

## MARGRET WIBMER: NATTO - objects and photographs

NATTO is a typical thing Japanese eat for breakfast, very healthy but somewhere queer and disgusting for non-Japanese people. The *natto* could depict the way Margret Wibmer is gripping the viewer into attractive pictures, which yet reveal at second sight a certain shudder of fear and doubt about beauty of science, machines and the perspective of human changing into cyborgs. Margret Wibmer reacts towards current news we are witnessing, like cloning or robots' artificial intelligence. She aims at raising the viewers awareness of their repulsion and phantasm about these new technologies. The term *natto* is also giving this taste of science-fiction, for it refers to Japanese mangas, and so invites the visitor to enter a world of senses and poetry, which gives a glimpse of future, its beauty and fantasy.

Margret Wibmer's photographs and objects are indeed like manifestations of the future, inspired by the 50's and 60's imagery. The artist is particularly attached to this period, when vision of the new man was emerging into a technologized aesthetics. The artist picks up machines from this period and after having dismantled them, she freely changes their appearance to definitely destabilize their first function and belonging. These objects become the models of futuristic visions and the actors of sequences the artist is imagining in her photographs, like the black and white print 3. Stock. Zimmer 213. Here, intriguing anonymous persons are manipulating objects within a minimalist almost aseptic decor. They express an irresistible mystery, which becomes an obsession as the viewer cannot get the meaning of the photographs' narration. The only escape is imagination. Each element of her artwork creates a narrative process of dreaming, like the recurrent surrealistic image of the ballerina. She is like the white rabbit of Alice in wonderland, inviting the visitor to enter a world of strangeness, while staying an anonymous but significant character, a projection of the girl of the new millennium: introducing some sensitivity and sensuality within a world controlled by machines. Margret Wibmer's work explore this state of in-betweenness, by showing human cyborgs trying to mirror and control humanized robots. Natto, the black robot appearing in 3 stock. Zimmer 213 and staged in this exhibition, is one example of these morphologized robots, having its head, or helmet, disguised with pieces of fabric. Margret Wibmer creates new fantastic clothes with the same accuracy than a fashion designer and the power of a creator giving birth to fancy chimeras, like the video camera L.e.a appearing with fur. The multilayered work of Margret Wibmer explores systems of control by playing off a certain fresh innocence. Indeed, apart her collaboration with fabric industry, she likes to keep the freedom to develop more ambiguous and poetic images in her artistic practice. 'I am provoking questions', she precises. Her troubling atmospheres are just resonant wrapping mirrors for the viewers 'to escape the present, by imagining their own world'.

Emilie Oursel

This text was written on the occasion of the exhibition *natto* at Lumen Travo Gallery in 2007.

