

Hair, Hair, Hair

(For Roli)

When I look at Roli's works I see a lot of hair. Shaving as well, but, above all, hair. Hair growing along something akin to table tops and hair sprouting from a drenched birdlike creature called Gustav. Curly hair, frizzy hair, long and straight hair, almost always dark hair. One single time it is a platinum blonde wig on an incredibly dark bronze figure. Then again closely cropped hair, like the remains of a shaved-off three-day beard that seem to have been salvaged by Roli from the drain of a white sink if it were not for the caption in the catalogue that consistently states: artificial hair.

Hair growing out of a gun coated in silicone. In the photographic reproduction it looks a bit as if the instrument of murder was painted and that the paint, still fresh and watery, had run down the canvas to the ground and left traces as fine as hair in the process. Then again hair in tangles, painting dark marks onto the image, then again a single hair or two drawing a subtle line onto the canvas. And repeatedly in Roli's work there are these naked bodies, yet most of the time there seems to be something inherently hairy about them, something eerie, almost revolting: within this pursuit of beauty and a smooth, matte or glossy surface, dents included.

Great-grandfather Rilke taught us that beauty is nothing but the beginning of terror, and I could imagine that Roli is equally fascinated by beauty and ugliness. And that by combining materials that from a classical perspective might seem mismatched, yet fit together well in the context of contemporary art, he perhaps also negotiates the topoi of beauty and ugliness. This possibly creates some sort of tension that knows to indulge my own voyeurism. I could say, paradoxically: intrigued, I turn away. Or: alienated, distanced, I turn towards it.

Leafing through Roli's catalogue I also come across this female figure, or rather a torso including the head, whose inner life seems to be coated with fur, at least judging by the way it grows along the fringes and from her orifices. Like Meret Oppenheim's fur-lined teacup, twice upended. Ha! And since I mutate into an association-making machine especially when looking at art – maybe one that is speeding through art history on a motorbike with hair flying – I also need to add that with Roli's works I sometimes have to think of Matthew Barney, but only because of the frequent use of white, slimy silicone; and even more so of the aesthetics of Gottfried Helnwein. But maybe only as Helnwein himself is such a long-haired type of guy. Or has his magnificent head of hair in the meantime been reduced to a bandana that he wears wrapped around

a wig? All of this leaves room for speculation, just like the head and headdress of people in general. Is Billy Bob Thornton wearing a toupee? Has Berlusconi undergone hair transplant surgery? Is the health minister still bald? Is Nena permanently getting rid of armpit hair, whereas Miley Cyrus does not seem to mind it of late?

Just as Roli's work gives rise to speculation in general: who are these people whom he depicts so accurately in every detail? Or whom he creates anew from clay, silicone, bronze and artificial hair, like Prometheus creating life in Greek mythology? And what is the origin of their attributes, at times strange, at times ordinary? Not only guns but also baseball caps, similar to those that Roli prefers to wear himself. Bras as well, but I obviously cannot hazard a guess about their relevance to Roli's individual dress code. Ha-ha-hair! No, I actually believe that this accumulation of female figures among the sculptures – at least the ones I am familiar with – to a certain extent is still also related to devotion and adoration, at times presenting itself in an almost fetishist manner. Up to a sculpture that only shows spread legs and two orifices. The origin of the world, according to Courbet's point of view.

Recently, and this is a different story, I met the 91-year-old poet Friederike Mayröcker. I have long admired her black-dyed, messy rock hair. Just like her entire style. When walking, she shoved a cognac brown fur cap over her jet-black hair. Again browsing through Roli's works I had to think of Friederike Mayröcker's black hair and that he perhaps might have taken pleasure from it on that winter's day. Incidentally, sitting with us at the table had been 13-year-old Marie; she had long, blonde, slightly wavy hair. And since she must have been

bored with the adults at the table she spent hours tugging at her hair and combing through the strands with her fingers, at times searching for something in it – and maybe finding something in it as well. I remembered how boring it had been at school, and how frequently as adolescents we had torn at our hair over each wasted hour.

And on another occasion I had found very long, dark hairs in our flat. It had already been after the end of a relationship, but the long, black hairs still had been completely new. Those hairs had finally rung in the departure of my flatmate, who had once been my boyfriend, as loudly as only long, black hairs can. I had stayed in this flat for another six months and those long, black hairs, so different to my own, had turned up everywhere. When the movers had already arrived, the last one had still hung high up from the lamp of the living room, swaying back and forth...

Once, and this again is a different matter, I was asked where I, as an author, took my ideas from. And since I take them from dusty everyday

life, where the ideas are lurking in a corner twirling their hair, or from the visual arts and from images and figures, like the ones created by Roli; or since ideas originate from the fabled nowhere that nobody can ever put a name on, I answered: from my hairdo. Which is to say: hair, hair, hair. I drag everything in by the hair! And Roland Reiter as well, for under his baseball cap there are still some left.

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