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Special Feature

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Art Force

6位本地藝術家的故事

*Beneath
the*

VISIONS

The Voice of
SOUNDSUIT

專訪 Soundsuit 靈魂人物 Nick Cave

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Feet Up, 2013

23.75 x 19 inches

Polymer emulsion on honeycomb panel

Courtesy of Sonnabend Gallery and Robert Feintuch



Translated by FI.



關於揮拳的畫作。
Two-Fisted, 2014
 19 x 23.75 inches
 Polymer emulsion on
 honeycomb panel
 Courtesy of Sonnabend Gallery
 and Robert Feintuch

Robert Feintuch: *The Hercules and the new work*

具象畫家Robert Feintuch與我們談他的新作及作畫背後的故事，
 包括對大力士Hercules的演繹。

Queenie

「Feintuch 的作品是警世的、木無表情的、嚴肅的，同時是惡搞的。藉着如此創作，Feintuch 在探索古典觀念、心理慾望、親密生活與當下時事之間的連繫與矛盾。」Robert Feintuch 的代表畫廊 Sonnabend Gallery 這樣形容他。

Robert Feintuch 是一位具象畫家 (figurative painter)，自 1970 年代起居於紐約。他自小接受抽象畫的訓練，緩緩地、循序漸進地涉足具象畫的領域。彼時彼刻，概念藝術與簡約主義為主

要的藝術思潮，許多人認為具象的藝術創作為世不容，而且很愚蠢。

深受古典及現代西方繪畫影響，尤其是北歌德時期 (Northern Gothic period)，Robert Feintuch 延續具象繪畫的悠久傳統，與此同時創造他獨有的藝術風格，在作品裏滲入抽象與概念的藝術形式，以及當代的日常關注。他的畫作徹底打破了古典肖像建構下來的傳統觀念。

「在素淨的背景跟前，僅僅穿着內褲，此畫家擺出的功架，顛覆着經典神畫及風俗畫，以至鬧劇及報章照片。」Robert Feintuch 將於下月在 Sonnabend Gallery 舉行個人畫展，這句輯錄自畫廊新聞稿的評語正好後形容這位畫家的獨特風格。在他的大部分畫作裏，Robert Feintuch 常常以自己作為模特兒，縱使許多不是別過面就是面目模糊。這樣的人物畫，是自畫像，亦非自畫像，同時是自傳，卻又富有更寬廣的寓意。

我曾在因緣際會下與他對談。以下是我們談話內容的節錄，內容蘊含有關畫作與作畫過程的深奧想法，由他最早期的畫作談起，說到最新的形體作品。



ROBERT FEINTUCH

Robert Feintuch對自己身體的疑問引發一連串的創作。

Room, 2012-13

47 x 35.25 inches

Polymer emulsion on
honeycomb panel

Courtesy of Sonnabend Gallery
and Robert Feintuch



Another Assumption, 2014

19 x 23.75 inches

Polymer emulsion on
honeycomb panel

Courtesy of Sonnabend Gallery
and Robert Feintuch



Conversation I: On depicting "real life" in your painting

在畫作中描繪「真實生活」。通過不同的手法，我試圖通過實物或身體去做一連串關於慾望的創作。這些慾望當中，部份是屬於我的，但部份已超越了這個範圍。長久以來，我擔當自己的模特兒，但這個人是否我自己其實都不重要。如果其他人將自己投射到畫作裏，並進行詮釋，我喜歡。

畫作裏有些姿勢，比如我揮拳的動作，乃來自報章上關於遊行、扭打或不同的政治事件的照片。我看到許多照片都有男人揮拳的動作，就在心裏想，我也要試試這樣做，感受一下箇中滋味。

我說，希望畫作裏有真實生活，這不是指我想就着日常生活作畫。我所指的其實是真實的心理生活，裏面通常隱藏着一連串的東西。

當那些東西展示於人前，有些人會覺得它們很陰暗。就像我所說，我想我的作品紮根於真實生活，宣示真實生活裏的一些難處。對我來說，當中有一些是很有趣的。

Red-Faced, 2012
12 x 16 inches
Polymer emulsion on
honeycomb panel
Courtesy of Sonnabend Gallery
and Robert Feintuch



Conversation II : On using himself as a model

親身上陣擔任模特兒。成為具象畫家之前，我曾經直接用工作室裏的水桶、梯子等作畫。直至某一刻，我決定要畫人，我開始畫自己——原因之一是這樣比較方便。但後來這變成「一件事」，一種擁有主體的方法，這種方法有時候或會造成尷尬。起初，我藉着照片創作，特別是拍攝背部的照片。但漸漸我也開始寫生，利用鏡子輔助，因為有些我想要的資訊無法通過照片得到。如今我會雙管齊下，既從照片獲得資訊，也會寫生。

Conversation III: On anti-grandiosity and anti-heroic

反浮誇與反英雄。論本質，繪畫包括了堂皇的概念——有好一段時間，它都是為權貴製作影像的最有效工具。因而，歷史上的許多藝術以至大量的當代藝術，其畫面或是概念皆是堂皇的或英雄的。博物館裏的歷史肖像皆英姿颯颯，手執的物品包括劍、書本，是權力的象徵。我看了許許多多以後，開始覺得它們很滑稽。起初，我常常思考到底要在主角手上放些甚麼，終於，我喜歡用上一些某程度上無價值的東西。我有很多猜疑，喜歡拿這些猜疑來開玩笑，但我不是說我凌駕於那些慾望，因為我真的不是。

Conversation IV: On how he wishes his painting to be seen

希望作品如何被觀看。我喜歡畫作有點曖昧，甚至非常曖昧。只有曖昧的東西，才容許各種各樣的詮釋。我真的希望我的畫作會追尋詮釋。

有一段時間，我的作品非常沉默。我不確定我是否喜歡這樣，但事情做了一段時間後，你會做回你自己。也許這樣做真的很不切實際，但我確是喜歡人們站在我的作品前，花時間與它同在，而你不能一次過看透它們。我幻想人們花時間與它們在一起。

對於我的作品主題，我自有想法，但我不會刻意告訴觀者要去看甚麼，或我認為那些東西意味甚麼。於我而言，人們去解讀那些畫作真的很有趣。

Conversation V: On new work

關於新作。我以大力士（Hercules）的形象作畫已有好幾年。我認為，有權力的人視他為守護的象徵。我卻將他塑造成肥胖、手扶拐杖、手執棒子。步入 60 之齡後，我自問感到有點衰頹。小時候看卡通片，某個角色被打後，會被打到雙腳朝天，飛彈到九霄雲外。通常這些角色會輪流被打敗，卻又會回復知覺，無限復活，如此情節沒完沒了。類似的小把戲，在我來看非常有真實感。《Assumption of the Virgin》及《the Ascension of Jesus》在差不多的時候開始吸引我，大抵並非巧合。被瓣瓣雲朵圍着，萬事皆在腳底下，這樣的幻想美麗極了。如此英勇的一面、成功的一面看似很棒，同時亦很荒謬。因此我想我會為自己傳油。



Robert Feintuch筆下的肥胖大力士。
Fat Hercules, 2011
30 x 22.5 inches
Polymer emulsion on
honeycomb panel
Courtesy of Sonnabend Gallery
and Robert Feintuch

Robert Feintuch: The Hercules and the new work

"In work that is simultaneously evocative and quietly deadpan, serious and parodic, Feintuch explores connections and contradictions between classical ideals, psychological desires, intimate life and current events." Sonnabend Gallery

Robert Feintuch is a figurative painter living in New York since the 1970's. Trained as an abstract painter, Feintuch began making a slow and gradual transition towards painting figuratively during the time when conceptualism and minimalism were the dominant artistic ways of thinking, when many people thought making representational art was forbidden and considered foolish.

Influenced by classical and modern western paintings, particularly from the Northern Gothic period, Feintuch continues the long tradition of figurative painting, but creates his own unique artistic style by instilling his work with abstract and conceptual forms as well as contemporary everyday concerns. His paintings end up turning the traditional ideals of the classic portrait on their head.

"Seen against a plain backdrop, dressed in his underwear, the artist strikes poses that evoke influences ranging from classical mythological and genre paintings, to slapstick and newspaper photos." Sonnabend Gallery

In his paintings, Robert Feintuch utilizes himself as a model in most of his work, though in many of them his face is turned away from the viewer or otherwise obscured. This figure may or may not be a self-portrait, but functions both as an autobiography and in broader metaphorical terms.

I had the opportunity to speak with him and below are some of the excerpts of our conversation in which he talks in depth about ideas behind his paintings and work process, from his earliest painting to his newest body of work which will be shown next month at Sonnabend Gallery.

Conversation I: On depicting "real life" in your painting.

In a lot of ways, I am trying to make a sort of a range of desires evident in physical, bodily form. Some of those desires are mine probably, but some I hope are broader than that. I have used myself as a model for a very long time- a lot of that time it didn't seem that important to me that it was me. Whenever people project themselves into the paintings and interpret them I like it.

Some of the poses in the paintings, like those with my fist up in the air, were taken from newspaper photographs of demonstrations, or of beatings, or of various political events. I saw lots of photos of men with their fists up and thought to myself I am going to try this on and see what it's like.

When I say I want real life in the painting it's not like I want to make paintings of daily life. What I think I am after is more like real psychological life, where there is a range of things that ordinarily get hidden.

When those things are put out in public some people seem to find them dark. Like I said, I want my work to be rooted in real life, to acknowledge some of the difficulty of it. But for me, some of that is funny.

Conversation II On using himself as a model:

As I became a figurative painter, at first I worked directly from objects like buckets and ladders that I brought into the studio. Once I decided I wanted to paint a figure I used myself- it began partially as a matter of convenience, but then it became a thing, a way of getting at subjects, sometimes in ways that might be embarrassing. I used photographs at first, especially for viewpoints seen from behind. But gradually I started to work from life too, using a mirror because the photographs didn't have some of the information I wanted. Now I go back and forth, working from photographic information when I need it and from life.

Conversation III: On Anti-grandiosity and anti-heroic

Painting was inherently involved with grand ideas- for a long time it was the most powerful tool for making images linked to power. So a lot of the history of art and plenty of contemporary art is filled with images or ideas that are grand and heroic, that are about flattering power. Museums are packed with historical portraits of men looking heroic, with objects in their hands like swords or books, that are emblematic of their power, and after seeing a lot of them they began to seem comic to me. From the start I was always interested in what I could put in my characters' hands. It turns out I like using things that suggest a certain level of futility.

While I have a lot of skepticism and like to poke fun at all of that, its not like I see myself above those desires, because I'm not.

Conversation IV: On how he wishes his painting to be seen

I like a certain, pretty high level of ambiguity in painting. When things are ambiguous, they accept a lot of interpretations. I do want the paintings to ask for interpretations.

There are times when the work is pretty quiet. I don't know if that's something I like, but you do what you are after a while. It is probably really impractical, but I do like that people have to come to the work and spend time with it, that you can't read it all at once. I imagine people spending time with them.

I have ideas about the subject of my work, but I'm not interested in telling viewers what to see or what I think things mean. It is just really interesting to me when people *do* interpret the paintings.

Conversation VI: On new work

I've worked with images of Hercules for a few years. I think he was seen as a symbol of protection by the powerful. I made him fat, propped up with a crutch, with a limp club in his hand.

I turned sixty and I was feeling a little beat up. In cartoons from my childhood, when a character got punched, their legs went up over their heads and they ended up in the clouds. There was a sort of endless cycle of characters flattening each other, only to spring back to life, to be resurrected. A lot of that sort of vaudeville stuff seems very life-like to me.

It was probably not a coincidence that around that same time paintings of the Assumption of the Virgin or the Ascension of Jesus began to really interest me. What a beautiful fantasy, to be enveloped in clouds, somewhere above it all. The heroic, aspirational part of it seemed really wonderful and really ridiculous. So I thought I would anoint myself.