

PAVLEYE

ART
&
CULTURE

Kurt Stallaert: Because Winter Lasts Longer Than Summer
November 28th, 2013

This month marks the opening of Belgian contemporary artist and photographer, KURT STALLAERT'S first solo exhibition, aptly titled *Because Winter Lasts Longer Than Summer*, held at Bratislava City Gallery in Slovakia. His unique style takes inspiration from prevalent social and cultural issues with an added level of subtle satire, often blurring the lines between the real and surreal, and he is continually striving for his artwork to be strong, authentic and original.

With a diverse portfolio, Stallaert's work is a mix of personal, editorial and commercial. Taking a look at personal work, a significant series for this award-winning artist is *Bodybuilder's World*; a collection which utilized digital enhancements to create a fascinating alternate world of over-buff subjects in everyday, incongruent settings. With this, Stalleart created a remarkable, visually stimulating series, which perfectly balances the rather sinister with the extremely seductive. *Bodybuilder's World*, although initially shocking the Belgian art scene, was featured in numerous art magazines, private collections and galleries both in Belgium and across the globe.

Stallaert's work has since progressed and in 2012, he started experimenting, attempting to blur the lines between image and film with what he entitles *moving stills*. Through splitting a single photo into thousands by using high-speed photography, the artist toys with the idea and depiction of simultaneous realities. The viewer is misled to believe they are examining a single, motionless photograph, however, it is on closer inspection that the viewer learns the 'image' is actually a slow-motion moving picture. The aim? Stallaert is exploring the relationship between two juxtaposed ideologies; beauty and suspense. He hopes to invite us as onlookers to take a second, third and fourth look, as though something is about to happen...

In terms of commercial work, this well-established photographic genius was also the man behind the lense of exquisite advertising campaigns for brands such as Sisley, Annee Erotique and possibly most notably, D'uss VSOP Cognac, shot with American rap superstar, Jay-Z. Even though these images are more direct and simple, Stalleart's visual style is clearly very much present in all of them.

The up-coming display however, curated by Ladislav Babuščák, focuses on Stalleart's personal works, featuring both the video and photographic pieces. This compelling and intimate exhibition will be opening at the historical Bratislava City Gallery on the 28. 11. 2013 situated at Pálffy palace, 3rd floor, Panská 19 and will be running until 16. 02. 2014. The gallery is open Tuesdays through to Sundays, 11am until 6pm. Chances to experience Kurt Staller's personal work in such a setting are rare, so one should take the opportunity to discover and explore his powerful and evocative diary of pictures at this unforgettable exhibition first-hand.