poet Walerian Borowczyk, the undervalued author of *The Beast* (1975). The beast is also about this theme as it seems to roam around as the personification of John Wayne Gacy, an affable and generous man who during thirty years led a double life, that of a respectable business man and that of a serial killer. Dozens of corpses were found under the boards of his ranch home in a Chicago suburb. Sentenced to death, he spent his last decade painting portraits of clowns with carnivorous smiles.

Shameless sentences shared by Curzio Malaparte in *La peau/The Skin* (1949), an autobiography with heady perfumes celebrating the mundane and the sperm shooters, where glittering immoral people sewed themselves false sexes to please American soldiers. And among the ruins is where Vesuvius spews forth like her brushstrokes. Queen, fortune-teller, lady wearing a wig, cannibal and neuromancer, self-proclaimed muse erecting her Bayreuth, a viscontian dreamer, she barely knows what moderation is, not even in private, and forcefully wears herself down like someone we are talking about, even if we are saying nice things.

Pierre-Alexandre Mateos & Charles Teyssou