

TRASHY QUEEN by John Lee Bird

"It was a jolly little day in June when Madame Papillon stumbled upon a funny little alley. She headed through a funny little door and to her surprise she discovered a curious little garden...It was magnificent and bizarre. Trinkets hung from the branches of tiny twisted trees, mushrooms clustered at the feet of eye-boggling sculptures and the summer sunlight bounced all over the most splendid exotic flowers. ...Madame Papillon could feel an excited dance coming on.

She primped and preened and jumped around, toes curling and twirling as she danced in praise of the plants...and her own splendour!

After a few hours of fluffing around she found herself mysteriously drawn to a peculiar pom-pom plant in a far corner of the garden...it was emitting a strange little smell. The sickly sweet and sumptuous vapours exploded like colours in her mind and curiosity drew her in. She twinkle-toed over and loomed in to take a great big greedy whiff of the flower's monstrous blooms...Fungal thoughts flooded her brain, giant furry creatures bounced ear to ear, pollen-like shooting stars flooded her vision...she was in a magical Eden. Had she sniffed a little too much?

She floated down onto her knees, dizzy weasel feelings overpowering her for a few seconds. Then suddenly she swooped back up onto her twinkle toes, energised like never before, eyelashes fluttering in the gentle breeze, she smiled, twizzled her little finger and skipped off to further into the undergrowth to another adventure."

-notes for a performance (Madame Papillon's Topsy-Topsy-Turvy Trip - 2003)

TRASHY QUEEN is a selection of portraits of **Stephane Sionville**: a French /Cockney performance artist living and working in London. He uses various stage names = Madame Papillon, Madame Champignon, VamPapillon - and does it all for fun, for laughs, - *just in case!*

For the past two years Stephane has been focussed on his new alter-ego = JOU JOU La MENTHE: lead singer of the alt-art cabaret/punk band and performance troupe SLaPpER. Lock up your sons and daughters (and yourselves!) - SLaPpER are coming to town.
www.myspace.com/slappertime

John Lee bird produced the **TRASHY QUEEN** series between 2002 and 2005. This project lead to further associations with other performance artists which has become his ongoing series of performer portraits 'before encore'. (mainly thanks to Stephane and the AMAZING Suey-Sue founder of **FABARET** = like cabaret... just MORE fabulous!- and now bass playing queen of **SLaPpER** 'Symphony Cockpit' -who persuaded John to take part and join in on the Fabaret show she was producing).

In the **TRASHY QUEEN** series John Lee Bird found his portraiture style. They are a missing piece of the puzzle, being exhibited together for the **FIRST** time ever at 10 Gales Bethnal Green, 18th January to 5th February...and NOW available for sale by means of funding the staging of his next instalment of the **before encore** series - **part 4**, showcasing another 36 new and upcoming performance artists/ singers/ musicians on whom John wants to shine a spotlight.

"**TRASHY QUEEN** is a series of work that is dear to me. Not just because of the friendship that it portrays but because of the artistic and personal development that came because of it. I'd never before ventured into using a full colour palette, had never quite trusted myself with the responsibility of mixing full colour with a diagrammatic style of painting - although I was hoping for some sort of Warhol-esque idolisation of the subject, I didn't want to just make Pop-Art, I wanted the results to be far more personal, hence the inclusion of eyelashes and other minutiae. The colours hold an accuracy of realistic detail, but background colour reflects the mood of the piece...At first, adding drama to the snapshot...then bringing joy.

Although I'm incredibly sad to let these portraits go, it's befitting that money raised will be put to furthering adventures with the **before encore** project, meeting new people to showcase and adore, performers becoming closest friends, to me - and to YOU. **before encore** is an art party, and you're always invited."

With thanks

John Lee Bird - January 2010

www.johnleebird.com

About the Artist:

John Lee Bird lives in London. He once lived in Ipswich (in Suffolk) where he went to school, played with his cousins and liked to buy rabbits to afford him some time with his father whilst making the hutches.

He studied art at Ipswich College, dropped out to work in a record shop and ended up as the Manager and stayed there 5 years before throwing his arms up in the air and returning to study art properly. He then had a little accident and forgot to eat anything, and was forced to work in a record shop again (after he'd gotten a little fatter) whilst he saved money to go to university the next year.

He studied fine art at London Guildhall University whilst working at theatres and nightclubs and finally graduated in 2000.

Since then he has worked as a duty manager in theatres and as a primary school teacher and now he works as a full time artist; freelancing for different companies and most importantly to him, working on his own art.

John Lee Bird was 35 on the 3rd January 2010.

Previous Exhibitions:

John Lee Bird has exhibited work in his hometown of Ipswich, in Cambridge, Bristol, Southampton, Plymouth, and at Kielder in Northumberland. He has also had various solo exhibitions in London including: his degree show in 2000 at Guildhall University (now London Metropolitan), in Gloucester Road 2002, at the Truman Brewery (Brick Lane) 2004, at the Start Centre in Woolwich 2004, at the Phoenix 369 Gallery (Edinburgh) 2005, at The 20th Century Theatre in Notting Hill (**before encore** - 2006 and **before encore 2** - 2007, **before encore 3** - 2008), at the UBOX Gallery in Vauxhall Dec 2007 and Feb 2008, at Simon Carter in Covent Garden in April 2008, at the Stratford Old Town Hall June 2008, Amp studios (Harringay) December 2008, **bird does boosh** at Ketchum at Liverpool Street 2009, 23 Romilly Street, Soho June - Sept 2009, 10 Gales Bethnal Green Nov-Dec 2009...and shows regularly at his studio in East Ham.

Press enquiries:

John Lee Bird- info@johnleebird.com

Abigail Bamsey [07971 455879](tel:07971455879) abigail.bamsey@gmail.com