

# SHOPPINGHOUR

A magazine bringing art, philosophy, poetry and critical theory together to expose the nuances of contemporary life and culture

# MAGAZINE



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Issue 9 - Authentic Human

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Featuring

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Authentic Human



Authentic Human

# Vincent J Stoker

## Heterotopia

### I. Heterotopia The Utopian Bodies

How sweet it is to observe the misery of others from the midst of known comfort, whether it is while having one's buttocks deeply wedged into the padded seat of a theatre, or while observing the reassuring flatness of a piece of paper in an exhibition space, a safe distance from the squalor and smells of the subjects photographed. Yet one never comes away entirely untouched from a true artistic encounter. Art brings together as much as it creates distance. It brings light to the shadows where the most extreme potential violence lies in hiding, it measures the gaze we cast upon the world, all the while providing a vicarious means of escapism. Art allows us to confront the underlying forces at stake within the world, those of nature and culture, casting sparks as they come into friction.

an infinite experiment  
into otherness

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Microscopic 400x magnification  
Cultural photography 111 x 175 cm

## II. Heterotopia The Tragic Downfall

Rigorous methods, discipline and applied reason, optimization of space, increased productivity and profitability, the search for maximal efficiency, development, Progress. They say Nature must be tamed, but human nature is a phenomenon that must be controlled all the more. This room within the mine, completely laden with long chains is reserved for the most covert and obscure operations of the structure. A basket on the ground, empty, denounced those tardy or absent. It only took a glance at the baskets to know which miners had gone down and those who had not. A basket containing a miner's street clothing hanging high in the evening was enough to indicate that someone had not come back up from the pit. Here, the ideal fail-proof control mechanism had materialized. By adopting this comprehensive vantage point, I appropriate the position of the foreman who saw the room in its entirety, and now it is my turn, to keep surveillance on these hanging objects.

Heterotopia #180011  
Colour photograph 150 x 175 cm



### III. Heterotopia The Non-places

As an artist, one must render oneself neutral, to still certain inner dialogues in order to create an entry point for the spectator within the work. Boisterous souls tell their little stories, producing sweaty oeuvres that impose themselves upon the viewers, fully digested and significant solely to the creator. One should be an artist "for" the spectator, that is, "in the place of" and "for the attention of" the public. Objectivity is taking into consideration the spectator as a being capable of imagination. It permits limitless interpretation, and functions as a screen to project the sum of the experiences and subjectivities that every observer brings to the work. How else can we incite the multiplicity of discourse and stage the breadth and depth of each individual's experiences?

Heterotopia #00001001  
Culture photography 115 x 170 cm



## IV. Heterotopia The Stored Knowledge

Let us fill ourselves with wonder! First individually, and then together. The cramped space of the human body harbors abyssal richness, let us begin to unfurl it. It is not necessary to enter into flights of fantasy about small monsters with hairy feet, pudgy angels with bows and arrows, nor bearded beauties who walk on water. The taste for exaggeration flourishes very well in the here and now. Wonderment is mundane and human.

Heterotopia #LARCYN1  
Colour photography 135 x 210 cm



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### V. Heterotopia The End of History

We are creatures of habit. Confronting the unknown by extending oneself radically beyond one's experience can give a heavy head-rush of doubt and the sensation of intense vertigo. It is about stepping into uncertain and undefined heights and territories. How can you keep from falling when you lack any point of reference? Would you willingly lose your footing in order to infinitely widen the range of your full potential?

Here, the unfathomable illusion physically manifests itself, is it thus no longer an illusion but reality? Reality is ludic, it plays with itself. In certain areas, it expands and reveals itself as labyrinthian. Even powerful navigation systems admit defeat when given the task of circumvoluting metaphysical reality. Willingly losing yourself is a means of gaining heightened consciousness about the immediate space that surrounds us; it is about embracing the chance to become transformed and encounter an entire other self in its feral state. Disorientation is an irresistibly attractive game through which one discovers a perfectly radical otherness.

"Heterotopia: PRESENT"  
Editorial photography: 111 x 178 cm



### VI. Heterotopia Zeropolis

Reason has been thrown out the window. The lunatics have won. Meaning has been stripped and stands naked in the public square. Laughter and levity have seized power. We live in an era of a plethora of truths, which we systematically destroy. But how can we keep a straight face while trying to take these zeropolis seriously? Why shouldn't the Venus de Milo incarnate herself in fiber glass in the middle of a round about? Wouldn't the Victory of Samothrace find marvelous fulfillment when surrounded by garden gnomes? Our civilization devours itself. It renders null where there was once value and meaning. It reduces all to zero. Or rather should we interpret this tendency as the infinite human capacity for reinvention? Of course, Goldorak and Great Mazinger once transformed into monuments, may succeed in uniting us.

"Heterotopia #0001"  
Colour photograph: 111 x 170 cm

