

Nathalie Djurberg

New Museum

Primal urges permeate Swedish artist Nathalie Djurberg's enthralling and disturbing sculptures and stop-motion animations. A ragtag procession of colorful, demonic-looking birds zigzagged through



Nathalie Djurberg, *The Parade*, 2011, mixed media, installation view. New Museum.

the darkened room, their soulless eyes peering up at the viewer, who had to be careful not to get snagged on protruding beaks and claws. There were some familiar species—peafowl, buzzards, pelicans, spoonbills, a little cardinal—but the sculptures, with feathers made of dyed cloth, more resembled puppets than real birds. They twist their necks, lift their legs, puff their chests, and stretch their wings in the aggressive postures of mating and fighting. It is a parade of garish avian mannerisms, which mimic the show-offy attitudes of mankind—or vice versa.

Clumpy clay figures of animals and people torment each other in six short animations projected on the walls above the birds, and this was where Djurberg's art got truly scary. The gruesome films have allegorical traits, though all are seemingly amoral. Still, unlike in many art films, in Djurberg's, story lines progress and characters evolve. In *Bad eggs* (2011), three gluttonous fat ladies capture a pelican. They take off their clothes, and one of them wipes her rear with the frightened seabird before plucking its feathers and extracting its eggs, which are thrown into a vile green stew. The toughest film to watch was *I wasn't made to play the son*

(2011), in which two small men, like medieval physicians, wear beaklike masks and methodically dismember a naked purple woman with scissors, while saying mock-soothing things like "There, there" and "Easy now."

A soundtrack composed by Hans Berg (Djurberg's partner in life and art) is heavy on bassoon, theremin, and clomping percussion instruments, lending the works a zany air of old cartoons and the creepy camp of *Dark Shadows*. In lesser hands, the use of such a cloying medium as claymation to express brutally psychotic narratives would seem pat. But

Djurberg pushes past glibness to create robust, winningly repulsive scenarios that keep us transfixed. —Trent Morse

Builder Levy

Flomenhaft

This exquisite show provided glimpses of the beauty Builder Levy has been discovering in remote places across the globe since 1997. Intimate portraits and distant landscapes were among the gold-toned gelatin silver prints on view, all printed by the artist employing the meticulous technique he learned directly from Paul Strand.

A group of photos taken in Bolivia included a breathtaking panorama of dramatic mountains, a handsome young man in an Adidas vest with a parrot on his shoulder, and a crowd demonstrat-

ing to restore a subsidy for gasoline in La Paz. In Ngorongoro Crater, Tanzania, Levy captured a pair of zebras with their heads affectionately placed on each other's backs, a family of cheetahs, and a Masai village of straw-roofed huts. There were also beautiful scenes featuring Mongolian wrestlers, archers, and horse tamers. Levy has been taking pictures since his father gave him a camera in 1951, when he was just a child. His estimable body of documentary and street photography includes many images of underprivileged children in the blighted New York neighborhoods where he taught reading, creative writing, art, and photography between 1960 and 2000. He also made a lauded series on the harrowing working conditions in Appalachian mines, and has been covering protests since the marches against the Vietnam War in the late '60s.

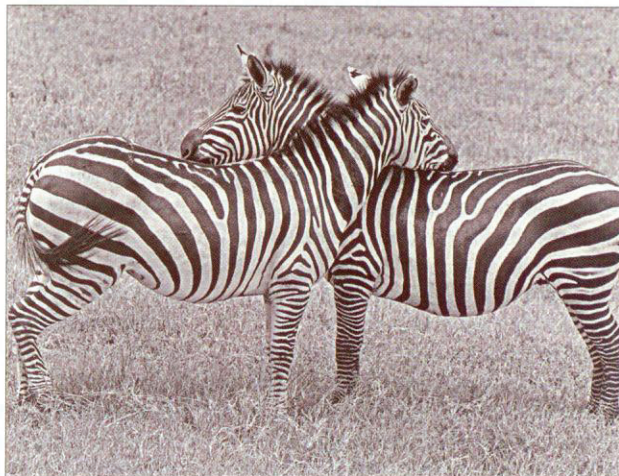
As Levy has explained, his aim has always been to visit and portray places that are "attempting to channel the wealth and resources of their nations toward health care, education and housing, culture and a sustainable environment as a priority for the majority of the people." Levy's valiant and optimistic vision was clearly laid out in this luminous exhibition.

—Elisabeth Kley

Martine Franck

Howard Greenberg

This show, surveying the work of photojournalist Martine Franck—the widow of Henri Cartier-Bresson—who died in August, demonstrated the extent to which



Builder Levy, *Zebras Nuzzling*, 2012, gold-toned gelatin silver print, 11" x 14". Flomenhaft.

BENOIT PALLEY