



LONG HAIR DONT CARE

The Swiss artist LOUISE BONNET creates offbeat paintings featuring figures with exaggerated, mind-bending bodily proportions. Her characters usually lack a face; but then again, there's no need for one when you can express yourself with every muscle to its extremes. Stretching and contorting, often in the nude, they seem to shout both their shame and their total lack of it. But what is it she and her critters are hiding under all that hair?

Words by
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Photography by
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Paintings by
LOUISE BONNET

Above: *The Hermits*, 2017. Photography by Nino Mier Gallery. Courtesy of the Artist.
Opposite, Louise photographed at her studio in Los Angeles.

BUFFALO ZINE: Your characters are often roaming in the wild, partially or fully naked—how does that relate to your personal relationship with nature?

LOUISE BONNET: As I get older, I am starting to like being in nature more, but I agree with Werner Herzog that basically nature is pretty terrifying. Which is probably why I put naked people in there—they're more vulnerable in nature.

BUFFALO: Are the figures in your paintings idealists? Why do they put flowers in their ears?

LOUISE: It's pretty, but very uncomfortable. I think they're just itchy but still want to look good.

BUFFALO: Why do they have patches in their clothes?

LOUISE: It goes back to the ropes. I like when things are kept together in very basic ways, maybe like monks' clothes, the simplest way to make a practical thing. But I also love the opposite, when everything is superfluous and overwrought and makes no sense, like veils for example.

BUFFALO: You have said that among other things they represent a certain embarrassment for not being able to contain their body's protuberances. Do you think we are getting worse and worse at accepting the animal condition of our bodies?

LOUISE: Definitely. All the plastic surgery, et cetera...

BUFFALO: What do you think about nudism?

LOUISE: I grew up going every summer to nudist camps in former Yugoslavia with my parents, so I know a lot about nudism. It's definitely not sexy.

BUFFALO: Have you ever represented the penis protuberance? Are you interested in it?

LOUISE: Yes, I love penises. I am not sure we need more representations of them, at least not by me. My noses are enough, I think.

BUFFALO: Which is your least favourite protuberance?

LOUISE: Breasts are pretty annoying. They need all these implements, all the different bras for different outfits and activities. It's pretty boring. But also exactly what I am interested in. Little baskets to put your glands in.

BUFFALO: Were your parents hippies?

LOUISE: Well, sort of. We had no TV, and, as I mentioned, we went to nudist camps every summer. I remember one of my classmates in elementary school asking me why all my clothes were brown, but we also lived in the suburbs of Geneva. How much of a hippie can you be there?

BUFFALO: What do your kids think about your characters?

LOUISE: My daughter says they are very unique to me because they don't look like anything else—except Squidward—so she always knows when it's something I painted. My son says he likes that they have big noses and the toes are long and there are no faces.

BUFFALO: As you know, I was inspired by your paintings to shoot a fashion story, and the other day I was in my retoucher's studio and he mentioned that someone else was inspired by your characters for the hairstyle of another story. Did you ever see fashion potential in their styling choices?

LOUISE: I am honoured! I don't really think of it as fashion, more of what is the best shortcut for what I am trying to say, which is usually articulating some sort of tension. I think of the hairstyles sometimes like the way Yankee ladies in New England cut their hair. It's extremely practical: it's too long, I can't see my secateurs as I am trimming my rose bush, I will just cut it straight across the forehead, so I can see. They are the ones who will survive the zombie apocalypse. Never mind that my characters can't see anything. They can't survive the zombie apocalypse.

BUFFALO: How do you make your characters look friendly even though we can't see their faces?

LOUISE: I have no desire to be cruel to them. They always have their dignity, even as they still try to pretend they are not a bundle of leaking fluids and exploding body parts.



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Figure Seated on Stool, Louise Bonnet (2017). Photograph by Lee Tyler Thompson.



Top and trousers BERLUTI,
striped trousers LOEWE,
earrings (worn throughout)
model's own, gloves ARAUCARIA,
string across chest from
NICHOLAS DALEY bag.
Opposite top LINUS
LEONARDBSSON; box
MARLEYAT; headpiece
ANDREAS KRONTHALER
FOR VIVIENNE WESTWOOD.



Coat MIU MIU, T-shirt ED CURTIS, tights MARIA KE FISHERMAN,
hat DILARA FINDIKOGLU, boots CHARLIE McCOSKER
Opposite: jumpsuit (worn on top) DIOR, jumpsuit (worn under)
and hat vintage from THE COSTUME STUDIO, gloves stylist's own.



The Magician, Louise Bonnet (2017)

Top and skirt BALMAIN, hat ED CURTIS X BENEDICT ANDALLO, earring MY DAUGHTER IS BETTER THAN YOURS, bracelets stylist's own, socks LINUS LEONARDSSON, shoes VALENTINA KARELLAS.









Top and skirt GIVENCHY, leggings YUYAO LIU, bracelet stylist's own, boots ACNE STUDIOS.
Following spread: jumper VIVIENNE WESTWOOD, trousers MARNI, jumpsuit (worn under), collar and shoes vintage from THE COSTUME STUDIO, bag NICHOLAS DALEY, bracelet DIOR, legwarmers stylist's own.



The Birth of Man, Louise Bonnet (2017)





'The Stamp', Louise Bonnet (2018). All artworks © Louise Bonnet. Courtesy of the Artist and Galerie Max Hetzler, Berlin | Paris | London and Nino Mier Gallery, Los Angeles | Cologne.

