

Obsessions on paper

The mental discharge of Le Dernier Cri

by Marinus de Ruiter

'Life Art', is what studio Le Dernier Cri calls the radical visuals it unleashes onto the world. Known for its colourful silk-screened books and prints, the French publisher recently released a DVD called *Savage Religion*. Together with a collection of prints, comics and books it is available at the Amsterdam gallery Illuseum, currently exhibiting artists connected to Le Dernier Cri (which translates as either 'latest fashion' or 'last cry').

*Savage Religion*, or *Les Religions Sauvages*, is collection of animation films that is best described as a 120 minute sensory overload, a continuous discharge of sex, death, torture, cannibalism, masturbation, religious symbols and bodily fluids, executed with passion and humour by over 30 of the finest underground expressionists.

'It's the power of the artists to show all the human obsessions', says Pakito Bolino, who runs the Marseille based studio with his wife Caroline Sury. 'It's better to put it on paper than to do it in real life'.

All the genitals, blood and brains gushing out of the images can't reveal the craftsmanship that underlies them. Grace De La Luna of Illuseum points out the collages of Fredox, depicting grotesquely deformed bodies and faces. Fredox usually designs for one of the world's biggest fashion houses, but he prefers not to reveal his identity out of loyalty towards his boss.

With his manipulated photography, Fredox is the odd man out among the Le Dernier Cri artists, who mostly use drawing as a means of expression. 'In this graphic art the line is really important', says Bolino. 'We started publishing underground comics, but soon the graphic style of comics became more important than the story. I think one picture can tell more than a whole book. For me, the energy inside the drawings is more akin to noise music--it's noise art'.

Bolino works with artists all over the world. In the studio he does most of the silk-screening and the colouring, which explains the coherence in all the works. In the past decade he released seven comic-style anthologies called *Hôpital Brut* ('crude hospital'). 'This is like a mental institution with crazy artists inside', says Bolino. 'Artists ought to be a bit crazy. Of course, all the people I publish know what they do. Then again, if there's a new nazi government, they'll probably have to go into a real mental institution after all'.

Le Dernier Cri, until 21 December at Illuseum (Sat-Sun 15:00-20:00). Finissage at 21 December with live music and screenings of *Les Religions Sauvages/Savage Religion*.