

Pressrelease:

Koen van den Broek – Journey

Opening on March 19, 2010 at 7.00 p.m. in the presence of the artist.

Exhibition runs from March 20 through April 30, 2010

On March 19, 2010, we inaugurate at 7.00 p.m. our third exhibition with works by the Belgian painter Koen van den Broek (*1973). We are glad to have the chance to show van den Broek parallel to his survey-exhibition *Curbs & Cracks* in the Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst (S.M.A.K. – running through May 16, 2010) in Gent, Belgium.

For *Journey* van den Broek has assembled a group of works under a title that refers to the origin of his paintings. They are based on photographs that he takes on journeys mainly in the USA. His paintings are, however, also trips, research excursions on the field of painting and its conditions, its relations to photography and its examination of the possibilities between abstraction and figuration. Finally, the title has an extra meaning in the sense that we are in the position to show for the first time – after the exhibition *Preview* in the Royal Museum of Fine Arts (January 22 - February 28, 2010) – works on paper. These are for van den Broek, who up to now only worked in oil on canvas, on the one side a journey into a new artistic world and on the other side they are reminding us of typical documentations of a trip – insofar as they permit, as an easy-to-carry media, the immediate transfer of impressions of being on the road.

Van den Broek, with this exhibition, goes one step further – compared to his previous oeuvre. It is clear that he always played with the discrepancy of abstraction and figuration, and with the illusory spatiality of the image and the two-dimensionality of the canvas. However, even in the most reduced depictions of banal motives like curbs or shadows we saw an intense play with reality and its tones of light, with – if you want – almost climatic atmospheres. With his newer works he goes farther in the sense that he reduces the relation of his paintings and reality and that he abstracts more radically: not all details of a painting can be easily derived from the experience of reality, a reality to which he takes a distance already in the beginning of the process of production of the work by choosing with his photography topics that are not typical – to say the least – and that normally can barely be considered worth the while to be painted: a pastose application of the paint, running and dripping paint make us understand the work rather as a radical painterly, mainly abstract composition than anything else. Still, the source of the paintings, the photography, remains visible. With this painterly strategy, the viewer is challenged to do a research of the relation of the just recognizable reality of the world and the reality of the painting.

Contrary to that, the works on paper look lighter. An elaborate preparation of the paper is – different than with the canvas of the paintings – not necessary. And by using the acrylic paint that dries quickly van den Broek creates works that seem to be snapshots of reality and atmosphere, almost as if he had been painting on an easel in the landscape like the painters of the school de Fontainebleau. However: even in the works on paper the photography – the contemporary media per se – is the source material. And van den Broek does not depict romantic landscapes, impressions of a sublime reality, but mainly views of cities and streets, of the objects that are part of our daily life and that do not belong to the dreamlike phantasies of nature.

For more information and / or images please contact the gallery.