

PhilippvonRosenGalerie

Koen van den Broek

The Dog

Opening on March 8, 2019 from 7 until 9 pm

Exhibition from March 9 to April 27, 2019

The artist is present

If after carnival the dog has to get some fresh air again and a walk follows the celebrations, it should lead to our gallery. There is no need to take the pet with you, because *The Dog* is already here in the form of our seventh exhibition with works by the Belgian painter Koen van den Broek. We are delighted to open this exhibition with new paintings and - for the first time in van den Broek's oeuvre – charcoal drawings on March 8, 2019 at 7 pm.

For this show van den Broek used photographs that he took during extensive walks with his Scottish collie through the landscape surrounding his house in Schilde near Antwerp. Accordingly, in the new paintings we see no more American city views or landscapes, no deserts, no motorway bridges. Rather, van den Broek paints his homeland: fields, meadows, forests, gates, paddocks, paths, a cultural landscape of the European West. Often the center of the painting is more or less a plant structuring the picture surface, which not only defines left and right, but also foreground and background.

For these paintings van den Broek has chosen a palette that is partly new for him. The colors are subdued, the light predominantly diffuse, as if the sun was seldom shining in Belgium. The leaves of the plants are yellow and partly have black spots, showing signs of decay, as if they fell off with the next gust of wind. With their reddish shoots, they look like plant depictions in Art Nouveau style and with their fleshiness they also have an erotic side, like limbs in nudes from the oeuvre of Egon Schiele or Gustav Klimt. All in all, the works are permeated by a moment of melancholy and fragility. van den Broek thus sets a signal for the finiteness of our existence. In contrast, the earlier works, especially the typical border motifs, stand for permanence and strength.

With these paintings van den Broek by no means denies his pictorial-conceptual past. The interest in the photographic gaze and thus also the interest in relating the two media, or as a painter in dealing with the medium of photography, remain. The composition of the image continues to be determined by photography; the compositional decisions are made with the selection of the photographs. Yet van den Broek's new works achieve a very special, perhaps even mature, mood. He is no longer the adventurer "on the road" who drives through the American West with loud music in his car and tries to capture the sublime of this landscape in his paintings. Rather, he is a man who has learned to enjoy his home and who can see the beauty in the little things – a plant, a shadow from the fence of a paddock on his daily walk.

Of course, van den Broek will not forget or even neglect the American landscape and the great metropolises of the American West. In our exhibition they are present in charcoal drawings. They were made at van den Broek's home – again after photographs taken by the painter over the last 20 years – with coal from his fireplace. The line is correspondingly energetic and the appearance of the works correspondingly rough, reminiscent of charcoal drawings from German Expressionism. But van den Broek was not driven by the emotion that underlies these works from the early 20th century. His drawings are – in terms of content – just as conceptually dry and hard as his paintings have always been.

For further pictures and information please contact the gallery.