

ROBERT FEINTUCH

Bacchus in the Studio, 2007
Polymer emulsion and oil paint
on honeycomb panel
76.2 x 57 cm
The Sonnabend Collection

The peculiarity, the potential and even the destiny of myth is to be both eternal and mutable, adapting to every circumstance in its limitless and multifaceted capacity to sustain an ongoing *raison d'être*, to come down from on high and mingle with everyday deeds which, by *antonomasia*, both interpret and confute them. Robert Feintuch reinterprets myth, acknowledging the impossibility of its reinterpretation, figuring and reliving it with deadpan theatricality, almost to the point of farce, in a spirit of melancholy disavowal. Whether offering us implausible self-portraits such as the *Three Graces*, or *Hercules* or, as here, *Bacchus*, by his dispassionate pose (rendered anonymous by the virtual obscuring of his face), Feintuch reduces myth to the essential visual syntax of its classical iconography and at the same time sets it within the banality of daily life: the artist is in his underwear and a newspaper has dropped to the floor. The timelessness of myth, its immortality, its endless possibilities for iteration contrast with the option to locate it in the here and now. Only the core iconographic detail of the bunch of grapes, gazed upon before being impetuously and deliriously swallowed whole, evokes the drama of Bacchus/Dionysus, the Greek god of the vintage, depicted as always in a state of intoxication, and alludes to the universality and the mystery of its message, highlighting the irrational side of man bared in its irrefutable reality.

