

Bas de Wit

Duck and cover

Exhibition from October 16 through December 18, 2010

Opening on October 15, 2010 between 7.00 and 9.00 pm

On October 15 we inaugurate with *Duck and cover* our third exhibition with the Dutch painter and sculptor Bas de Wit (*1977), who had a single exhibition in the Bonnefanten Museum in Maastricht earlier this year.

With its title *Duck and cover* de Wit cites the U.S. Federal Civil Defense Administration that asked its citizens in the early 50ies to duck and cover on the occasion of an atomic attack. With reference to the works in the show, this can only mean that we shall turn off our gaze if we are not able to stand and bear the toughness and radicalness of the works.

Already the first painting, *Amuse me or loose me*, takes us on a journey to Absurdistan. The old man, only slightly moved out of the center, threatens the personal surrounding him that he will die unless they amuse him. With the title de Wit gives Neil Postmans thesis – "Amusing Ourselves to Death" – a twist and describes the amusement as a strategy for salvation. That reminds us of the "dance on the volcano" that took place during the Weimar Republic and that was taken as a way out of the miserable situation in which people were living.

Likewise, the sculpture *A moment on the lips, an eternity on the hips* has the character of a contemporary moral ballad. The current pressure towards beauty and youth is transferred on the classical sculpture of the centaur. The beautiful lady that takes on the human part of the horse-man – a variation of the antic, Greek archetype – shaved away her mouth and cut a lot of scars into her horsebody. What remains is a naked, pink *memento mori*. Its drama is watered down by the ironic elements of the towel wrapped around her head – the centaur got caught and frozen to a sculpture in the bathroom – or the shaving cloth and the foam that dripped on the body.

And also another sculpture of our exhibition – *The one and lonely* – refers to an image of our collective memory: Marilyn Monroe in Billy Wilder's *The Seven Year Itch* in the moment she is standing on the subway grate and as her dress is blown above her knees by a passing train. While Monroe was able to confirm her reputation as a sex symbol through this scene, the figure *The one and lonely* is far away from having sex appeal: old, shrunken, bend and having sagging tits, this would-be presentation of an aged, only and lonely Marilyn is first and foremost shocking.

The painting *Oil, sweat and tears* shows a mermaid that had drowned in spilled oil. Her provocative gaze has not yet been blurred, though. It is a most complex, multilayered composition which's man in red on the right side paraphrases ironically the personal of Neo Rauch (the person, obviously a cleaning man, wears rubber gloves and carries a toilette brush); similar to Rauch's paintings, no coherent interpretation is possible..

Finally, only in Absurdistan can take place the scenery that is depicted in the sculpture *Stop till you drop*. Again, de Wit cites a saying, which we know from our current consumer world ("shop till you drop"). In addition to that, the demand "Don't stop till you drop" stems from a song that refers to dancing and living. However, in Absurdistan the old man, who's nose is dripping and whose face, besides his firm nose, is totally wrinkled, has to carry himself with his cemented feet to waters that shall serve as the place for his suicide. But if he will ever be able to arrive or if he gets stuck on his way remains open. He becomes an ironic, exaggerated symbol for men's unfulfilled wishes and his agony.

For more information, images and prices please contact the gallery.