

Yuck 'n Yum

Winter 10

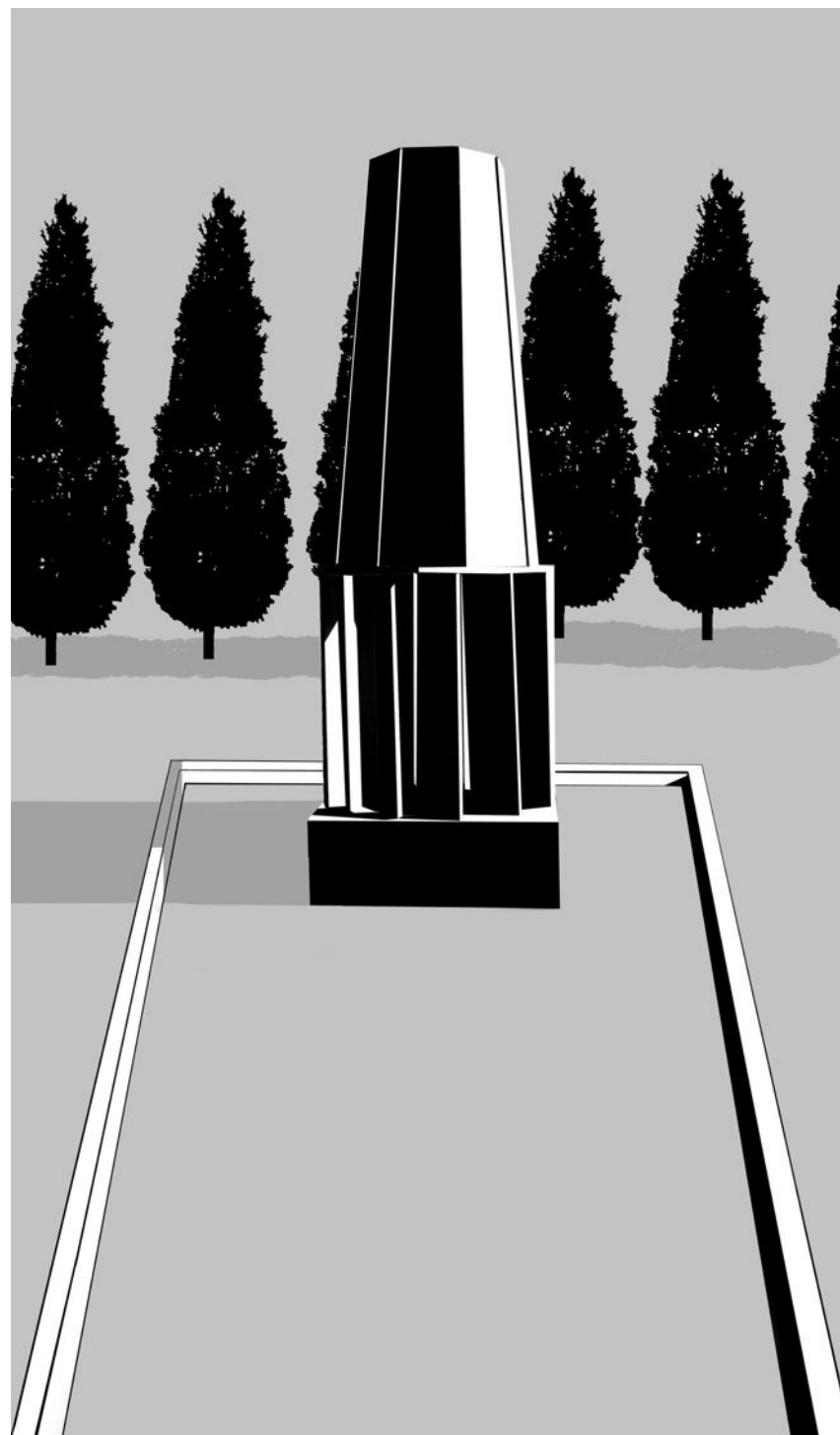


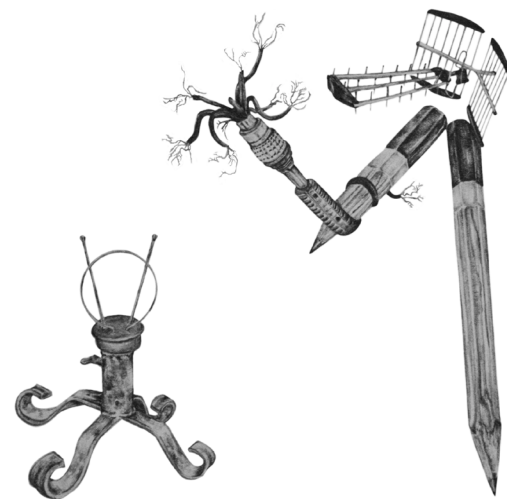
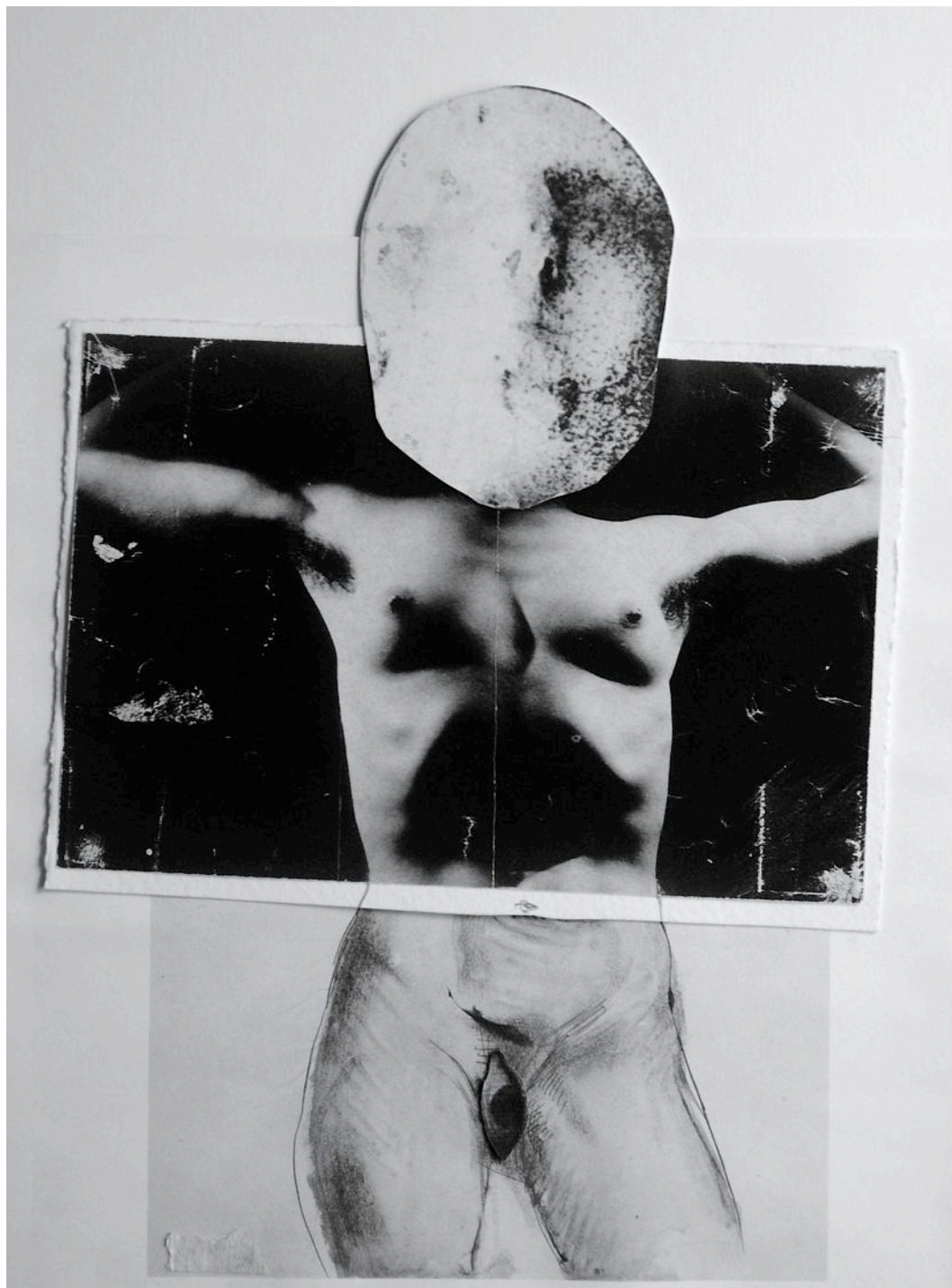
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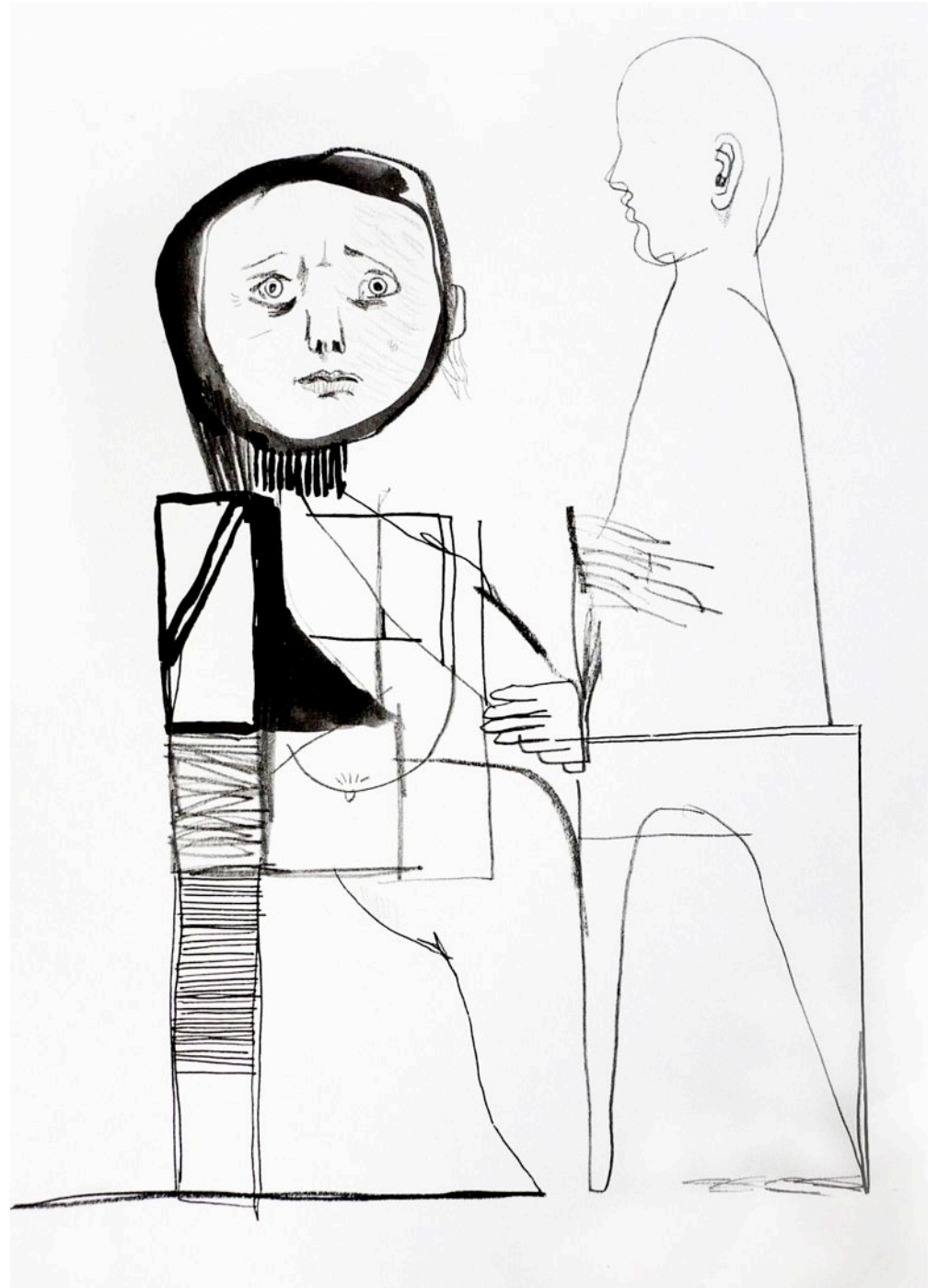
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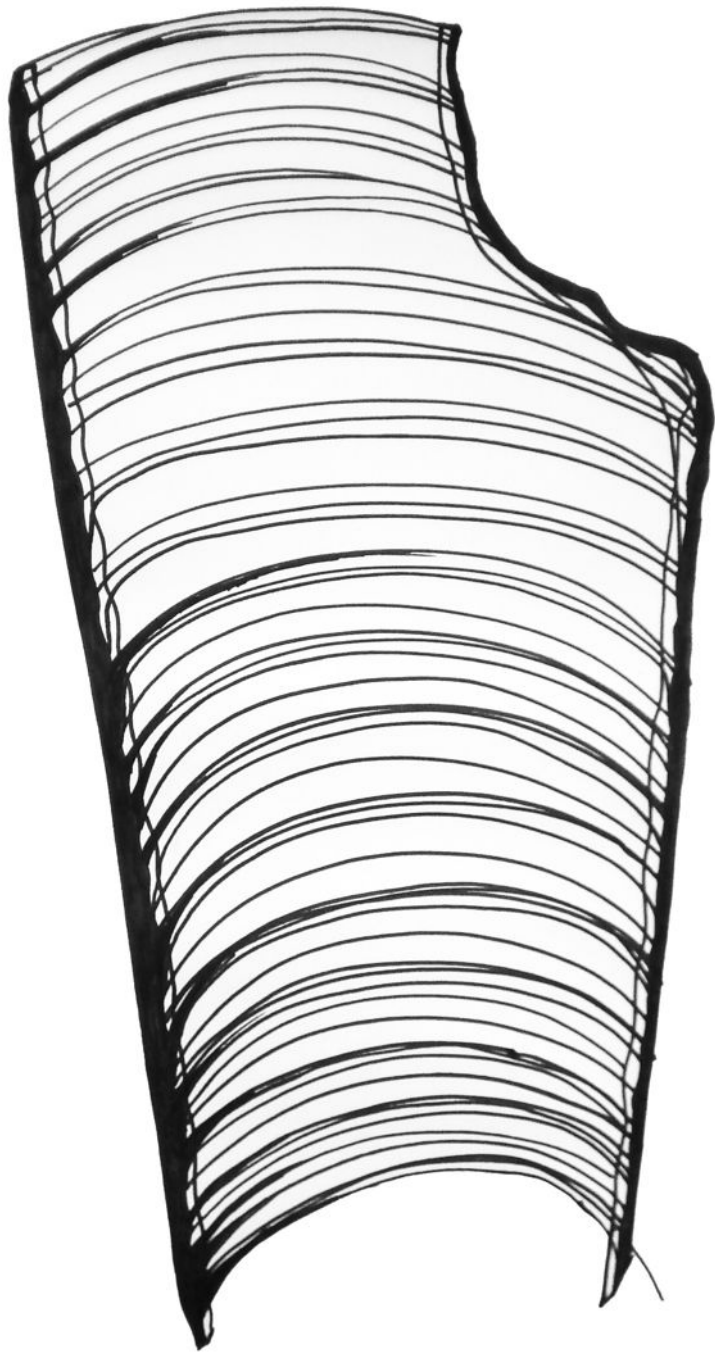

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Martin Bladh: A Body of Work

Martin Bladh is a Swedish artist of multiple mediums. His work is dark, visceral, hypnotic and disturbing, laying bare themes of violence, obsession, fantasy, auto-eroticism, self-mutilation, domination, submission, narcissism. Further beyond that, there is also a tribal, base, essential quality to his work, a kind of saving grace which grounds his art and makes it extremely rare and extremely valid.

I first discovered Martin Bladh when I came across images of him online reenacting the murder and dismemberment of my father at the hands of the infamous serial killer Dennis Nilsen. It didn't shock but intrigued me. I wanted to know more about this man, who he was and what, if anything, he had to offer up artistically. For almost a year I sat back in reflection of his work, personal fears along the lines of the repetition of history preventing me from contacting him. When I finally did, by email, it was not some two-bob-serial-killer-fanboy-internet artist I felt I was making contact with but rather a man who had really broken through, someone living and breathing his art – an art that subsisted outside of galleries and theatres and resided in a bedsit with a polaroid camera often as the sole spectator.

Looking at Bladh's work one can discern influences from Yukio Mishima, Francis Bacon, Hermann Nitsch, Peter Sotos, Georges Bataille, Dennis Cooper, Dennis Nilsen, David Nebrada, even St Sebastian. They're all there, all openly on display, yet remarkably Bladh's work progresses past these influences and finds its very own standing alongside them. There are not many who can transform a Bacon painting into their own, who can litter their work with the quotes of writers and philosophers and have those words seem more their own than their owners'. Martin Bladh can, and does. His arrangement of collages, his cut ups and pasting, his personal markings, all lend a uniqueness to what he does that is unmistakable: everything he produces signed with a signature that cannot be scrawled.

Indeed, the work of Martin Bladh is just that, 'a work', an entire body, a Gesamtkunstwerk. His pieces can only be viewed separately, but they never make more sense than when seen within the context of his overall oeuvre. Through a bombardment of the senses, which comes from full exposure to Bladh's art, one acquires a kind of cognitive idea of his expression and no one part represents that better than the whole – the body.



during any discussions about his past. In fact the only time the prospective agent seemed likely to express any feelings at all was when he broke into a lengthy monologue about numbers. During this exchange Blomeier began to speak of the poetry that was expressed by certain equations, of a perfect symmetry that divulged what he came to regard as the supreme truth. During these exchanges he started to grip the chair legs tightly and once emitted a high-pitched laugh that she'd found alarming. The episode was quickly over as their conversation had turned back to the matter in hand.

During his six years with the agency Stefan Blomeier's code-breaking skills had foiled several atrocities, and there must surely have been many individuals who'd wished him great harm. So when he went missing last week everyone at the agency had feared the worst. Usually Blomeier was like a Swiss watch, filing reports and replying to messages without fail, but the detectives sent to search his flat had found nothing to suggest any struggle or that anything at all was amiss. Stefan Blomeier led an ascetic life, and the only objects found in his living room were a wardrobe, a few clothes, a single bed and a laptop computer. Weeks went by as friends and family were all interviewed, and still silence until finally the tape arrived. Addressed to the chief, and handwritten in Blomeier's inimitably precise script, the package had landed on her desk yesterday, and it was all that the chief could do. She had to play the tape back over and over, again and again.



irm : the cult of the young men

The Stefan Blomeier Tapes

Although she loathed herself deeply for doing so, the chief of Stefan Blomeier's department sat at the desk biting her nails. Given the sensitive nature of the terminated assignment her frequent spells of anxiety could hardly have come as a surprise. Stefan Blomeier's disappearance had threatened to cause a major diplomatic incident, and besides all this the chief's husband was sure to dish out a thorough chiding for her continuing this filthy habit. She wiped a saliva-sodden finger on her skirt and listened once again to the tape.

The sounds reverberated around the emptied office as the chief gazed out across the river. It may just have been her strung-out synapses playing tricks, but the flight of the birds seemed co-ordinated in time to the music as they jittered along against the grey sky. Blomeier's cassette was on a constant loop, the music easing into a mantra by virtue of its endless repetition. The chief's thoughts slowly became more abstracted as the hours passed and as darkness settled over the city and, once again, she contemplated Stefan Blomeier.

They had met only once, towards the end of the listening agency's protracted interview process, and colleagues were already whispering breathlessly about the man's abilities. By the third week of vetting the outcome was already beyond doubt, and the two had discussed Blomeier's early life in Denmark, his development into a maths prodigy, his likes and interests, eventually just settling down to some inconsequential job interview talk. The chief was struck by how austere the man seemed, with Blomeier betraying not the slightest emotion

That kinda brings us to the chaos of Martin's art and the multiple mediums he uses – not so much through choice but more through necessity and desperation. Text, paint, performance, music, film, no medium inferior to the other, but all holding equal strain of what he seeks to get out. This all builds into his Gesamtkunstwerk and somehow each medium retains the unique artistic print of the man behind them. They all have the same unique feel and all pull us towards the same unique place.

But pull as they might, at whatever they can bring out of us, there is nothing to learn from Bladh's work but the man. Anything else you walk away with is grace to yourself, extrapolating your own obsessions and fears and disgusts from what he cuts, slices and serves up. And it makes sense. Bladh's art/performance are not put on show for us but for him, they are fantasies that follow the man into his most intimate personal spaces. He would create and play these things out if he was floating lost through space alone. His main audience is himself and that leads back to the narcissistic qualities that were mentioned before.

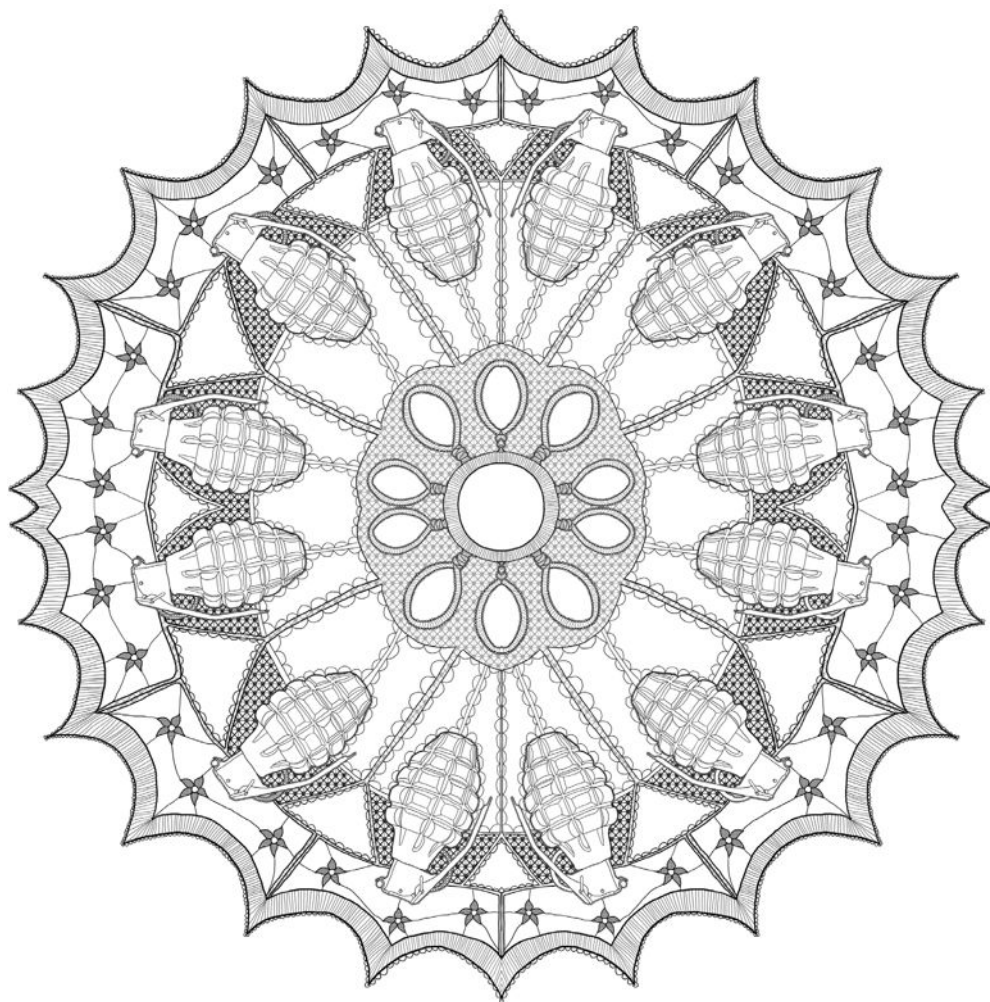
Of course, that summing up has about as many holes in it as a colander. It is the truth of a lie and sits rather unsteadily with the exhibitionism (even the narcissism) that Martin freely admits to being present within his work. And I can offer no marriage or resolution to that. All I can say is that as with the best, his work is full of contradictions and it's those contradictions that make it impossible to define his art, but possible to define the artist.

Martin Bladh's work will not be to everyone's taste. He is definitely much more Yuck than Yum. But it's important one knows of him, if only to disregard, rubbish or become nauseous over what he does. Still, for all the shock in Bladh's work, he is anything but a shock artist. Bladh's motivation for creating is too self-directed to care for such things. And finally, it is in that self-obsession/worship, Bladh's unabashed display of auto-eroticism, that one finds an honesty and an integrity in his work that is desperately lacking in the arts today. Martin Bladh has deserted the middle ground and is off somewhere all on his own.

<http://martinbladh-vf.blogspot.com>

<http://caveforsdecadenceblack.blogspot.com>

<http://www.memoiresofaheroinhead.blogspot.com/>



"ALRITE THERE DEGOY, OOR BUDDLES HERE! HUV' YIH TASTED THE COFFEE OOT ON THON EEKBALLS MACHINE, FUCKIN' FURE TECKLE LIKE, JIST THE PERFECT PICK ME UP POST~SCRIPT REFRESHMENT! IM NO TALKING PONTs, YIH GET ME! D'YA LIKE THE 'DEAL UR NO DEALS', FREE FOR ADDICTS LIKE ME, HANDY AS FUCK FOR WEE DRUG RUNS ABOUT THE PLACE, TALK SOON MIND
 , YOUR BUDDLES, OOR BUDDLES ABODY'S PECKIN' BUDDLES"

