

N-SPHERE OCTOBER 2010

EDITORIAL TRANQUILIZERS

»Lolita, light of my life, fire of my loins.« You, with flailing arms in puddles of rain, with dirty face and ruffled pigtails, your big eyes shine through ages, your name revolves in waves: childhood. However frail, however strong, the inherent innocence (and therefore lack of) have stood tall in worlds of incredible wonders and majestic dreams.

The child - an entity in itself, intrinsic presence in the lives of yester, a remnant of tamed wild beasts. double sided mirror that looks into itself for all eternity - the child resides in generous weirdness. Not the bad kind, that you'd tell mommy about crying your little eyes out, but the good kind, the one where princes and princesses live and evil witches appear in enchanted forests. The weirdness that Danny Malboeuf dared depict, through eyes of latter days, through eyes of what has been and never again return. Inside this world, Henry Darger's pieces would find the path

to tell their stories. The unprofaned is torn abruptly. Luciano Scherer and Matteo Maculotti stand in opposite corners of the world, Nadir and Zenith of innocence and corruption. Intensely, the lines of odd imagination stretch out recreating the horizons of artistic endeavors into the realm of outsider art, the limit of perception stretched into past oddities, and weird little towns of weird little forever-and-never grown-up children live on in Harmony Korine's dynamic jewels.

Oh, how sweet the cotton candy tastes, how bitter after decades, how fragrant its fading memory. »Grown-ups never understand anything by themselves, and it is tiresome for children to be always and forever explaining things to them.«

Quotes:

Vladimir Nabokov. Lolita. 1955 Antoine de Saint Exupéry. Le Petit Prince. 1943



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DANNY

GLASS SHOWCASE MALBOEUF

GOD GIRLS CONSISTENCIES CONTRADICTIONS

Name:

Danny Malboeuf

Location:

North Carolina, United States

Occupation:

Artist

Definition of personal sphere:

Reflective, reclusive, always remembering. Elevating Burne Jones, and dismissing cezanne.

Artwork in 4 words:

God, girls, consistencies, contradictions.

What is inspirational for you:

Literature: Lovecraft, J.G. Ballard, William Hope Hodgson, Elizabeth Hough Sechrist. Music: Much and many genres - except for rap, and school marching bands.

Currently favourite artists:

Fernand Khnopff, Arnold Böcklin, Félicien Rops, James Gordon Irving...

Tools of trade:

Acrylic paint and sable brushes.

Current obsessions:

Streetlights, girls in saddle shoes & knee socks, black hair, cold autumns, post-dystopian winters.

Personal temptation:

Refer to the answer above, and add pizza.











photo | Danny Malboeuf. Crust of the Sun. Courtesy of the artist



photo | Danny Malboeuf. Hyperion. Courtesy of the artist

STONE SHOWCASE UNREAL OF RYDARGER

»WE HATE YOU (LITTLE GIRLS). THE UNREAL OF HENRY DARGER«



Name:

Henry Darger

Lived:

12th April 1892 - 13th April 1973

Location:

Chicago, United States

Occupation:

Hospital janitor and trash collector by day, painter and writer by night

Influences:

Elsie Paroubek

Technique:

Collage, painting, writing, pencil and pen sketching

Associated with:

Naïve Art, Outsider Art, Art brut, Illustration, Bricolage, Collage

Obsessions:

Little girls, rifles, severed heads, children games, curls



photo | Henry Darger. 18 At Norma Catherine.
But wild thunderstorm with cyclone like wind saves them.
By James Prinz. 2002
Courtesy of American Folk Art Museum. New York



photo | Henry Darger. 6 Episode 3 Place Not Mentioned.
Escape during violent storm, still fighting though persed for long distance
By Kiyoko Lerner. 1995
Courtesy of American Folk Art Museum. New York

WE HATE YOU (LITTLE GIRLS). WITH YOUR LITTLE CURLS.

Seven little Catholic Girls, an evil general called Manley, severed heads and blonde curls, guns and a land threatened by Glandelinians. Henry Darger's body of work has often been described in terms of paradox and striking dichotomies. An almost invisible man by day and painter by night, Darger orchestrated a dystopic universe in a 15143 pages manuscript discovered posthumously: In the Realms of the Unreal. His book renders visible the story of the Vivian

Girls, a group of Catholic children living in a land named Angelina whom are attacked and abused by general Manley's troops.

I HATE YOUR LITTLE TITS. I HATE YOUR LITTLE CLITS.

»I must Create a System, or be enslav'd by another Man's.« In his manuscript, Darger exposes an upside down world populated by bodies without organs. The characters that he portrays, namely the Vivian girls, seem to act according to given patterns of behavior, their actions turning out to be predictable from the very first pages: children winning and losing battles, arms and legs injured, battles rendered in saturated tones. Both his aesthetic approach and naïve narrative invite to a fetish for surfaces, the Lolita-s simultaneously functioning as spectacle and subjects.

Although juxtaposing fragments of reality, Darger detaches from any existent framework in creating his characters, operating instead in parallel with the societal coda. His technique can be termed as bricolage,

title quote: Throbbing Gristle. 1979.

We Hate You (Little Girls)

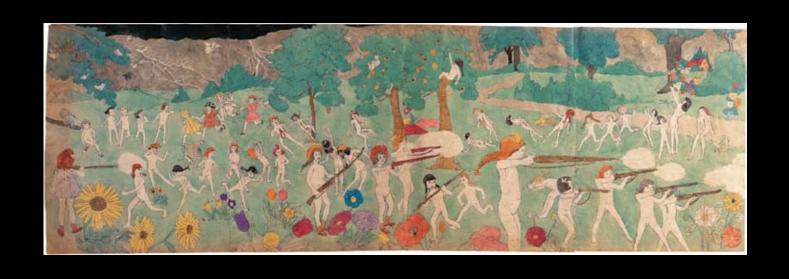


photo | Henry Darger. Untitled (Battle scene during lightning storm. Naked Children with Rifles) By Kiyoko Lerner. 1995 Courtesy of American Folk Art Museum. New York questioning and deconstructing reality by bringing forward a manuscript out of cut-outs and tracings of found images. In a naïve manner, he creates something new out of seemingly random figments.

I HATE YOUR MOTHER TOO.

In turn, a question arises: how relevant are Henry Darger's turbulent childhood and Catholic background for reading into his work? Having lost his mother at childbirth, the young Darger spent his early years in a Christian school for boys and after-

wards in the Lincoln County Asylum for Feeble-Minded Children with the diagnosis of masturbation or "a heart in the wrong place". Having escaped his imprisonment at the age of 16, he moved into a small room at Chicago's North Side where he lived for the rest of his life, until 1973. In the Realms of the Unreal has been afterwards found in his room, thus turning Darger into an acclaimed self-taught visual artist. While analyzing his background, it can be argued that, to a certain extent, significant episodes of his life surfaced in his artwork.

The apparent pattern of wwe hate

you little girls« in the manuscript could therefore be associated with a castration complex and placed within a Freudian framework. The numerous decapitations and Catholic references would stand as proof for a hidden Double gradually exposed in Darger's work. However, would an Oedipal analysis suffice for a work ultimately based on dissociation insofar as the Unreal separates itself from meaning altogether?

text quotes: William Blake. 1804.

Jerusalem

HARMO THE CRIPP

MOVING SHOWCASE NY KORINE & LED CINEMA

»WRECKING (KORINE) HARMONIES«

here are many films nowadays that use the depiction of freaks, street life, sex and drugs as a selling point since it is very easy to take a position that appeals to the masses and make an emotional film about it, which may not be - in the end - a bad film, but, at its core, just a dishonest one. Amusingly enough, these films are either acclaimed or overlooked (by making a mainstream comedy about sex drugs and freaks even; and the worst thing is that critics would consider it »unfunny«). However, when a film approaches these issues in a more honest and disturbing manner, they are »obnoxious«, »immoral« and so forth.

Korine's work falls in the *obnoxious* category mostly, which is not something entirely new, nor would it be original if it were only that. Nevertheless, there is an intimate quality surrounding his films, something you can't label, can't work your way around it, but yet [if you feel], to whom you feel drawn unto.

The best example in this case is *Gummo*, a film that on a level of »disturbing-ness«, makes films such as *My own private Idaho* or *Happiness* look like a timid nun speaking about anal sex.

On the surface, *Gummo* is ugly, unpleasant and depressing, but it has an intimate quality, something that makes the most outlandish of characters convincing.

For those whom are not familiar with the storyline, Gummo's plot revolves around a small town (Xenia) - hit by a tornado, three years ago - and its inhabitants. Although saying this, I basically reveal nothing since the film was shot without a formalized script or a formalized plot, for that matter. And while we are given the impression that we watch an odd documentary about a small town that faced disaster, the fact is that Xenia is a fictional town and so are its inhabitants. And yet, there is something real in all that outlandishness, that voice, those gestures, those reactions, in





other words: the surface, what we can see for ourselves every day. That surface is convincing. And here is the interesting part: most films choose a different approach: they either have an off-the wall character depicted as such from the very beginning, hence using familiar material to sustain it (familiar ideas, fragments of familiar dialogue, to articulate and bridge the gap between the familiar and the alien), or they start from a character that seems normal and then they reveal his true identity, thus providing the »conspiracy theory« market new and satisfied customers. Harmony Korine doesn't do that, he does not label his characters. He does not judge them, henceforth he does not see them as »weirdoes«. Therefore, in this case, what we first may perceive as weird becomes familiar.

There are some other interesting connections: Xenia&Xenius as Zeus&Athena, Athena being the goddess of wisdom (in Greek mythology, of course) - wisdom devastated by tornadoes, its seedlings preying their own world(s), anyone? Looking at it, this may not seem an implausible scenario.

So what's up with Gummo, anyways? It is not a documentary, although it acts like one, and maybe the same thing can be said about the actors too. While some of them are well-known actors (Chloe Sevigny, Jacob Reynolds), I think that most of them were first-timers and remained first-timers afterwards, as well. So after which point does the fiction become a real documentary and the acting reality?

His next project, Julien, Donkey Boy, however, had a more straightforward approach, but this doesn't mean that it entirely became more accessible. It still retains a rather bleak tone and the fascination for »freaks«... [and

»introducing« Werner (Aguirre, der Zorn Gottes, Fitzcarraldo, Herz aus Glas) Herzog]. Again, there is no formalized script and the pacing is even more contemplative than that from his previous endeavor.

The film itself doesn't hold a deep meaning, but it is an honest and heartfelt look at things that most people wouldn't be noticing.

»ON A LEVEL OF DISTURBING-NESS, GUMMO MAKES FILMS SUCH AS MY OWN PRIVATE IDAHO OR HAPPINESS LOOK LIKE A TIMID NUN SPEAKING ABOUT

Eight years later, Harmony Korine returns with another film called Mister Lonely. Unlike both Gummo and Julien, Donkey Boy, Mister Lonely's tone is by far not that disturbing. While it retains a certain fascination for depicting off-the-wall characters, there is a childlike touch piercing throughout the whole film. We also meet Werner Herzog again, playing the role of Father Umbrillo.

ANAL SEX«

Unlike his previous cinematic endeavours, here there is a far more accessible plot and a sense of familiarity about it. But this doesn't compromise the film. The tone is still a contemplative one, there are sequences of sheer beauty playing well by themselves and the plot, even if more concrete and accessible, is not easy to handle. Instead of playing with our dark corners, this film is playing with our dreams and fantasies and the off-thewall moments are here framed in an overall gentle tone.

All in all, Mister Lonely is a welcoming change of pace, proving that Harmony Korine can shift approaches without losing his trademark.

Two years later, the director resurfaced with Trash Humpers, which marks a return to his early roots with Gummo. But while Gummo had its poetic moments, Thrash Humpers is downright nightmarish and horrifying. There is no beginning, there is no end, and while his previous works held an obvious contemplative tone to counterpart their disturbing side, this one's point seems to make films such as Mundo Trasho, Multiple Maniacs or Pink Flamingos look like fairytales.

Yet, in some cases the movie can be quite effective and - depending on the viewer - a point might emerge. This film contains only representations, no plot, no rhetoric, no eye-candy visuals, just the characters themselves, the representations themselves...

All in all, Harmony Korine's work - even if consisting of only four films - does a fine job examining aspects that for many people are discomforting and disturbing and there isn't one to be ignored for those whose tastes meet movies such as: El topo, Pink Flamingos, Eraserhead, Even Dwarves started small, Begotten and so forth.

photos up & right | Gummo. 1997.

Courtesy of Harmony Corine



LUCIAN

NOX SHOWCASE OSCHERER

NAME:

LUCIANO SCHERER

LOCATION:

SÃO PAULO, BRAZIL

OCCUPATION:

VISUAL ARTIST

WEBSITE:

FLICKR.COM/INCRIVEL











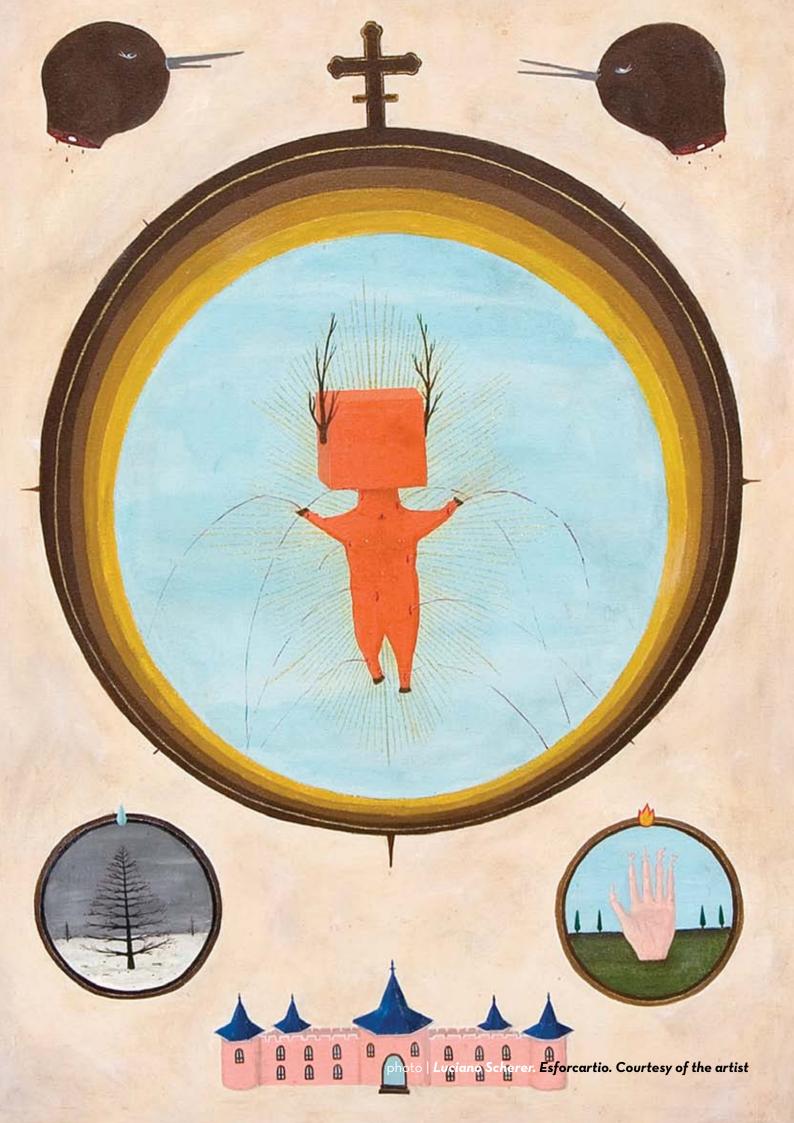


photo | Luciano Scherer. Pregadores. Courtesy of the artist



photo | Luciano Scherer. Soul Rescue. Courtesy of the artist





RANDOM ONOU

SHOWCASE THOUGHTS TSIDERART

»EXPRESSION TRANSGRESSION OUTSIDER ART«



Of all the »-isms« of the 20th century, outsider art - umbrella term quasi-interchangeable with art brut or raw art, marginal art, self-taught, visionary art, mediumistic art, folk art, contemporary folk art, arte naïve, neuve invention - distinguishes itself through its inconsistency and lack of ideological or stylistic framework. Within this article, I will try to outline the major problems posed by such a »volatile« term, which essentially reflects the aesthetic revolution of modernism and postmodernism.

EXPRESSION, TRANSGRESSION, »OUTSIDER ART«

Long viewed as simply pathological, symptomatic and therapeutic, the art of the mentally ill, along with the art of the »primitives« and children's art, became, for the historical avant-garde of the early 20th century, the object of reassessment and idealization. Radical anti-traditionalists recognized in it their own ends: the expressive force of an immediate, pure, spontaneous artistic act, devoid of convention and traditional values. The affinity be-



tween degeneration or the typical process of schizophrenia and the artistic phenomena can easily be illustrated, e.g.: multiple points of views - analytic cubism or even, tracing back, impressionism or Cezanne's studies on light; no external referentials/self-referential - abstract expressionism; detachment - theatre of the absurd, Duchamp; and so on.

Perhaps as a legacy of the romantic image of the creative genius touched by madness, rethinking the art of the psychotic or mentally ill was due to a growing interest as manifested in such studies: L'art chez les fous (1907 - Marcel Réja/Paul Meunier - psychiatrist) or the more influential Bildnerei der Geisteskranken (1922 - Hans Prinzhorn - psychiatrist and art historian). in parallel with the psychoanalytic approach which sought possible signs of disturbance in artists previously considered sane (Freud's analyses on Leonardo and Michelangelo -1910, 1914). A contact with Prinzhorn's study and a tour of the psychiatric asylums in Switzerland, where he also encountered the works of Adolf Wölffli, prompted Jean Dubuffet to destroy his previous works and gather in a personal collection (1945) »brut«, »uncivilized« productions, including naïve, folk or mentally ill art. Along with André Breton and other friends, he established his own Compagnie de l'art brut and organised the first exhibition in 1949, publishing his important text: L'art brut préféré aux arts culturels. Later on, he would consider the brut character as universally defining modern art and develop his style accordingly.

Coined by Roger Cardinal in 1972 as outsider art, the term acquired autonomy, a plethora of dedicated exhibitions, catalogues, monographs and evolved into a unequivocal pigeon-hole for anything produced outside the art establishment and its

institutions, by individuals with none or limited artistic education.

Since it lacks the stylistic criteria, art brut/outsider art challenges the classical art historical method of periodisation or the newer geographical approach*. The term essentially refers not to any formalistic or ideological traits, defining instead the status of the artists. This state not only increases the difficulties of find-

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ing a consensus regarding the definition of *outsider art*, but allows to ask ourselves whether the term, understood literally, can still be validated in a world of anti-elitistic cultural pluralism, where »anything goes«.

In addition, there are a few other senses in which the term may seem ambiguous. Firstly, outsider art was (at least until recently) discussed only through its sustaining role and source of inspiration for modern artists (Rousseau & Picasso; Wölffli or anonymous artists from the Prinzhorn Collection & Klee or Dubuffet), since this type of art responded to the ideals of immediacy, rupture, purity etc. This aspect was

linked by Hal Foster (critical art historian) to a »misreading« of the art of mentally ill which informed, however, the avant-garde's need for transgression or metaphysical. His main idea is that if the avant-garde sought to break a symbolical order and renounce conventions, the source of inspiration for allowing the fostering of these ideals - the art of the mentally ill, expressed intrinsically the desire of those individuals to repair, replace, reinvent a symbolical order, the lost conventions and regain, eventually, the equilibrium of the mentally sane. This may imply that, as a vehicle to provoke and deconstruct art's established spheres and elites, the art of the mentally ill, though brought to mainstream attention, was actually obscured.

Secondly, its link with the historical avant-garde turned into a backlash when the notion of avant-garde itself was rediscussed in the 5Os-6Os, with the dawn of the neo-avantgarde movements. See for instance Leslie Fiedler's verdict that the avant-garde was dead, the works of Leonard Meyer, Angelo Guglielmi and others.

Finally, outsider art, especially in its folk aspect, has always been existing, as vernacular art alongside the official art. Mediumistic art goes back to mid 1800s, inheriting the belief in immaterial entities. Sometimes, the cathartic expression is a natural reaction to one's suffering.

It is perhaps the modern need of an Other, a stranger to the conventional art world, that generated the *outsider* art and the new aesthetic and market categories implied.

* but, concerning the historiographical problem, a side question arises: could outsider art be the subject of a study within the broader history of objects and images, as proprosed by George Kubler in the The Shape of Time?



POST C

HANGING CAGES HILDHOOD STRESS

»YOUR TINY ISOLATED NAÏVE KINGDOM«

ome find it difficult to mourn over a dead flower. But to the truthful naked eye, seeing the petal's last breath is as easy as a walk in the park. Sing a feeble song for the dear departed souls you cannot sculpt anymore and draw thick lines on the blessed retina as you turn your eyes inside. Black harps invite you to merge with the sound burnt by sunlight of the dying sky, and take a seat at the head of the table. Assume the office of the lonely gardener and bring forth the tools of your justice.

So, may the infants come and play over the remnants of the soil you tended. They just as well might laugh a little more before dumping their nightmares on the concrete walls of your garden. And do something about those horrid noises. You should know best how the creatures howl and squeak as they grow, change skin, develop steel limbs. It hurts

them too. Remember that you're not only a mere gardener. However, that doesn't mean you got to do whatever you want whenever you want. You hold a high position so, as long as you are here, and that is for quite a while, entertain the products of your original recipe fertilizer. Make the poor worms smile once more in their miserable lifetime. And hand out stupid painted ceramic gifts and creepy butterflies under the moon.

That's how your tiny isolated naïve kingdom should be run. If you want to be reappointed that is. Pay heed to this free advice I'm giving. I have no interest in seeing you fail. And besides, the family picture would not be the same without you, and the dressed up children would feel uncomfortable without you at their side, or at least lurking somewhere at the back of the school bus. And the last thing they need is a karmic get together scheduled in the near future.





MATTEO

SHOWCASE^{II} MACULOTTI

NAME:

MATTEO MACULOTTI

LOCATION:

MILAN, ITALY

OCCUPATION:

STUDENT

CONTACT:

MATTEOMAC.COM







photo | Matteo Maculotti. The Twin Brothers. Courtesy of the artist



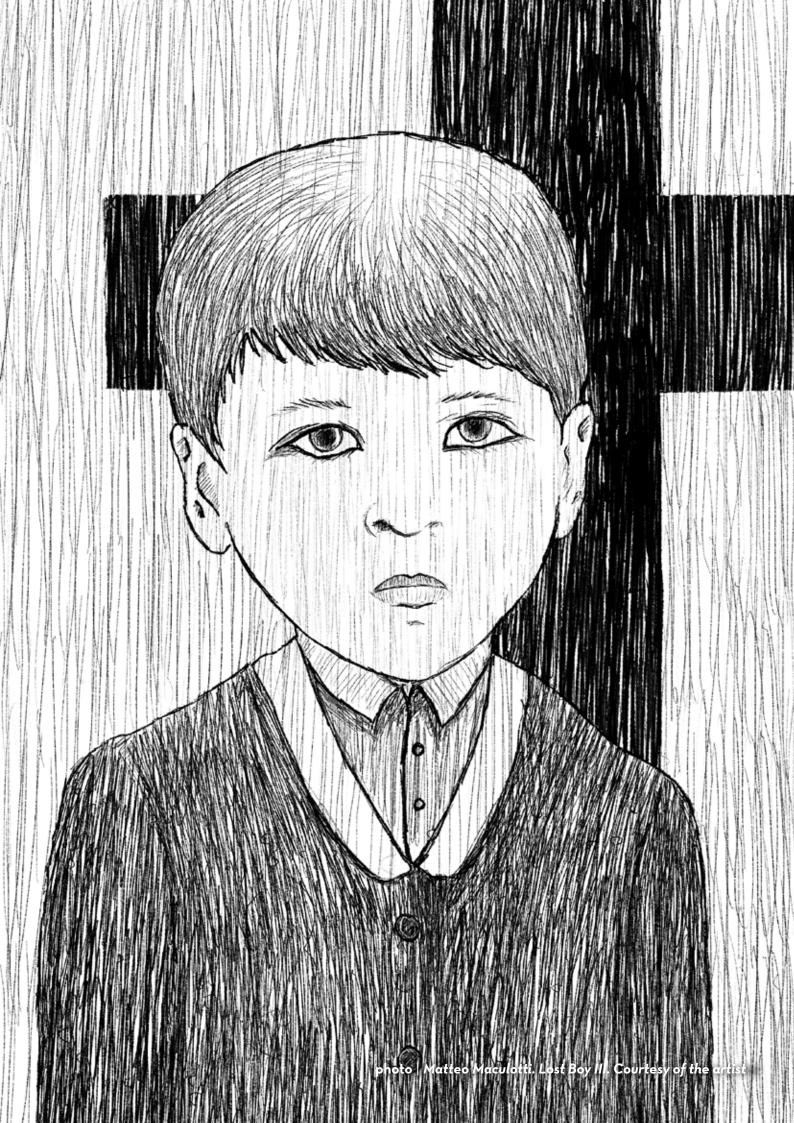




photo | Matteo Maculotti.The Devil Behind. Courtesy of the artist



photo | Matteo Maculotti. Wooden Planes. Courtesy of the artist



photo | Matteo Maculotti. An Empty Room. Courtesy of the artist



photo | Matteo Maculotti. Half A Soul. Courtesy of the artist

CHAI

CISSORS





