

Three Star Books

FETISH

Heimo Zobernig

with an essay by Sabeth Buchmann

Published Summer 2007

Book description:

Format: 24 x 33 x 5 cm.

88 loose-leaved sheets in signatures of four pages

20 sheets of fabric and plastic materials

Printed box covered in pearl white synthetic fabric and lined in red velvet

Press Release

Mound and cleft. Quite simple, really, and yet the archetypal subject of pictorial fantasy and literary imagination, not to speak of the daily musings of lesser beings, of men and also women. The origin of the world.

When Gustave Courbet painted the genitals of a woman in 1866, limiting his pictorial subject to splayed legs and a central focus on lips and pubic hair, even his friends were scandalized, not to speak of a public that finally had occasion to see his work only at the very end of the twentieth century. Forever, it hung behind curtains or painted panels, the private pleasure of its varying owners.

Marcel Duchamp picked the subject up again, or laid it down, so to speak, in *Etant donnés: 1° la chute d'eau / 2° le gaz d'éclairage* an installation he worked on for the last twenty years of his life, subsequently acquired by the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Here too, such an uproar was caused that, even in the swinging 1960s, a vision of post-coital abandon could cause shivers.

The power of eroticism in art still dictates that ancient Roman artifacts of sexual nature are housed in a secret room in the archaeological museum of Naples, banished since their discovery in the nineteenth century.

Thousands of artists throughout history, including Caravaggio and Egon Schiele, have been slapped with fines and even prison for their licentious depictions.

It is therefore surprising that the normally reticent Austrian artist Heimo Zobernig, master of Helvetican self-restraint, of the pleasures of geometry and abstraction, of the fineness in gray, yellow, and blue, would turn his attention to latex, dildos, and silicone breasts.

And would take the reader of an object that purports to be a story on an excursion through images that run the gamut from post-Mapplethorpe penis portraits to Ninja breast warriors, to the marvelous portrait of a stocking fetishist.

Even the chaste insertion of curtains creates a barrier that is rhythmic in nature.

With utter consistency, Zobernig commissioned his pictorial text to be accompanied by a decidedly undecided view of pornography offered by writer Sabeth Buchmann. Who, in proffering a perfect essay of the type vaunted in academies and universities, toys with the tastes of an audience that seeks intellectual enlightenment for that which is without explanation.

Desire.

It is the fever that grips the bibliophile. Or anyone who must have and hold.

Zobernig's complex book fetish knowingly spreads itself before the viewer who in turn must justify his or her lust, just as the publisher rationalizes the creation of an object offered for sale and consumption. All motives are both pure and tainted.. Lest the images be seen as exploitation by any neo-Victorian minds, it shall be known that they were carefully selected by Michaela Rapp-Zobernig, wife of the artist, thereby laundered in the holy union of artistic collaboration and marriage.

Zobernig, the artist and man, is playing here--with primary colors and art history, with pictures and materials, with a commission and publisher, with a writer, and with his beloved.

This is the work: the act of conception.

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Colophon:

Heimo Zobernig
FETISH

Concept and design Heimo Zobernig
Image consultant Michaela Rapp-Zobernig

Essay Sabeth Buchmann
Translation Gerrit Jackson

Publisher Mélanie Scarciglia
Editor Cornelia Lauf
Production Christophe Boutin

Archival photo printing Executive Artists, Paris
Production assistants Katherine Leary and Gian Paolo D'Ambrosio, Rome
Typeset in Helvetica and letterpress printing Vincent Auger at
Atelier Mérat-Auger, Paris
Paper Ahnemühle Photo Rag
Fabrics Azienda Tessile Romana and Celsa 93 s.n.c., Rome
Box manufactured by Dermont-Duval, Paris

The edition is limited to thirty-five copies plus five artist's proofs
and four demonstration copies.

Each book is signed and numbered by the artist and the author.

A single print edition featuring the entire book is available separately.

Three Star Books, 2007

This is copy n°

Price upon request.

Forthcoming

Maurizio Cattelan
Douglas Gordon "The Honest Bible"
Ken Lum and Hubert Damisch "Ultimo Bagaglio"
Matt Mullican
Tobias Rehberger