ALINE BOUVY/ JOHN GILLIS DAVID BURROWS & SIMON O'SULLIVAN

ALICEDAY, BRUSSELS
1 DECEMBER – 25 JANUARY

As conceived by Gilles Deleuze (an abiding presence for the two collaborative pairs in this show), the baroque is a 'light-mirror-point of view-interior decoration system', an involution of space and time that collapses both to a single point: the universe in a monad. Its substance is reflection: the mirror, the crystal, the fold; but the raw materials of a baroque aesthetics can also sound like the makings of a rather ravishing night out – the exquisite, brief confecting of decor, chemistry, fashion and flesh. Thus, perhaps, the conceit of Bouvy/Gillis's title, *Another drenched night at the Pagano Club*: the club as imaginary community, arcane sorority, perverse or utopian conclave. Hence too Burrows & O'Sullivan's privileging, in their lurid pastiche of post-Deleuzian rhetoric, the plastic as pure potential.

Bouvy/Gillis's etiolated figures, made of plastic, leather and metal, conjure a baroque that has been compacted to diamond-like hardness, its complexity arrested in fetish form. Sporting gleaming steel or shiny black genitals, encased in leather, splayed in pornographic poses or towering like totems, they suggest a short-circuit between an anthropology of the most ancient tribal artefacts and a collective dream of the post-human future. Faces composed of gleaming fragments of jewellery cut from advertisements and fashion photos – Arcimboldo via Tiffany's – suggest a future in which animal, vegetal and mineral have somehow fused, with humanity exiled to a crystal land.

In the gallery's project space garish totems and shrines announce the presence of a futuristic band of guerrillas dedicated to the production of new ways of being, new kinds of joy. In *We Are Plastique Fantastique, Staabucks Fukkee is your enemy*, Burrows & O'Sullivan suborn all manner of precursors to this fictional cause. Leigh Bowery, Sun Ra and Baruch Spinoza appear in the comic book in which the pair (artist and philosopher, respectively) picture their mythical cabal. Here, feathers, mirrors, fake stones and straw make up shrines to 'a people yet-to-come'. Absurdly, the dream of a post-human, mineral utopia starts to look like the paraphernalia of an adolescent's bedroom, reduced to a scattering of crystals, candles, incense and glitter. In photographs of totemic figures, Plastique Fantastique hysterically intone their visionary (and, politically, somewhat underwhelming) communiqués: 'this is the dead time, the time of capital, the time of entropy'; 'latte rots your brain and shrivels your sexual organs'.

There is a particular curatorial blather that appropriates unthinkingly the more easily travestied aspects of Deleuze's philosophy of pure immanence. I'm not sure the writer(s) of the press release really believe their fervent assertion that the exhibition 'might summon forth new, radically mutant subjectivities', but these artists are cannier than that. Bouvy/Gillis acknowledge, in the adamantine glamour of their perverted stick figures, that the utopian 'power of the false' is as much the preserve of apparently vacant consumerism as of any 'alternative' community. And Burrows & O'Sullivan imagine the simultaneous attraction and silliness of a new crystal vision whose only purchase on political insight is a vague sense that global capital is a Bad Thing. Somewhere among the innumerable mirror images of the contemporary baroque, suggest both duos, the face of the future is waiting. *Brian Dillon*

Aline Bouvy / John Gillis, *Kevin #3*, 2006, collage on wood, cloth, bamboo, tape, bronze. Courtesy Aliceday, Brussels