



# Romantic interludes

5 videos, 36 sec (each), 2007

These video sequences are a reflection on the notion of Romanticism, in this day and age when computer-generated images are regarded as one of the territories of utopia. The “Romantic Interludes” work as animated pictures; they take up the representation of the romantic hero in front of a landscape which is propitious to meditating. The character makes little suggestions of gestures, thus simulating a semblance of life. The romantic universe is transposed into the utopian world of digital images. The rebel romantic hero is embodied by the skater, a figure of the urban contemporary counter-culture.

The surface-appeal of the images hides the vision of the world as seen by the videos, in which both wonderful and disenchanting elements constantly coexist. The character’s contemplative attitude, the choice of the colours, and the use of 3D, redolent of the latest technological progress in image processing, carry us away to a wonderful universe. However, disillusion lurks: for with Romanticism, landscapes evoke the infinite, as well as nature’s beauty and might. Here though, the landscape appears as a completely artificial “cardboard” set, as a result of the use of deliberately pixelated images. Such artificiality hints at the limitations of 3D techniques when it comes to arouse the audience’s sensation of the infinite. The use of exclusively natural sounds creates a sharp contrast with the pictures, making their artificial side even more obvious.

The fact of deliberately choosing to reduce that contemplative moment to an interlude evokes the impossibility of finding times for breaks which characterises our Western society.

To conclude, the choice regarding the technique used also partakes of the romantic theme. The technique, called “machinima”, consists in making 3D films using video games and picture-capturing softwares; it is within everyone’s capability. “Machinima” was born in reaction against the much closed companies which currently produce animation films. The antagonism expressed here is similar to the debate which once brought the Romantics in conflict with the rigour and dogmatism of the classical principles. Still, this technological dispute was but short-lived, for, reacting to the unprecedented success met by “machinima” films, the major film-producing companies soon hired the new directors away. And yet, the latter originally had a single goal: to show that an independent film-maker without power could do as well as the great industries.

Frederic Nakache

Translation : Elisa Ferrero