

Endless Lowlands breaking up – part 2

Gwenneth Boelens, Peggy Franck, Alon Levin, Marijn van Kreijl

Curated by Alexandra Blättler

02/22 – 03/29/2008

'**Endless Lowlands breaking up – part 2**' is the second part of an exhibition project that – first presented in Zurich and now in Berlin – features young Dutch artists that stand for a new current in Dutch contemporary art, which has met increasing interest abroad. In developing post-graduate programs like those at the Rijksakademie or de Ateliers in Amsterdam the internationalization and integration of different artistic approaches has become programmatic.

In the early 20th century the Dutch author Hendrik Marsman described in his book "Endloos laagland" the extreme flatness, the endless horizons and the therewith ostensibly empty landscape of the Netherlands. In the past century this allegorical flatness has vanished more and more by the steadily growing number of constructive interventions. With the rise of the "international style" enormous bridge constructions span as so-called landmarks the wide rivers. Up to today numerous high rises have become emblems of an internationally far developed country.

'Endless Lowlands breaking up' takes this as a vantage point for an exhibition project that stands for a strong representation of this artistic approach. Between 2005 and 2007 the exhibited four artists have graduated from the post-graduate program at the Rijksakademie. They have more or less left their original medium and work today with a wide range of media. None of the presented artists produce work in its classical manner that can be defined clearly as painting, drawing, sculpture or photography. For instance, photography becomes three-dimensional and hence sculptural, sculpture on the other hand finds itself at the intersection with architecture, writing mutates to drawing and vice versa. Formal elements constantly recur and link the at first sight different bodies of work on a visual level. The common basis of the respective works is a very individual construction of utopia.

Gwenneth Boelens (*1980 in Soest, lives and works in Amsterdam) takes as point of departure the precise observation and analysis of photography and develops it to three-dimensional installations, performances or video projections. She illustrates, for example, the dialectic relation between culture and nature, the relationship of the human being to space or the fragmentary character of memory and recognition. Her seemingly divergent works unites a subtle pictorial language that does without big gestures or ostensible narration while illuminating its objective very precisely. There are two works on monitor displayed, *Coordination* (16mm, film on DVD, 6:40 min., 2007, text Nickel van Duijvenboden) and *Hand – Wall* (16mm, film on DVD, loop, 2007). The fascination for movement and dance underlies both these works. In *Coordination* the person lying on the floor follows a studied choreography with her legs and arms. According to the rhythm of the text the movements ensue in parts spontaneously and floatingly, but also deferred and stutteringly. The works deal once more with the relationship or struggle between two

seemingly opposing poles, rationality/logic on the one hand and on the other hand intuition/improvisation. The artist speaks here of a void and of doubt that is intrinsic in every artistic work.

Peggy Franck (*1978 in Zevenaar, lives and works in Amsterdam) deals with the extension of inherently 'flat' photography into space. She composes in so-called studio settings atmospheric ensembles aiming towards a precise section of the image. In her installations aspects of staging and performance come to effect and objects of daily life emerge next to a minimalist play of form and color. Dramatic narration meets abstract surrounding, content seems to collide with form as does space with photography. For this exhibition Franck decided to show besides her photographs the more and more often presented form of the installation itself.

Alon Levin (*1975 in Israel, lives and works in Amsterdam and New York) combines drawings, collages and constructed wooden objects to large-scale installations. In his work he looks at structures and systems we often take for granted, those that are informed by philosophical, economical and social theories. And it is Levin's serial and modular approach that is quite striking. In their extreme interlocking and encompassing spatial quality they themselves resemble constructed utopias that are substitutes for the human pursuit of principles of sense, order and control. In 'Endless Lowlands breaking up' he shows the modified version of his work *The fake, the future and the finite (A commemoration of the absolute in the 21st Century) Part 1: Sun, Rainbow, Arch (reinvented). 2007/08*. Levin himself adduces in this context 'the Absolute' and therewith alludes to the similarity of his works and the modernist form of prescribing truth and perfection.

Marijn van Kreij (*1978 in Middlerode, lives and works in Amsterdam) develops – either directly on the wall or on A4 paper – his own world that consists of colorful spots, painting, black and white scribbles, words and fragments of sentences. His drawings appear like a mixture of mindmaps and telephone-doodles. Van Kreij notes down and erases; mistakes are corrected, repeated and formalized. With his text fragments that are often borrowed from song lyrics he develops set pieces of concepts and associations. Hence, the aspect of a conscious composition is reduced to absurdity. What appears to be unknowingly is well thought out and what seems to be spontaneous turns out to be constructed. In the exhibition he shows the over-sized, connoted black square as wall painting that often reappears in his works as 'black square man'. It seems to stand out of poise with his wagging legs and arms while it balances on the shoulder his small colorful brother.

Alexandra Blättler works as curator in Zurich and the Netherlands. She is engaged for the foundation BINZ39 in Zurich and Coalmine – centre for contemporary photography and museum of photography in Winterthur. Currently she prepares as co-curator a comprehensive exhibition of contemporary art at the Kunsthaus Zurich.

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