Susan Bozic

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Bozic says, “Carl is the perfect man. He’s young, he’s tall, he’s fit, he’s successful, he’s romantic, he’s attentive. Carl’s girlfriend is in bliss. There’s nothing wrong with him except he’s fake, but she doesn’t quite see that because she’s blinded by her love.”

Perhaps Bozic is playing a highly contemporary riff on anthropologist Margaret Mead’s suggestion that women should have three husbands during their lifetimes: one for young sex, one for raising children, and one for companionship later in life. Of course, Bozic, in these works with their overtly romantic idylls, clearly addresses the first-stage category of husband.

One could argue that (and Bozic makes the same point in a more subversive way), men who are “too good to be true” – that is, men who can store up a laundry list of skills and attributes – are much less appealing to women than are those with average looks and still attractive looks. Of course, there is the ongoing problem that crops up in life that only the most brilliant asocial cynic avoids: love can and does blind one to the truth. Bozic lures us into her subversive narratives through laughter but seems to end up asking, by extension, should women shun Mr. Perfect in favour of Mr. Rather Less Than Perfect?

Researchers found that “highly attractive men of high status” scored much better with women than “highly attractive men of high status” in a survey asking women to rate the success of their relationships. The study indicates that one very likely reason for this is that the belief that the so-called Mr. Perfect is more prone to infidelity. Or is it an unconscious recognition that Mr. Perfect might register with the unconscious of other women as well, as a Mr. Perfect for all, and thus represents a certain risk? The upside of this is a certain residual desire that sometimes cannot be denied. As Kate Asey wrote, “Every man I’ve ever met has his own agenda, some more than others.”

It has taken Bozic a couple of years since her remarkable Incorporation series to come up with a worthy and equally stunning sequel. The earlier black-and-white images commented on humankind’s colonization of nature and its methodical deconstruction. Bozic constructed a wildly wry and satirical dreamworld and slathered it around taxidermist’s birds. Now, we have a plastic mannequin instead. Same difference. It is as meticulously wrought, placed, and posed as the taxidermist’s birds were. And, notably, just as hollowed out. The new work is as witty and satirical as the first work was, and as winning as it is wistful, although it must be said, rather more pointed. The earlier work and the latest one share the same satirical, unswervingly interrogatory bent. Bozic is working at the top of her form and is clearly a talent to watch.


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