

Uwe Henneken

Légion Troublée

Apr 24 — Jun 7, 2008 | Paris

They're back once more, the protagonists we know so well from Uwe Henneken's colourful world, the inhabitants of his "Imperium Schlemihlium" (*Empire of Fools*) (1). Astonishing faces and sometimes absurd heads peek out from behind walls, in a fool's kingdom populated with amoebic beings, vagrants and freaks.

"LÉGION TROUBLÉE" sees the development of a trend that has been noticeable in Henneken's work for some time now: while earlier pieces could perhaps have been described as peacefully romantic, his characters seemingly escaped from a fairytale kingdom, the last few years have seen a significant radicalisation of Henneken's pieces with his arrangements now characterised by a far sharper tone. They also show Henneken as increasingly committed to the radical view of romanticism.

In "LÉGION TROUBLÉE", what previously seemed to be innocent, foolish dolts now turn out to be a wildly assembled, fundamentally diverging, unpredictable military mass, commanded by something from above that lies in the unconscious. Whether this is fate or an imaginary, probably crazed commander, the fact that these beings are not in control of their own actions is particularly unsettling in the context of the military, invasion and forceful seizure of power that Henneken creates through his visual punctuation (canons, flags, helmets, etc.).

If we follow Henneken's idea of the "Imperium Schlemihlium", essentially an autumn culture in which, according to the artist, we all find ourselves sooner or later, one question must be asked: what should we expect from this unbalanced mass? Are these legionaries to be tamed, particularly as we find ourselves among them and – horror of horrors – are part of them? Perhaps unexpectedly, this work is shaped by critical impetus, as "LÉGION TROUBLÉE" sees Henneken bring us a step closer to his interpretation of the brutal absurdity of our everyday existence, our culture, time and life.

Kirstin Strunz

(1) The term "Imperium Schlemihlium" is found throughout Henneken's work and is described in detail by Suzanne Hudson in the catalogue "Imperium Schlemihlium". Veenman Publishers 2007.