

# Rebellion through Beauty

Daniel González's daydream believing



With his 'Criminal Aesthetic Fashion Soundsystem' and his cheerful baroque 'Bastardisation shoe collection', Argentine visual artist Daniel González puts a smile on many faces. And that's exactly what he is aiming to do. "I want to change the world, our everyday reality, by sharing beauty. Of course one can claim the streets, but I prefer to change the world the Pasolini way: from within the mainstream system. Always critical but never negative, and with a bit of playful humour, *por favor*."

VEERLE DEVOS

Referring to his exuberant Bastardisation Sculpture Shoes Collection (part of the D.G. Clothes Project he started in 2004), which is full of colour, sexy lace trims, frivolous curls and fringes (it premiered in Milan), González exclaims: "The collection is a statement against the trend of globalisation: everywhere in the world you can buy the very same uniform products and brands. How dull! Well, each shoe I make is utterly unique. I get inspired by different cultures and countries – from Argentinian exuberance to American trash. Making shoes is like making a sculpture: these are little pieces of art consisting of a mash-up of materials, fabrics, and styles", and then he adds emphatically, "but these shoes are wearable artworks." Still, it's about more than just the outer appearance, since the artist says he wants to shake people out of their everyday lives and restore their capacity to daydream and follow their desires. "When women wear these shoes, they change

their approach to life, they free their sensuality, they celebrate. Some say "but you make shoes for divas!" Well, dammit, yes! We have to seduce, to dress up! If one looks good, one feels good. You can choose to follow the masses or to express your individuality. So set free your diva!"

There is no heaviness to his work, no existentialism, "because that doesn't bring much change. It is with feel-good beauty and cheerfulness that you create opportunities for people to reflect, in a constructive way. In the same vein, González created his 'Criminal Aesthetic Fashion Soundsystem', which spouts music with a social reference. And once again, celebration is the leitmotif. Where does this lust for life come from? "I grew up in Argentina during the dictatorship. Back then, my clothing was the way I could express myself without ending up in jail. I experienced how beautiful things and a positive atti-



DANIEL GONZÁLEZ  
Photo: Siegrid Demyttenaere

Facing page:  
BASTARDISATION SCULPTURE  
SHOES COLLECTION  
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CRIMINAL AESTHETIC FASHION  
SOUNDSYSTEM, 2014 (1)  
Ventura Lambrate, Milan  
© Daniel González

CRIMINAL AESTHETIC FASHION  
SOUNDSYSTEM, 2013 (2)  
38 x 27 x 13cm  
© Daniel González

JULIET & THE FORBIDDEN  
GAMES SHOES (3)  
Performance frame  
© Daniel González

tude changed my reality. You feel more energy if you dress up. A nice scent and beautifulness cheer you up and free your thoughts. And suddenly, you can resist bad situations with more ease.”

As an Argentinian currently living in Berlin, González confides that he has had to curb his sensual, exuberant, Latin American self in the Western world. He is now working on a new show that exploits these contradictions – “We Argentinians, who survived dictatorship and economic inflation of 800%, react differently to a crisis than Germans do, for instance. The latter tend to analyse the problem rationally, choosing a solution and then working that out. Argentines, they sit together and talk about the situation until they become delirious; discussions go in all directions, reaching surreal or absurd levels, but in the end we come to a solution, which I find is often richer, more enjoyable, more beautiful, and therefore better.” It is quite clear: for Daniel González, the revolution will either be cheerful and beautiful, or beautiful and cheerful. <

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