
Philipp von Rosen Galerie

Koen van den Broek

Behind the Camera

Exhibition from September 3 to October 22, 2016

Opening on September 2, 2016 at 6.00 pm

We are proud to present on the occasion of DC OPEN Koen van den Broek's sixth exhibition at the gallery!

Koen van den Broek is often erroneously seen mainly as a painter of borders, land- or cityscapes. However, he always dared more than just to fulfill the cliché. Thus, he created works that did not use photographs taken mainly during trips to the South of the USA as the basis of his paintings. On the contrary, in the last years he has composed rather abstract works with the help of the computer. For that matter he isolated elements of earlier paintings and sampled them in new compositions in Photoshop. And these compositions were used as the basis for the new paintings. He remained true to what he had done before by using self-created blueprints for his paintings, however, he superseded the photograph and its depicted reality.

With the works that we show in our upcoming exhibition, Koen van den Broek seemingly regressed. Because we see, more than ever, readable landscapes, objects, and even persona. Everything is directly related to his photographs that are used again one on one for the composition. The title of the new show is *Behind the Camera*. With it and with the works shown, van den Broek stresses that it is in fact he himself who is using the camera as an important tool for his compositions. It is he, the artist, who is shooting these very personal photographs with his camera, acting as a photographer – he is not just using found photographed images. And in some of the works he even adds a somewhat uncanny atmosphere, adding a lot of emotional energy to his works (while in earlier times his paintings rather restrained any emotional aspect).

While this new development seems to be a step back towards 'traditional' ways of painting, one should not forget that van den Broek's oeuvre was always characterized by swinging forward and backward. It was motivated by the search for the answer to the question of what is possible in today's painting, taking into account the contemporary techniques and possibilities. In the beginning of his career he used photography as a 'sketch' for exactly this reason. The paintings can be seen as a mixture of abstraction and figuration, stressing equally form and content. And again for this reason he used Photoshop for the compositions in his more recent paintings.

The surprising introduction of figures in his latest paintings (for example: *Shoulder* or *Self Portrait. Pool*) only seemingly comes without presuppositions. These images of figures that obviously show himself respectively his shadow draw on discourses that are known from the history of the images for reflecting the creative processes of an artist. Be it, that the 'invention' of painting has been constructed as the outline of a beloved person that is about to leave, so that it (the person) remains still palpable. Be it, that the artist, as is well known, is depending on a (technical) instrument, the mirror or the camera, in order to get an image of himself. Self portraits and portraits done with the help of

Philipp von Rosen Galerie

shadows bring to mind the specific conditions of the media painting and photography and they play off the one against the other. And thus van den Broek is even with these newest paintings continuously working with the topics that interest him in general: the mutual relation of the media.

A feature of van den Broek's oeuvre is that he cannot be reduced to a specific linear direction, suggesting the modernist phantasm of a targeted evolution as real. Rather, he shows us with his oeuvre that everything is equally eligible without losing the sight of the quality of painting. And this is what defines our current exhibition as well.

In 2003 he took part in the exhibition *Matisse and Beyond* in San Francisco's MoMA and was thus placed in a show with the artists that interested him most. In addition to that, he had single exhibitions in Hasselt (Z33, 2001), Salamanca (Domus Artium, 2004), Deurle (Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens, 2005), Maastricht (Bonniefanten Museum, cooperative works with John Baldessari, 2008), Antwerp (Royal Museum of Fine Arts, 2010), Ghent (SMAK, 2010), Riva del Garda (Museo Alto Garda, 2012) and Bremen (Museum Weserburg, artist space, 2016). Directly after our opening, Koen van den Broek will be doing the show *Borderline* in the so-called Antwerp Tower, a show curated by the MuHKA, Antwerp, with paintings and works on paper that had been used in OPERA-Project executed for the Flemish opera.

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