

## Anne-Sophie ATEK

I found out about Atek's work quite long time ago by now, it was just before she decided to introduce a little bit of colour in her fascinating, unsettling and meticulous universe. At once, I recognized the work of a big artist, because of the precision of the lines, and the strength of the images used. Bodies lose their shape, in a poetic dance, subtly waking us up. Gracious, light and monstrous, this is how you may describe Atek's creatures. But what stands out is imagination, pure creation. A feeling of a great mastering of her art, and still growing... But let 'not wait longer and meet Atek :

**For those who haven't had the pleasure to see your work, could you introduce yourself and say what you mainly like as a creator ?**

*My name is Atek and i am a plastic artist, I studied in different schools of art, Plastic arts school of Monaco, Graphic design school of Rouen and Academic Art School of Nice. But I really started learning something after all these schools, in real life, as I had to find a place to be in the middle of all the things i had heard of.*

*My passion for drawing hasn't always been an asset, but i stuck to it, and enriched it, as this is my favourite medium as well as my 'artistic line', it feels as if i have always drawn as far as I can remember, because to me, it's just as obvious as eating or thinking and writing, it's obvious and vital. I was seized by a passion for art, creating is my nature, I can't conceive a life without art. It's my main activity and I fight everyday to find my space in the Contemporary 'milieu '. Real life jobs succeded one to another, as art can barely sustain any person's life, or let's say you need a certain time to get to that point, but I am motivated and you get to learn about patience. The important thing being not to lose your self confidence and to go as far as your passion may lead you to.*

**I couldn't agree more ! How has your work evolved these last years?**

*At first, I had a very simple approach to drawing, it was mainly very economical . I had to work with a low amount of money, as a purist, just pencil and paper,, and I also wanted my works to be easily transportable, it has always been very important to me, because of things that happen in life. That challenge allowed me to focus on the essential and to get better at my white-grey-black style, sometimes minimalist or overloaded, but in every case, with the desire to express my restless and tabooless complex brain 's deepest thoughts through the plastic aspect mainly. Because to me, Drawing is intellectual when Painting is sensual. My*

*imaginary crowd of bodies, faces, monsters, mutants, cloned to nature, to the object, to animals, to whatever crosses my mind, all this becomes a new language : my own iconographic repertoire is set in an out-of-time universe but it always has existential references . It's been 10 years now, that i've been experiencing lead and fiber on formats that I wish to be larger and larger, I started a study of Form which I then associated to Meaning, working with the space formed by the paper or loading the image to the maximum possible, I will never have finished to explore this medium ! This year, I made attempts at introducing colour, washes with ink, and what comes out of this experience is : Drawing forever ! I allow myself to have small vivid and luscious breaks in which i play with colours, though the latter are contained by a black frame made of my shapeless shapes, horribly lovely. There is a sensual pleasure with the strange ugliness, in the fact of shaking the canons of Beauty, and to question by striking minds. Art must intrigue and try to show previously unseen images that make you wonder. 2008 is a key moment in my work, through a repeating trip into colour and back to black and white, with graphism being a constant.*

**How do you consider the 'artistic world' and talking about this, does it matter at all to be an artist ?**

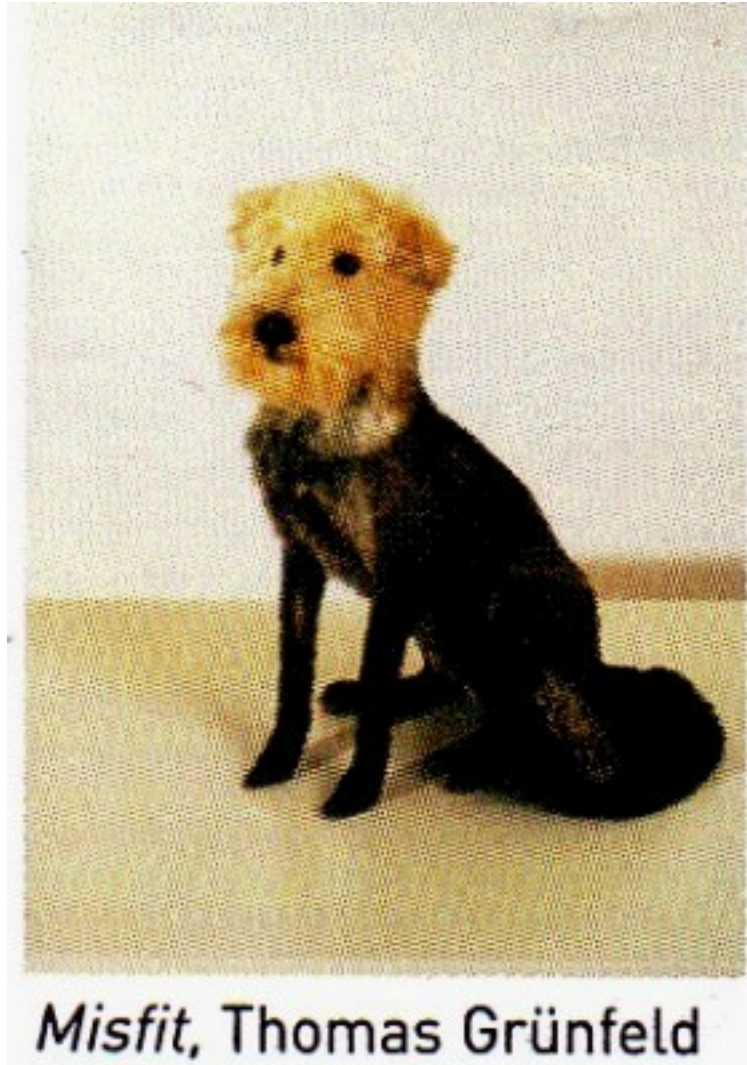
*As an artist, i must say that it is very difficult to find a place among fellow artists, the world of art is very selective and I sometimes feel that you need to be over eighty or dead to be honoured by a retrospective in the local museum. It's strange to see and meet so many creators with so few places to exhibit them. Furthermore, if you're not into painting or sculpture, then you're almost helpless, you need rage but most of all some passion , motivation and hard work, that is the correct recipe.*

*An artist offers a soft madness, sometimes represent its era or is in opposition to it but it's always a source of wonder because the artist communicate its folly and makes it possible to escape, it moves your bowels, and makes your brain work, in a word, it wakes you up ! To be an artist is to embody a utopia, it's making a child's dream alive, it's escaping the dullness of everyday life. It also makes you go forward and it's a good therapy. It's also a long study and it's with some knowledge of art history that you can evolve in your domain, both plastically and aesthetically, you may then also situate yourself in time and inside your own work. Any form of art interests me, you need to be curious : in any style, any movement, there is novelty and talent, I could talk about Bosch, Klimt Magritte, picasso or Brancusi for instance, but i want to take some time to introduce an artist i recently discovered when I visited the art showroom of the Conseil general of Aix en Provence : it was a group exhibition called « Le Cabinet des Merveilles » (NdT : Cabinet of Wonders), and i found out among other things the work of Thomas Grünfeld.*

**So you chose to present Thomas Grünfeld to our readers through his piece called 'Misfit', can you tell us a few words about his work ?**

*He does a three-dimensional plastic work in which the artist shows us cloned animals, hybrids so real and yet quite unlikely. This taxidermist work takes us back to*

*the issue of 'what can be shown in a work of art ?', His creations are unsettling, because they make us feel uneasy and fascinated at the same time. There is some beauty from an aesthetic point of view, some surprise through the cloning part, some fear with the realistic rendering, a quiet coldness in the strange beast statuary that he imposes to our eyes.*



**Misfit, Thomas Grünfeld**

*As far as I am concerned, I often give poetic titles to my pieces, song titles too, I create strange words because writing is an art in the same respect as drawing is. You have to give it a shape, it does not necessarily help people to get the meaning of the image, but it gives a bonus colour, a bonus tone, it comes together with the work. There are no rules, I think, to get into a piece of art, it either triggers something or not, it's a matter of taste, and it's totally subjective.*

**About subjectivity, how does the public perceive your work ?**

*When I started exhibiting, people used to think Atek was a man in his fifties, and it was rather funny to see them find out that it was me, a young woman, I avoided to identify myself at the beginning as the world of arts is quite chauvinist, and more, a certain age gives you a stronger credibility.*

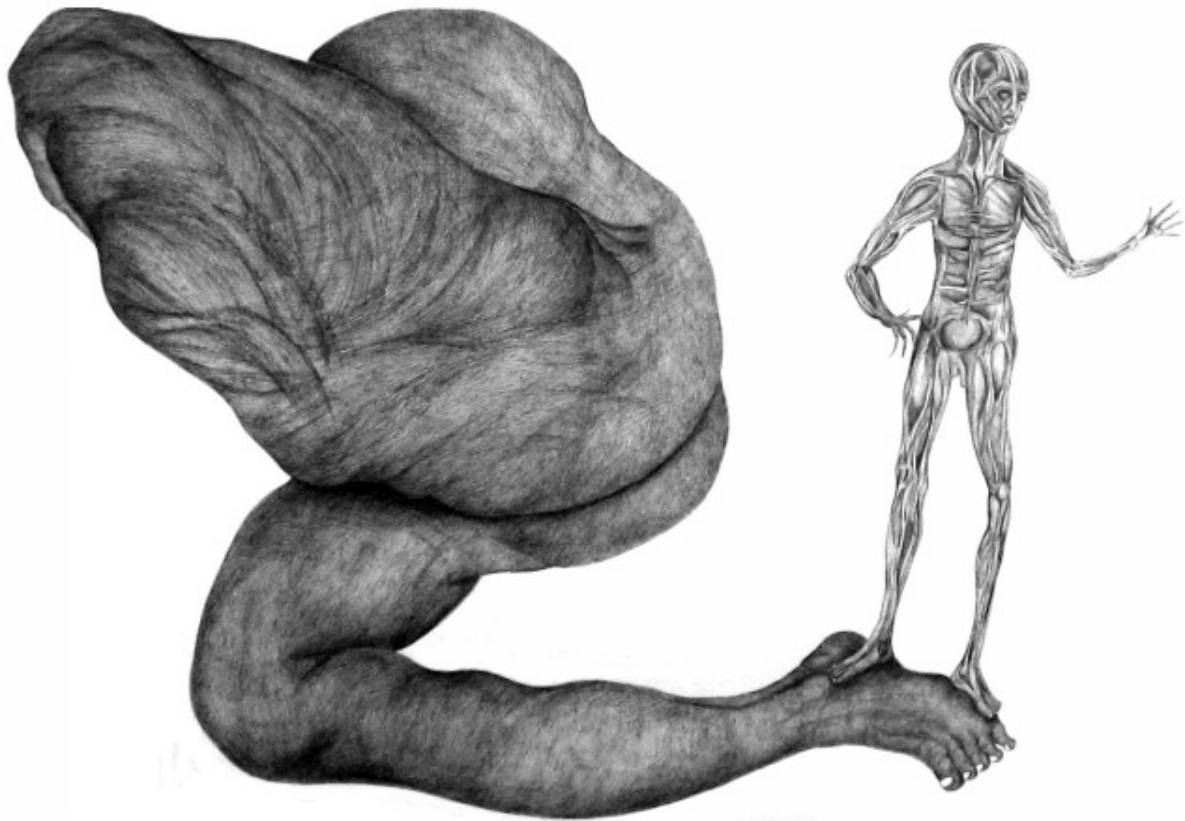
## **And now you have accepted yourself ?**

*I am a 36 years old female creator and proud of it ! I don't have any particular environment in which I like to create, I have moved a lot before, and I had to adapt to small and bigger places, drawing on walls, in the kitchen, on the floor, on my bed, but one thing that i always have near me is a notebook or a paer with a pen to note down my ideas or do quick sketches, afraid to forget, I guess, and so many things happen inside a head !*

*In an art school, there is plenty of space! An academic training is a plus because you get an artistic, pragmatic, plastic and aesthetic knowledge at the same time, it allows you to find your own style, to have an access to different techniques, and to meet master artist teachers. But there are a lot of self taught artists, art is about guts, in day after day learning, you have to live your own experiences, and if you are enthusiast and motivated, you stick to it, and you try to make it a career.*

## **Now, can you show us an example of your work at the moment and tell us about your projects ?**

*At the moment, I alternate between small ultra detailed coloured works and large simple uncluttered lead pencil drawings. For example, in 'Supoditoire' Lead pencil Drawing on a 100 x 70 cm paper created in August 2008*



*I am involving both realistic figuration and body decay, the écorché in a situation of speech on a n endless bottom. The character is cut into parts, detailed, making a speech to noone, the support is a huge bottom, symbolizing the 'who cares ?' attitude. This work is about how hard it is for an artist to be heard, speech is vain but the will remains, I won't go further into theorizing the drawing, yet I use nudity, erotism and tragicomic or neo-romantic absurd images to give further weight to the picture in an atmosphere both dark and bright through the technique used, it is the artist's paradox.*

*Concerning news, I am preparing a collective exhibition with 'the portrait' as a theme in October at the Atelier du 6 Bis in Aix en Provence, A exhibition that will be more personal in November in the Alter Ego Gallery, also in Aix. And in September , issue n°7 of the philosophical paper « Le Grogard » will be published, in which I am contributing as an illustrator, and created the cover of that issue.*

*You may find my work and my latest news on my Blog*

*<http://annesophieatek.canalblog.com>*

*And I want to thank you, Jeff, for this interview as well as for the interest you develop towards the artists of the new generation.*