



An Interview With Nuno Roque

BY NICOLAS DELAMBE

I live in Paris, and I must admit this city is the perfect place to meet fascinating new artists. But nothing could have prepared me for this. Portuguese artist **NUNO ROQUE** is not your average up and coming pop singer. If Chaplin and Madonna were portuguese and had a child together, this would be him. He's chic and absurd, childish but strangely sexy. Although it seems obvious that he's playing a character 100% of the time (yes, his moustache is fake but you kind of forget it), his (real) life story is fascinating to say the least. He began to work in the early 90's at only 3 years of age, and became a successful child pop singer throughout his entire childhood. Then, he rebelled and left his home land. After travelling around the world he settled down in Paris and became an actor and a mime working in some of Europe's biggest theatres. In 2015, a couple of projects he has been working on for years will see the light of day, including a pop-electro album. Reality and fiction haven't been blurred like this for a while.

Can we talk about your moustache? What about it? A red nose is the clown's mask and my moustache is mine.

What is your connection with fashion? To most people you are what you look like. So for me fashion is about deciding who I am for the world, what I want to show about myself. But I hope fashion is also a door to the soul. What I wear on and off stage is my mask. You see, a mask doesn't hide you, it exposes you. For me fashion is a celebration of fantasy. Remember fantasy? We need it more than ever. In this day and age, everybody's trying to impose their reality on everybody else. Realism is criminal.

I saw you rehearsing, you were wearing a piano and « playing yourself ». I've never seen anything like that. It's like watching a Dalí painting alive. I don't know about Dalí. It's true we're both Iberian and we wear moustaches, but I call it "wearable sculpture" because it's a suit, a stage prop, and an instrument all in one. I am designing more of those right now. You see, one day I was walking down the street in Paris and I thought to myself: 'What if a piano just fell on me and they could never separate it from my body again?' You know, a little bit like those people who were shot in the head and they can only survive if nobody removes the bullet? So I went back to my studio and designed "The Piano Body". I'm inspired by traumas.



And comedy! People laughed constantly during your performance... Or just by me walking down the street as a matter of fact, but I don't feel obliged to be funny. Laughter is divine though. I love to watch people losing themselves, not controlling their own bodies. It makes me happy to think I provoked that on purpose.

You're in your mid-twenties, but you have already worked in opera, classical theatre, dance and Portuguese pop music, mime... I was three years old on my first gig, I've never been to high school, I went straight to art school. I've studied in three different schools in three different countries. I wanted to become a multidisciplinary artist. You spoke about Dalí earlier, one day he told his teachers he knew better than them and he was right. But when you learn the classics for so many years like I did, it gives you the audacity, power and confidence to subvert everything. The first rule on breaking a rule is to know everything about the rule. But you learn all the time, even if you don't always get what you're looking for. At the National Opera, I learned more about photography and costume design than about music; I went to Brazil to study cinema, but the biggest lessons I got were musical and spiritual.

What are you working on right now? All the songs of my future album are written. I'm currently producing them with two very talented producers. I'm also working on a one-man-cabaret-show, a tribute to France, a homage they would rather not receive (laughs). This project will also be a contemporary art exhibition where I'll be presenting photography, sculpture, video and clothing I've created with LaMAFIA Dell'Arte, my creative team.