

ubu

Georges Hugnet: The Love Life of the Spumifers

November 16, 2011 — January 28, 2012

Reception: Tuesday, November 15, 6 to 9 pm



Le Matricol Odorant ["The Oderiferous Matricoll"], No. 7 from the series *La Vie Amoureuse des Spumifères* ["The Love Life of the Spumifers"] ca. 1948 Gouache on vintage carte postale (ca. 1920)
3 3/8 x 5 5/8 inches

Ubu Gallery is pleased to present **Georges Hugnet: The Love Life of the Spumifers**, an exhibition of hand-painted photographic girlie postcards by the eminent Surrealist artist, poet, bookbinding designer and critic. These bizarre, lusciously painted images illustrate Hugnet's work, *The Love Life of the Spumifers*, where each accompanying text poetically and humorously catalogues the mating habits of a fantastical creature or Spumifer.

The Love Life of the Spumifers, or *La Vie Amoureuse des Spumifères*, combines Surrealist poetry's fascination with l'amour and Dada's tendency towards deliberate grammatical spontaneity and absurdity. Made-up words, like *bowoodling*, *friskadoodling* and *alabamaraminatingare*, are concocted to describe the seductive strategies of his imaginary creatures. Each text is dedicated to a different creature, describing how it woos, teases, gropes and molests its intended love conquest. Each Spumifer is illustrated by a gouache "beast," which is added to an early Twentieth Century vintage "French" photo postcard. The mellifluously painted monsters slyly slither around the bareflesh of the pictured "mademoiselle," nibbling and tickling, arousing her sexual desire. Hugnet's illustrations seduce the viewer, parodying the human pursuit of love and lovemaking through these adorable grotesques.

Hugnet realized the series during 1947–48 and wrote the accompanying texts in the early 1960s. The whereabouts of 4 of the 40 original Spumifers intended to complete the series are at present unknown. Hugnet composed only 33 texts and one of those texts accompanied a missing work. He created a number of additional Spumifers, maybe as many as 20, which were not part of the final 40 which he had intended to publish as a book.

In addition to the Spumifers, Ubu Gallery is presenting **Georges Hugnet: Selected Works**, a contextual exhibition of collages — including originals from *La Septième Face du Dé* and *Huit Jours a Trébaumec* — gouaches and publications, and unique ephemera made by Georges Hugnet from the 1930s to the 1960s.

Ubu Gallery is also pleased to offer a **limited edition publication package** produced to coincide with the exhibition. Housed in an elaborate and evocative slipcase, it contains a fully-illustrated French version of *La Vie Amoureuse des Spumifères* produced by Myrtille Hugnet, the widow of the artist, and a separate text-only English translation by Michael Fineberg. Ubu Gallery is also offering a deluxe version, produced by Myrtille Hugnet, housed in an illustrated clamshell box, and containing a limited edition, digital reproduction of a Spumifer.

THE RAPIERED ROTTLEBOM

La Torindon à Rapières

The Rottlebom is not frightened of spending, but he gives up his riches only for a good reason—when he thinks that it's worth it. He seeks out the company of respectable women who will not be put off by his unprepossessing bulk. He becomes their trusted ally, insinuates himself so far as to become their bosom buddy, commiserates with them if life has been unkind to them and butters them up by telling them that they do not deserve their fate, slyly disparages their husbands and denounces adultery. At the beginning, he always withdraws before it's time as though late for an appointment, leaving the respectable woman distraught, but then may well come back earlier than expected, thereby enjoying the benefit of an offense at once forgiven. Afterwards he fails to make an appearance for some time, and it's to him that the respectable woman remains faithful. She grows anxious, thinks she has been forgotten and sinks into a deepening gloom. When he comes back he feigns a discretion that endows him with a veneer of mystery and makes him glow with a seductive aura such that she whose honor has been respected dreams of nothing so much as that it should be respected no more. When he reaches this point, the Rottlebom offers a rose to this woman who has awoken in him a desire so strong as to

arouse his reproductive instinct and induce him to loosen his purse strings.

Straightaway the respectable woman is required to give herself unreservedly to him, while keeping the rose in her hand throughout as a symbol of his bounties and his sacrifice to love. He does not take his eye off it, nor off his partner, as he greedily lapperoons the respectable woman who, without even noticing it, has become a fallen creature. This action maintains his copoloots at the right temperature, which has the effect of sharpening his rapiers, two of which adorn his dorsal fur while a smaller one protrudes from each of his limbs. Soon he praxiteens and tootlishes, then shaking his gnolls, he dallicates. The sight of the rose electrifying him and throwing him into a frenzy, he collundarills the fallen woman who wearies and grows ever more helpless. The sexual act over, the Rottlebom recovers the rose, even though the debauchery has withered it somewhat, since he wishes to leave nothing to her who already regrets her weakness and dreams only of being restored to her former virtue.

"So much fuss for so little," the respectable woman admits to herself broodingly.



Le Torindon à Rapières ["The Rapiered Rattlebom"] No. 3 from the series *La Vie Amoureuse des Spumifères* ["The Love Life of the Spumifers"] ca. 1948 Gouache on vintage carte postale (ca. 1920) 5 3/8 x 3 3/8 inches