

THE NAKED TRUTH

ARTIST OLEG DOU COMBINES TWO MEDIUMS TO FORM HIS OWN SURREAL EXPRESSION OF BEAUTY + INDIVIDUALITY

By Patrice Farameh



Oleg Dou's "Naked Faces" exhibit is anything but bare expressions. Through digital photo manipulation, this Moscow-based artist and former 3D Web designer presents his personal views on human identity by creating photo-based artwork combined with computer-aided special effects techniques. Dou combines his two passions for design and photography to produce this exquisite series that contains both distressing yet tranquil elements of cold hues with digitally massacred faces. He uses traditional photography as the main material so that his art is more realistic, but claims that "digital art combined with photography is a much more powerful type of creation than either separately."

Dou's general interest in "human individuality and self-expression" evolved into this photo series featuring frozen-like avatars taunting an alarming message about the effects of the standardization of beauty. He believes that the greater danger of globalization is that it weakens the differences between cultures. "You can visit most foreign countries today and you will see people in the same clothes with the same hairstyles, and finally they have the same way of thinking." >





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Dou despises this inevitable outcome of rampant globalization. “I don’t like it when people forget who they are. I’m not conservative, but I think that people must love and keep their culture.” This series of disturbing but striking pictures is a “kind of a protest to show that a person should remain who he is and that people should perceive him in the way he is.” With their pale skin and hairless faces, Dou tries to express a unifying message: “I want to say that you can be very far from the standard and still be beautiful.”

“Visually, I’m inspired by the surrealists, and the culture of fashion. I often shock people. I try to create my personal aesthetics of the works.” Dou also believes that the general trend in contemporary art has the same “dusty style.” He tries to set himself apart from this herd mentality, so Dou created his own style, which he describes as “polished, very smooth and clean.”

His photos strive to evoke a response. “But it does not mean that emotions should only be positive,” Dou says. “They can express alarm, fear, and tearing away.” By erasing the flesh, eyebrows and eyelashes from the human face and smoothing the skin’s surface into a lacquered grayish finish, he pushes the boundaries of human identity as surreal and mutated objects. Through his clan of doll-like clones, Dou tries to “combine reality with artificiality” as a way to object to a modern society



Photos this page: Chris Seid

DOU’S FIRST SOLO SHOW IN THE UNITED STATES IS ON DISPLAY AT THE DUNCAN MILLER GALLERY IN LOS ANGELES THROUGH SEPTEMBER 8.



that “still restricts behavior and thought of a human being.” But even though each digitally recreated face is completely stripped of individuality and gender, it is beaming with meaning. As the viewer stares deep into the alien-like eyes of each subject, one cannot help but see the pure fragility of the human essence. □



Duncan Miller, curator

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