

Today: History

history painting in contemporary drawing

History painting is an art historical genre. It is a work that chooses its motives from 'history', a narrative. We know of, in particular from the seventeenth century, paintings of a biblical story or of an event of national importance. But actually history painting goes back at least to Roman pillars and arches, with their depiction of battles and political events.

In this exhibition the genre takes on a contemporary view. In drawings which seem to suggest a certain degree of narrative structure: a history. Not just actual historical but above that, work that creates history in the imagination. History, of course, exists except in grand and compelling events also in personal and intimate events: history is national or continental, and also: regional or individual. The exhibition presents these two aspects of "history" combined with the connotation of "history" as an indication of the 'narrative' or 'story'.

The exhibition originated from drawing, a medium that today can rejoice in a renewed interest as an autonomous form of art. Drawing is a medium in which the history of the emergence of the work usually remains openly visible. All inscriptions of events leave their traces in the work, and the immediacy of the line and the movement often remains separately visible on a more vulnerable carrier: often paper. In this sense, drawing is the history piece of the artwork itself. Even in the more academic tradition drawing is to be recognized as a documentation of the genesis of the work of art. Think of the drawn preliminary studies in the academic tradition of the nineteenth century: many steps in the development of a work are 'documented' in drawings and sketches.

- As if

- A work by Ton Kruse -

In the entrance, the doorway of the exhibition hall a playhouse is built. It is not possible to enter the exhibition space by going past this little cottage: visitors must stoop and crawl to go through the house, to enter the exhibition space.

When one bends and moves through the door, the house leads into an area of 'play'. Inside is a small table bearing a small tea set. Next to it is a small chair. On the floor is a small floor mat. In the corner of the room sits a person dressed in a fox-suit. The person pretends, does "as if" he / she is drinking tea.

The visitor crawls through the room, past the furniture, over the floor mat, along the 'foxperson' to the back door, and enters the exhibition space.

In the exhibition space is placed centrally a tribune. The stand 'stands on legs', which means that the bottom row of benches is not easy to enter, but begins too high. One may well come to sit down on them, but then one has to climb.

The benches mount up and do not stop at the ceiling. The ceiling trims the stand: you can only sit on the upper benches if you bend down and you squeeze yourself in between the seat and the ceiling. The top row of benches is placed so high against the ceiling so that you can not sit down on them.

The works that make up the exhibition are placed on the walls of the exhibition space.

The following artists contribute work:

- Rens Krikhaar

The drawings of Rens Krikhaar originate in series, several works exist as sub-headings under a title. Drawings like the chapters of a book, or snapshots of a history. In the images Rens is making since his graduation in 2009, he approaches the exploration travels and naval battles of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. A world where the 'terra incognita' still existed, and where the not-knowing (incognita) leaves room for the imagination.

With firm and gentle strokes Rens builds, sometimes in sketchy shading, dark and adventurous images with an often dramatic chiaroscuro. The turning point of the abstraction of line, movement and trait to figuration, remains visible in sketchy forms and movements, that except refer to things that exist "in the world" can also be read as patterns.

- Ton Kruse

In 1998 I started a project entitled "the boys' books series". So far this has yielded drawings that come from the pleasure of drawing and the adventurous and imaginative stories of the boys' books and stories from my youth. The relationship between children and animals have a special place in these drawings. These human-animal relations refer for me to the nature of man, his animality, and the desire for a selfless love in contrast to the reality of the struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest. Apart from the unpredictable and the self of man transcending property of the animal, which perhaps looks friendly but can suddenly appear dangerous, I also found a relevant capacity in this image of the relationship between humans and animals in boys' books. A relationship that therefore represents in an ambiguous manner ideals of love, loyalty and friendship, together with the adventure of the unpredictable and the dangerous.

In the drawings, I wanted to suggest a narrative structure, by which each work work has a virtually infinite number of (unrealized) 'befores' and 'afters'. At the same time, it is possible for every drawing to be connected in the imagination to each other, in a not yet completed narrative concept. While, in fact, they are made as autonomous works without any pre-conceived narrative concept. The suggestion of history arises from the work itself, and not from its origin.

What I find interesting in drawing is how the lines that I draw, the movements that I make, the forms and structures that arise in the work, can be read (with which I also refer to the reading of the boys books), in certain constellations, as references to things that exist in "the world": abstract picture elements "become" animals, children, a place, and a story. In that sense, each drawing is actually a Rorschach test. But a Rorschach test that everyone understands, to some extent, in the same way. I find it fascinating how objective signs become in the imaginative perception a world, and that this world is shared by both myself as creator (and the first viewer) and the various subsequent viewers. This is why, I think, that what is often understood as the "interpretation" of works of art, must rather be understood as "understanding" - because it is less strictly individual and subjective than the word "interpretation" seems to suggest.

- Nanda Runge

Nanda Runge makes in her washed ink drawings images of her own history. Travelling, as well as at home in her studio, she makes images of where she is. Watching and drawing become one in her work. What she sees she captures in motion and in tones.

Nanda's work is thus literally a documentation of her history: where she was, what she saw and how she moved the brush over the paper. What was becomes actual in watching her work. The viewer becomes for a moment who Nanda was, sees through and in the work what she saw. In the tracking of the movements, in connecting these into the forms, the viewer discovers places in the world. Experiencing Nanda's work is traveling to the places of her history and make them your own.

The sensitivity of Nanda's work is a poetry of impermanence, holding onto what has passed. A function that works of art have in their entirety, and what is included in Heidegger's concept of "keeping", becomes central in Nanda's work: in the work remains a time and a place, a way of being, although these have passed .

- Margreet Bouman

The drawings of Margreet Bouman are in a different way about personal history. They are not about the places where she was, but about her own body, and more specifically: her own face, as it was - as it was experienced. At the same time the work of Margreet enters a tension between the historical and the autonomy of the work itself. For how is the relationship between watching one's own face there and then, and drawing what one sees? How autonomous is drawing relative to what you see: choosing colors, making movements, the events that happen on the paper. What is seen, what is experienced, what happened involuntarily and what is chosen? The historicity of the subject turns Margreet Bouman to question, and by doing so the question of who one is - over time - comes along. Are you now who you were then? Is your identity autonomous or enters this autonomy the same tension as the work of Margreet does itself: is your identity partly determined by arbitrary choices limited to that time and place?

Ton Kruse

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<http://renskrikhaar.com/>

<http://www.nandarunge.nl/www.nandarunge.nl/Welkom.html>

<http://www.margreetbouman.nl/>

<http://www.tonkruse.nl/>