

BELA BORSODI

Interview, text & translation: Aiko Ishikawa
 Photography: Atsuko Tanaka
 Design: Kamikene

Raised in an artistic household, Bela Borsodi chose photography as his mode of expression after studying art and design. Perhaps one of the biggest factors in the blooming of his talent is his superior insight into the nature of objects. Although they are photos, it's impossible to describe Borsodi's work as mere still images because the way in which he builds the props and sets himself (something most photographers would never think of doing) gives what should be immobile objects a sense of lively motion. This is also what makes his finished images radiate with such intense artistic ability.

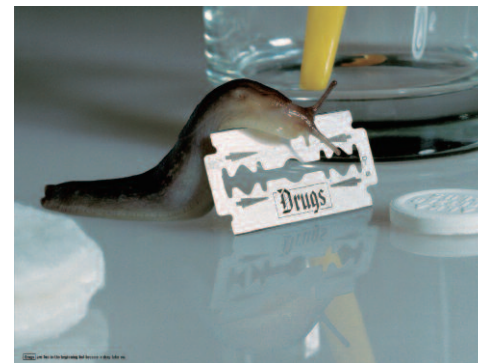
When we paid a visit to Borsodi's studio, it felt like a science lab or museum. Handmade paper-mâché masks stare down from one wall, and against another are tall bookshelves full of art books. Small Japanimation figures line the shelf above the computer desk, and on the column near it is an assortment of pictures and illustrations — it's modest in size but flooded with information and ideas. The Austrian photographer is known to breathe life into objects in his work, and says that he can hear the voices of his subjects. Though they should not be able to speak, as Borsodi puts it, "The objects complain if they don't look good." Join us as we get to know this most keenly astute of photographers and look over each of his works.

アーティスト的な家庭環境に育ち、アートやデザインを学んだ後に「写真」を自身の表現ツールとして選んだ Bela Borsodi。その才能を開花させた要因として挙げられるのが、物体に対する卓越した洞察力だ。ひとくちに「写真」と言っても、単なるスチール・フォトとして彼の作品を括ることはできず、本来ならば写真家が踏み入ることのないプロップやセットの作り込みを自身で行なうことにより、動くはずのない物体に躍動感をもたらしている。それ故、仕上がったイメージ・ヴィジュアルからは、芸術性に長けた才能を強く感じるのだろう。

今回の取材で訪れた Borsodi のスタジオは、科学実験室や博物館を彷彿とさせる。壁からは手作りの張り子面が見下ろし、背の高い本棚にはたくさんのアート本が並ぶ。パソコン・デスク上にある棚にはフィギュアが列をなし、その近くにある柱にはさまざまな写真やイラストが貼られているなど、控え目な広さながら、そこには情報とアイデアが溢れているからだ。物体に生命の息吹を与えるフォトグラファーとして知られる Borsodi には、被写体の声が聞こえると言う。言葉を持たないはずの物体が、「写りが悪いと文句を言ってくる」というほど鋭敏な感性を持つ彼の言動を巡らせながら、作品1つ1つに目を凝らして見てほしい。

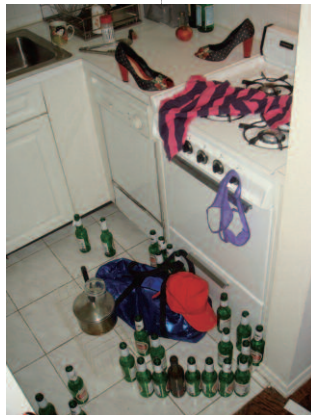


1 2 3 COPY #28 "DRUGS ARE FUN ..."
 4 5 6 IN COLLABORATION WITH SAGMEISTER INC.
 OCTOBER 2006 AUSTRIA
 © BELA BORSODI





FREITAG REFERENCE FW 2010 - SS 2011
 DESIGN: RAFFINERIE AG
 2010/11 SWITZERLAND
 © BELA BORSODI



WAD #39 "ALPHABETS"
 STYLIST: AKARI ENDO GAUT
 2009 FRANCE
 © BELA BORSODI



VLP- TERRAIN (IDYLLIC NOISE)
 PIA PALME, ELECTRIC INDIGO, JSX
 COVER PHOTO FOR MUSIC CD -
 WWW.EXTRAPLATTE.AT
 2011 AUSTRIA
 watch the making of it here:<http://vimeo.com/20054552>
 © BELA BORSODI



+81: What made you choose photography as your main tool of expression after studying graphic design and fine art?

Bela Borsodi(BB): Well, both of my parents were artists, so I grew up immersed in art. When I finished high school, I started to study graphic design at a university. But after a few years there I lost interest because my professors were very traditional and very boring. I wanted to do something new and exciting. So I switched to fine art. But I was always doing photography, since I was a kid, because my parents used it for some of their projects. Then I had a lot of friends that worked for magazines, and one of them said, "Can you do photographs for us?" And that's how it sort of started. I never woke up one day and said, "Oh I want to be a photographer." It was just something interesting for me to do. In the beginning I was shooting portraits of writers and actors and people like that. I also shot a lot of documentary.

+81: How did you get into still life photography?

BB: I got a call one day. There's this great art director Beda Achermann in Switzerland, and he offered me a job to do still life photography. I wasn't specialized in it at the time, so I said, "Why do you want me to do that?" And he just said, "Oh, I think you'll be really good at this." It was a big job - I'd have to live in Zurich for two months and commit to two months of doing something that I felt that I wasn't even the right guy for. But I said yes, and that changed a lot of things because I loved doing it. That was in 1999, and there was no interesting still life photography around at the time. The project was for an annual report for Migros [a Swiss supermarket chain]. There were two other photographers and we all had to shoot garbage, literally. But I could do whatever I wanted with it, and there were a lot of things to shoot. So I started thinking, "How can I shoot many objects in one picture other than just putting them in front of the camera?" Then I thought, "Well, how about defying the idea of perspective, just to think differently, to add a whole other layer of perception?" That was a very important thing for me. To question like, "Is this just a coffee mug or can this be something else?" This is what I do up to this day - to take objects and put them in a context where they usually aren't, either to make something funny or to add things, to enhance their presence or to diminish their presence.

+81: In all stages of your image creation process - aside from art direction, prop-making, and retouching - how far do you involve yourself?

BB: Most of the time it's 100 percent me. Collaborations happen every now and then, but other than setting up props, I usually do everything. The reason why it's difficult for me to work with, let's say set designers, is that I sculpt everything with the eye of the camera. So a lot of the sets I'm using look totally horrible and wouldn't make sense if you looked from another angle. It's very difficult to explain to someone what to do because while I'm doing it I have a lot of options in my head. I'm a total dictator [laughs]. But a dictator also has to understand what he dictates because otherwise you just run

things over. In the end my aim is that these things can speak, that they have a life. I'm a dictator dictated by the objects.

+81: Clothes, shoes, bags and other objects transform into various images in your work. What's your process like?

BB: It depends on the basic idea. If I have a particular goal to accomplish, I have to adhere to the layout and measure perspectives and scales to make it work. Other times, I might just put things together, play around and go from there.

+81: Where do your images start out: an overall vision or a detail?

BB: Well, an editorial project has more freedom. So if I were doing something for a magazine, I ask them what we need to shoot: is it shoes, bags, or jewelry? What season is it for and is there a theme to the issue? Then I explore what it would be and give them my ideas. I don't like to repeat myself and I have to be excited about it. Otherwise there's no point in doing it. Then there's advertising, which is very different. Obviously they have a product that has to be in the picture. They have very particular visions and ideas of it and how it has to look, and I have to bring in as much of my art as I can within that frame.

+81: Generally, how far off is your final image from its original idea?

BB: It's surprisingly close most of the time. Sometimes you can even overlay the picture on my layout. It's that precise. Although I give it freedom to grow, I think of the steps [in advance] so much so that sometimes it's even pointless for me to do a sketch because I can imagine it all the way to the end result and see how it would be. I can do photography in my mind.

+81: Where do you often humorous and seemingly bottomless ideas come from?

BB: They all come from here [points to his head]. The thing that which I do not do is I do not look at magazines. If I see somebody executing an idea, even if I like it a lot I don't touch it. My inspiration or references comes from everything but my competitors' work. So I'd go to a museum

and see a Caravaggio painting, and I may notice a certain color, certain light or movement in that painting and think, "Oh, I want to try that." Thinking things out or just trying things out also turns into actual ideas.

+81: What step of the image production process do you spend the most time on? Is there a step that you struggle most with?

BB: I spend the most time fleshing out the idea to make sure it works. That is the most interesting and challenging part, because the rest is just execution.

Right now I'm working on a very complex shot [for product advertising]. I know pretty well all the steps involved. But now I have to work with art directors and there's an agency involved, and they have to confirm everything. So I have to explain, without being a complete jerk, why this is complicated. I know when I put something here, what will happen, what will work or not. But they don't always see that. So, a lot of my energy, particularly when it comes to advertising, is spent communicating the process and the result that I see in my head prior to doing it.

+81: What's the greatest joy in your image creation process?

BB: The greatest joy is if I find myself so very involved in my project, seeing all elements come together and evolving... It feels like being or battling on a very curious creative drug. That I lose myself

+81: Please share with us projects that you would like to try from now on.

BB: The Migros project was shot in 1999, and now it's 2011. Perhaps I might want to do more portraits again. It's hard to say what it would be, but I'm aching for a change, to broaden out. I started thinking maybe I want to publish a book, to sum up these last 10 years. And the other thing is, since forever, I wanted to do movies. Most likely animation movies. I've always wanted to do that, and now the technology is much more available and you can control the budget better, too. There's also much more of a market and possibilities. So we'll see.

+81: から「なぜ僕なんですか?」とグラフィックデザインやファッションの制作プロジェクトに選んだ理由は何か? Bela Borsodi (以下プロジェクトの仕事はゴ下BB): 両親と一緒にアートで、僕以外にも2名のフォトリポグラファーが起用された。何をしてもいいという。僕は常にアートに触れながら育つ。高校を卒業した後、大学へ進学し、グラフィックデザインを勉強し、教授がすごく古典的でつまらない。2年ほど経った頃にはグラフィックへの興味がなくなってきた。新しいことを挑戦しようと、専攻をファッション・アートに切り替えた。写真に関

とは仕事がつらいうらんだ。違う角度から見ると滅茶苦茶でわけのわからないセットだしね。それに、作り込んでいく過程でたくさんアイデアが頭の中にあふれてくるから、それを他の人に説明するのがすごく難しいんだ。完全に「独裁主義」だね(笑)。でも独裁者は何をどうすべきかを理解してなくてはいけない。そうでなければ支離滅裂になって終わってしまうから。僕が目指しているのは、そこにある物体が自ずと語り、生命を持つこと。だから僕は物体に支配されている独裁者と言えるのかもしれないね。

+81: あなたの作品では、服や靴、バッグなどのモチーフがさまざまなイメージへと変貌を遂げていますが、制作プロセスを教えてください。

BB: それは基になるアイデアによって異なる。具体的な目標を達成する場合、レイアウトを考慮して遠近感や大きさを測らなければならない。そうでない場合は取りあえず物を並べて、いろいろと試しながら進めていくよ。

+81: 全体像かディテールのどちらを起点としてイメージ制作を始めるのですか?

BB: 雑誌関連のプロジェクトの場合は結構自由が利くから、まず撮影の対象が何かを尋ねるんだ。靴なのか、バッグなのか、ジュエリーなのかをね。また、雑誌を発行する季節やその号のテーマを把握する。そして、何ができるのかを考えて具体的なアイデアを提案するんだ。以前試したことは繰り返したくないし、自分が楽しめることしかやりたくない。そうでなければやる意味がないからね。広告の場合は全く違って、写真の中に必ず収めなければならない。だから僕は、嫌味に

+81: オリジナルのアイデアと最終的なイメージでは、どの程度違いがありますか?

BB: 驚くほど近いことが多いね。自分が描いたレイアウトに写真をびったり重ねられることもあるくらいだよ。ある程度自由にできる余地を持たせつつも、制作の流れをあらかじめ把握しているし、最終的な構図や仕上がりも想像できるから、スケッチを用意することさえ無駄な時もあるんだ。頭の中で写真を撮影できてしまうんだよ。

+81: ユーモア溢れるアイデアの数々は、どこから湧いてくるのでしょうか?

BB: 全て自分の頭からだよ。ひとつだけ心がけていることは、雑誌を見ないことなんだ。他の誰かが形にしたアイデアは、たとえ面白いと思っても、絶対に真似たくな。インスピレーションや参考素材のソースは、自分の競争相手の作品を除く全てだね。例えば、美術館で見たCaravaggioの絵から、その中の色や光、動きに刺激を受けて「これを試してみたい」と思うこともあるんだよ。実際に何かを試しているうちにアイデアが生まれることもあるんだ。

+81: イメージ制作の際に最も時間を費やす工程と、苦勞する点を教えてください。

BB: 最も時間をかけるのは、失敗のないようにアイデアを具体化する段階。同時にその工程が最も面白くて、大変な部分でもあるんだ。あとはそれを実行するだけだからね。ちょうど今、商品の広告用にとても難しいイメージを撮影しようとしているところ。僕は必要なプロセスをしっかりと把握しているけれど、そこにはアート・ディレクターや代理店も関わってきて、全員に確認を取らなくてはならない。だから僕は、嫌味に

聞かえないように気をつけながら、なぜこの撮影が複雑なのかを彼らに説明する必要があるんだ。僕はどこに何を置いたらよいか、そして、どうしたらうまくいくかわかっているけど、彼らは必ずしもそれをわかっているとは限らない。だから特に広告に関しては、撮影する前に自分の頭の中にあるプロセスや最終的な画像を伝えることに、ものすごくエネルギーを費やしているよ。

+81: イメージ制作のプロセスで得られる最大の喜びは何ですか?

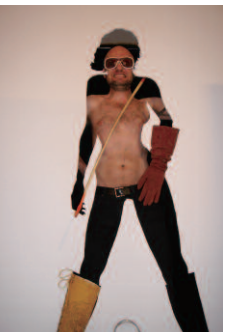
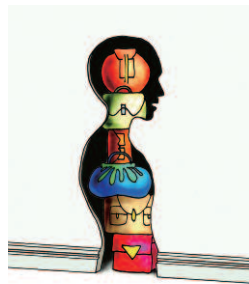
BB: 喜びを得られるのは、自分がプロジェクトに没頭して作品が進化しながらまとっていくのを目の当たりにした時や、我を忘れるほど苦勞している時。時間や全てのことを忘れて、とにかく濃縮された体験になるんだ。すごくクリエイティブなドラッグに冒されている気分になるよ。

+81: 今後挑戦してみたいプロジェクトを教えてください。

BB: Migrosの撮影をしたのが1999年で、今はもう2011年になるね。ポトレイトにもう一度挑戦してみたい気もするし、この10年間の作品をまとめた本を出版したいとも思い始めている。何をしたいかはまだはっきりしないけれど、広がりや変化を求めているんだ。そしてもうひとつ、ずいぶん昔からアニメーション系の映画を製作したいと考えている。最近テクノロジーもより身近になったから予算の融通も利くし、マーケットの可能性もより一層広がってきているから楽しみだね。



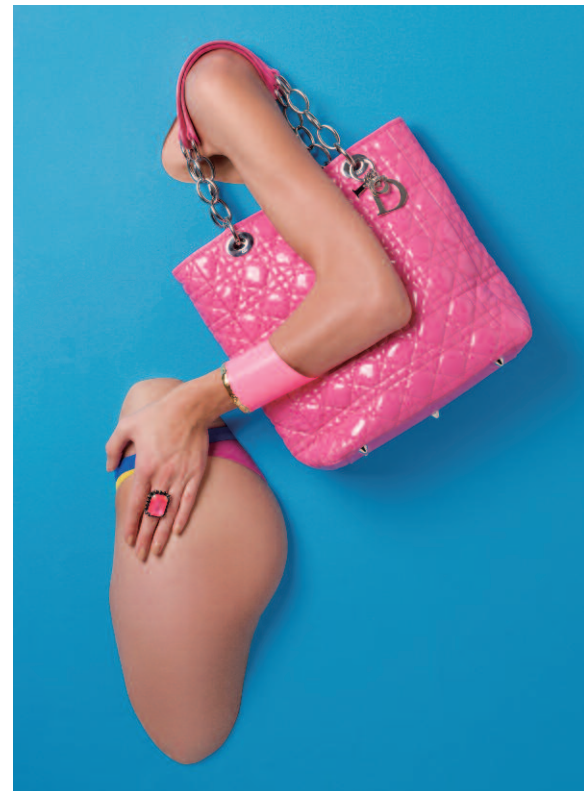
STERN #36 "AUS DEM SCHÄTTEN GETRETEN" 2006 GERMANY © BELA BORSODI





YALOOK.COM
DESIGN: FUTURE BRAND
2009 GERMANY
© BELA BORSODI

TATLER#19 "SEPARATION"
STYLIST: DAVID WIDJAJA
2010 RUSSIA
© BELA BORSODI



V MAGAZINE #48 "FOOT FETISH"
2007 USA
© BELA BORSODI

PROFILE: Bela Borsodi

Born in Vienna, Austria, in 1966, Bela Borsodi studied graphic design and fine art at the University of Applied Arts Vienna. He began shooting portraits for local magazines before moving to NY in the early 90s, shifting his main focus to still life photography after doing a catalog for a Swiss company in 1999. Today he is best known for humorous, sometimes surreal images that play with perception, bringing life to otherwise inanimate objects. His work has been featured in numerous publications such as V, Numéro, City and the New York Times Magazine, as well as in advertising campaigns and catalogs for international brands, including Hermès, Trident, Kiehl's and LeSportsac.

1966年、オーストリア・ウィーン生まれ。University of Applied Artsにてグラフィック・デザインとファイン・アートを修学。その後、地元雑誌へのポートレート写真を中心に手がけ、90年代初頭にNYへ移住する。1999年、スイスのブランド・カタログへの撮影を機にスチールの写真家へ転向。現在は、ユーモアがあり時にシュールな魅力を備えた作品で鑑賞者の知覚を刺激し、物体に活力を与えるフォトグラファーとして知られている。これまでに「V」「Numéro」「City」「New York Times Magazine」といった多くの雑誌に作品を提供し、Hermès、Trident、Kiehl'sなど大手ブランドの広告写真も手がけている。