

Berlin, Dienstag, 23. Juni 2009

Diploma Work of Sylvie Korankova

The fashion business is a beautifully dirty business. Tall dark walls, blurry, stained, covered with spots and scratchy, wet-moldy floors. Some sceneries could show middle age castles or even prisons. In between you see some small tiny characters doing there work. They are preparing for the big show or they are cleaning up afterwards. There are not many images about a fashion show itself. There are more about the backstage. The women are skinny and wear mostly underweare, the men have big sideburns, muscles and wear leather jackets. They look like gangsters. May be they are.

First it seems to be the stereotype of what we know about the subject. Money, sex and plastic surgery. There are a lot of details in every image of this book. Technical equipment, offices, clothes, cameras, record players. One can well imagine all the different situations of a fashion show. But the most important thing of Sylvie Korankovas drawings is the space. Her use of space changes the whole picture. For me it is amazing how she deals with the emptiness. All rooms are composed as stages, even the outside areas, the outside world appears just as a stage. At one hand it turns the people to lonely figures, at the same time it intensifies their liveliness, activities and characters. All the characters seem to have the freedom to move arround in the scenery, they all could leave the place and situation they are in. but they don't. They all do not look very happy but they all seem to play the game. They are all actors of a big theater play.

The realisation that behind the glamorous world of the fashion industry also hides frustration and disappointment, that there is no love but only business might be trivial. But the book »I don't have to like you, I have to sell you« goes further. It celebrates the bright sides of this business with love dedication and humor without neglecting the exaggerations and ridiculousness of the staging of what people call beauty.

The real beauty of this book lays in the various qualities of structures, hachures, shadings, spraying, opaque and transparent inking. It lays in the graphical treatment of every little character. Even the less loveable people are drawn with sympathy and affection. Sylvie is able to express with the thinnest line on some square millimeters the current emotional state of a person. But she doesn't lose track of the hole picture her characters are in. The emotions are expressed in a face and find their echo in the whole landscape spread out on the page at the same time. It is amazing what's going on in only one of her grayscale prints. The slight addition of only one color here and there is just right. It gives the book a rhythm and a little alternation.

Sylvie seems to be an impulsive worker. She is fast. As far as I know her she should start her projects a

little earlier. They could always need a little more time to be finished. But her work is honest and it would certainly look different when she would always be on time. I am not sure if it would be much better. Looking at her drawings she seems to be a person who needs a lot of space with a strong tendency to independence who loves her live as much as making graphic art.

Nevertheless as a poster designer I could imagine a more significant cover of the book. Those small thumbnails of women portraits might be right regarding the content of the book, also the surprise of seeing the whole image by unfolding the cover. But a book cover should be a strong sign, visible from further away. It should suck you into the story, should bewitch you to take the book in your hand and open it. Also the typography could need a little more dedication the next time.

But this is something one can learn.

The book as a whole shows in quality and quantity a professional approach to graphic art an a high level. I like the book a lot.

Prof. Henning Wagenbreth

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Wagenbreth". The script is fluid and cursive, with a prominent flourish at the end of the word.