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BEAUTY

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CREATIVITY

12 Interviews on the Act of Creation

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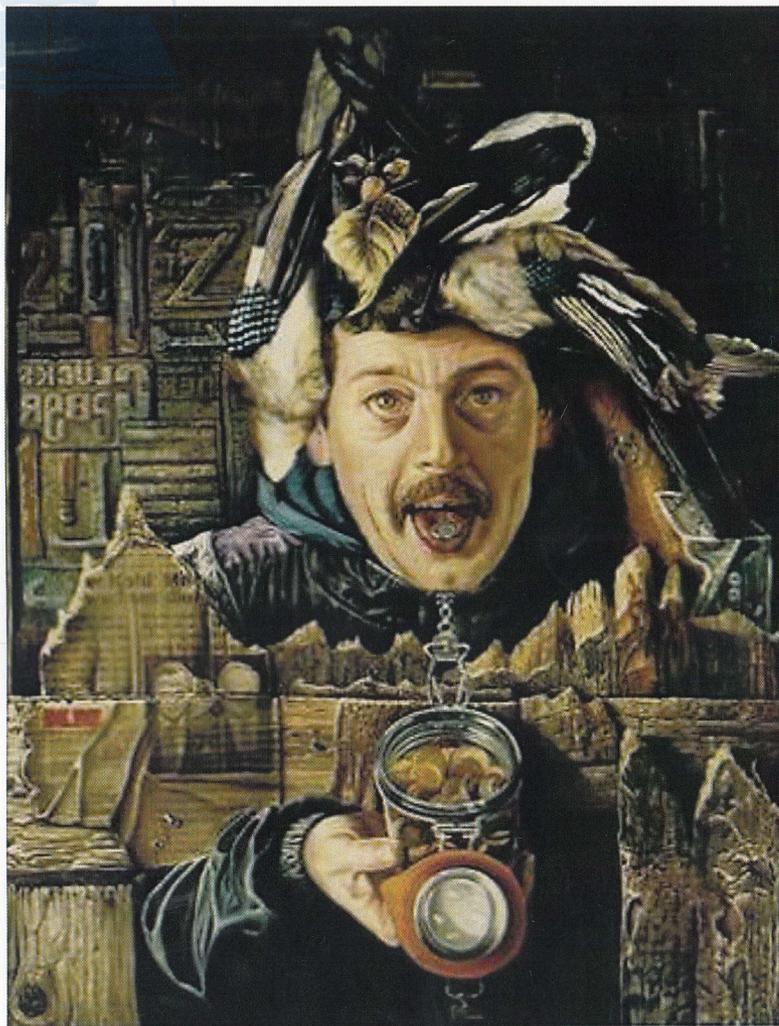
PARIS

MICHAEL LASSEL

TROMPE L'OEIL

ANALOGUE WORLDS

FLEMISH PAINTING



Der Glücksbringer

© Michael Lassel / Courtesy of painter Michael Lassel



MICHAEL LASSEL

SELF-PORTRAIT OF A RUBENSIAN IN TROMPE L'OEIL TECHNIQUE

Discovering the art of the painter Michael Lassel in a moment of serendipity is like finding long, long-awaited fruits. A powerful experience of "it exists", "it is magnificent" and "it is rare" I made when visiting his exhibition at the General Consulate of Romania in Munich, feeling very proud that this contemporary painter was born and studied in Romania.

I had just finished re-reading "Duveen" by S.N. Behrman. As Sir Joseph Duveen acquired only the best paintings to sell to his rich and powerful clients, such as the banker Morgan and the industrialist Frick, so I imagined the pleasure Duveen

would have taken in charming his interlocutors and explaining to them Michael Lassel's modern and unique *Trompe l'Oeil* technique.

Michael Lassel does not manipulate the reality; he actually draws forms and objects with the finest accuracy, revealed Prof. Carl Michael Hofbauer Santos de Almeida in a 2008 exhibition inaugural address. Duveen would have immensely enjoyed seeing the awakening of new realities and perceptions in the eyes of beholders.

Invited to exhibit at the British Museum in London in 2008 – 2009, Michael Lassel was the only one to



be present with contemporary paintings in the exhibition "*Babylon – Myth and Reality*" next to illustrious creations dating from before the XIXth century. His paintings have been part of exhibitions in Germany, Paris, Tokyo, Geneva, Brussels, New York and Miami.

He is among the few artists who experienced and can also convey to us **the closeness and the sacred of the rare relationship disciple – master** in its enriching and passion-for-art-sharing form: the relationship between him, the Romanian painter, Corneliu Baba and the Old Masters.

Between 6 October – 6 November 2015, the Exhibition "*Analoge Welten*" in Berlin organised by the Romanian Cultural Institute together with the Tiny Griffon Gallery was an invitation to experience **our relation with the reality and the imagination** at

the same time, ***the authenticity of a historical past alive, the desire for money*** and many other ideas and environments **seducing us daily into our own modern-life reality**. Michael Lassel, who is seen as reserving space in his works for his self-portrait, just like Alfred Hitchcock used to shortly appear in his movies, will offer us the tools to create and explore new realities.

Roxana Florina Popa: Seeing your paintings for the very first time at the General Consulate of Romania in Munich, one of my first thoughts was at Rembrandt and the Flemish painting.

You are born in Romania, to a German family and you were inspired by a French art movement.

How can your affinity for the Flemish painting be explained?

Michael Lassel: Painting's big crown wears Rubens. Many think of Rembrandt, but I see myself as a Rubensian. For me, Rubens is God's representative on Earth in the art of painting. He gives the definition of the painting's soul.

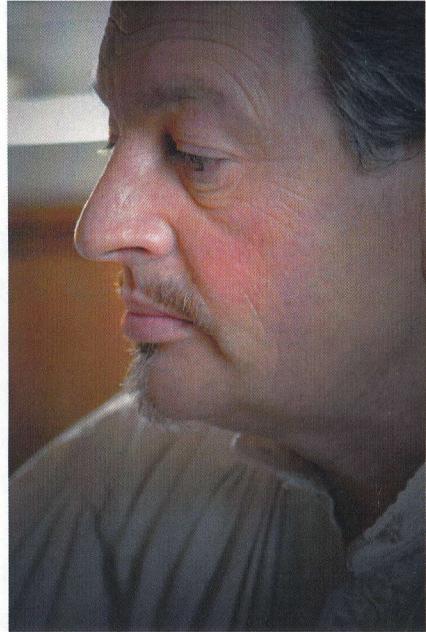
My paintings do not look so much like Rubens', except for the perspective and the approach I apply. I have refined myself in Rubens' art. I know exactly what he painted in his various paintings and what his workshop painted.

He was the only one who painted skin as it is. He painted such intricacies for the eye's sense: ***a felt regard is something different from a watched regard.***

I have been working all my life with the sense of sight. Helping tools like literature, music, philosophy and all other senses make a personality complete. I have always stayed true to my work just like my father,

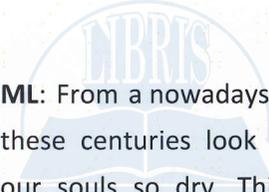
a shoemaker, concentrated on the shoe last.

RFP: Your inspiration comes also from the painting of the XVIIth – XVIIIth centuries. Which messages have these centuries for the nowadays' art of living and art of being?



Michael Lassel

Photo credit Katharina Frömel /
Courtesy of painter Michael Lassel



ML: From a nowadays' perspective, these centuries look so lively and our souls so dry. This impression one gets only by listening to Beethoven or reading the rich language of Balzac. Montaigne has already taught us so many things.

Looking with humour, the human being can be defined as head, heart and liver. When one thinks only with the head, this is something so strange for me.

A human being is a *summum* of complex forms of existence and development. Each human being has the subconscious which is so individual and cannot be exchanged. One can take so much nourishment from the subconscious. One needs to trust himself and, out of this self-confidence, one has to create. This source is there in each living person.

My intention is not to escape to the XVIIth – XVIIIth centuries. I want

to assert myself here and now. I want to bring something new. I like seeing a human being as a whole, just as I can smell the entire scent of a flower. By these means, I take someone as he is and so, I can appreciate his life.

RFP: What fascinated you to become part of the Trompe l'œil / Réalité movement? Were there also other parallel painting movements at the moment of your decision?

ML: Two years after I arrived in Germany, I participated in the Salon d'Automne at Grand Palais in Paris. This wish fulfilled itself as in a dream.

There were many sections showing the variety of modern art: Surrealism, Art naïve, la Seconde Réalité, Trompe l'oeil. It was 1988 and it was the first time I took contact with this art movement. I was totally amazed. I prayed to God