

TRANSGALACTIC NIRVANA

Nadine Blandiche's "Transalpine Adventures" are taking a new turn. Faithful to her attraction to gliding sports, she is setting off on uncharted paths, scrutinizing the world beyond its limits in order to voluptuously melt into it. Skiers and lugers follow one another seamlessly and the artist amuses herself by emphasizing their postures' ambiguity, automatism, and their stereotyped aesthetic. In addition to their technical and aerodynamic shape, their penetration of the air as well as their close combat with glacial fluid matter brings to mind the sexual.

This suggestion is further emphasized when two bodies are combined, and even more so when they are of opposite sex (mixed competition being practically non-existent in Olympic sports). At the same time, the synchronization of the sportive gesture and its tireless repetition strive to mimic the act in question and paradoxically tend to annihilate it.

A feeling of inertia overwhelms movement. The absurd race to victory and ephemeral pleasure are suddenly "pinned down". The foreboding of the fatal fall, following an exact and obvious trajectory, imperceptibly surfaces.

"Double-mixte" represents a fusing of man and woman extending themselves towards the same ideal of absolute and perfection. No need for a luge or a toboggan--the bodies interpenetrate and glide with one another, one over the other. Their objective is the universal, the timeless, to be but one and unique body traveling through space. Surfing on the ridge, where equilibrium seems to reside in a permanent disequilibrium, with injury, abandonment and depression lying in wait, the symbiotic couple strives towards this thirst for greatness that is shared by both high level sports and artistic creation--though fragile in its exception.

"Transgalactic Nirvana" evokes a travel into the infinite, a transcendental experience where time and space are reborn into a hyperbolic dimension. Humor and nostalgia mingle. Science fiction invites itself through its utopias, its dreams of spatial conquest and its slightly outdated imagery. Hungry for the strange, it explores the territories of the body and the soul, cutting out and transforming each parcel. Given that it has been ages since artificial intelligence and cloning last held any secrets from it, and that its most extravagant fantasies have materialized for the most part, what does it have to tell us today? Will science fiction fall under the yoke of an insidiously sprawling disenchantment?

Androgynous heads inserted into helmets affirm a complexity of style and of character with their artificial and colorful reliefs, their organic and metallic folds and double folds. As a sign of recognition, these faces incrustated with masks seem to be absorbed by their inner thought, closed in on themselves, forgetful of the outside world. Bodiless heads are calling for the missing body, the severing of the head, but also for flight, the detachment from tragic reality.

In the midst of this mysterious congregation there appears, impassive and milky, like a ghost vessel, the figure of the couple. The hybrid statue stretches its supple and smooth limbs towards the infinite. Carried by its pedestal, it is the focal point of visionaries and sceptics. The image of the myth, that of the perfect being bringing together the male and the female on either side, is underlying, although one could also well read into it the impossible fusion of lovers suddenly prisoner of petrifying matter. Less romantic is the image of the double or a narcissistic and mortifying projection of the self. The absence of expression, the mimetic resemblance, the homogeneity of the bodies, reinforces the spectral and supernatural aspect. And yet these strange humanoids do indeed exist amongst us.

Our era sees science fiction superimposing itself on reality. Tethered by all sorts of existential prostheses, caught up in roles of representation, exhibited by the media, tyrannized by more or less paradoxical injunctions, the body breaks up, disintegrates, grows hollow, and becomes more and more artificial. The idea of the body implies not only its appearance but what also inhabits it, its consciousness, its desire, its way of feeling.

The sport universe offers a caricature of this assessment. Excessive physical transformation stems from purification, from the placement of the body under cellophane and whose prostheses becomes the norm. Its numerous accoutrements and technical accessories make us forget the identity, the sex, even the very humanity of the bodies that carry them. The technological body is the realization of a fantasy of the body conceived as a weapon of penetration, a speed body, a torpedo body, a striking body, a projectile body whose ultimate metaphor and whose gruesome destiny is "disintegration amidst the flames".