

Fluiten in het Donker

Artist Information

Absalon (1964-1993, Israel) began to experiment with spatial aesthetics and architectonic constructions when he moved to Paris from his native city, Ashdod - in the late 1980s.

Absalon's practice suggests an intricate play with geometric possibilities and the functionalities of space-objects. Several of his works functioned as obsessive interrogations of interior space. Central to Absalon's oeuvre are *Cellules*, a series of 1:1 scale architectural models that he constructed as potential living units. The artist considered them - "bastions of resistance to a society that stops me from becoming what I must become."

Fluiten in het Donker presents a lesser known work that Absalon created towards the end of his life. This video work *Bataille* (1993) portrays the artist, formally dressed - frantically moving across an empty 'frame'. The neutral room and rigid framing of the camera yield an intense sense of unease and entrapment. *Bataille* spatializes an internal struggle set within a white void.

De Appel Art Centre was the first institution to present Absalon's work in the Netherlands (1994). More recently, The KW Institute for Contemporary Art (Berlin) organized an extensive solo show of the artist's works.

Samuel L. Beckett (1906-1989, Ireland) was raised near Dublin, and moved to Paris at 23; there he befriended writers and poets who inspired his thinking - it was then that he met James Joyce. Beckett developed characters that enter dream-like plots - bewildered and struggling, yet find meaning in non-sense and silence. He used French as primary language for publishing work. In his approach, language is treated as an obstacle that is often caught in loops of redundancy. Beckett was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1969.

Fluiten in het Donker presents Film - the avant-garde writer and playwright's only venture into the medium of cinema. It was written in 1963 and filmed in New York in the summer of 1964, directed by Alan Schneider and featuring Buster Keaton. The silent film, takes as its basis Berkeley's theory *Esse est percepti*, that is 'to be is to be perceived.'

Pierre Bismuth (1969, France) Through efficient and often humorous gestures, Pierre Bismuth interrupts the established codes of reading images and events that pervade daily life, from headline stories in newspapers and magazines, to the colour of the walls. In his ongoing series of numbered "performances" (consisting of a short text in white vinyl on a single wall painted chroma key blue) Bismuth creates direct encounters with exhibition visitors through precise action statements. The text is constructed in a way that it engages the projective reading of the visitor. For *Fluiten in het Donker* Bismuth has developed a new "performance" situated at the entrance to Boys' School that frames the entire building as a place of potentiality.

Fluiten in het Donker also presents another work by Bismuth, which is carefully directed to a limited audience of indifference. During the course of the exhibition, fifteen residents of an apartment building across the street from the Boys' School, will receive a letter. Written in the style of a ransom note, the letter reads 'I don't know you' - formally signed by the artist. An artwork disguised as a loose remark that reads like an ungrounded intimidation. Seemingly anonymous, closer inspection would uncover a trail that leads back to de Appel and the artist.

Bismuth's work has been shown at Team Gallery (New York), Jan Mot (Brussels), Mary Boone Gallery (New York), Cosmic Galerie (Paris), Gallery Erna Hacey (Brussels), the Villa Arson (Nice) and Lisson Gallery (London). Bismuth won an Academy Award for his contribution to the script of the film *Eternal Sunshine of a Spotless Mind*, directed by Michael Gondry.

Maze de Boer (1976, The Netherlands) studied at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie (2003), before attending the Rijksacademie van beeldende kunsten in 2007. De Boer has had prominent solo shows in the Netherlands and has participated in group shows across Europe.

In his works, the spectator is invited into 'constructed' environs that test the limits of the real; propelling self-reflexivity with a hint of absurdity. De Boer's spatial enquiries remain connected with the social history of locations, giving voice to existing narratives embodied within a built environment.

The artist states: 'I start from a staged view on reality and seek the boundaries between theatre and visual art.' Being a multi-disciplinary practitioner, De Boer works closely with film directors, theatre makers and musicians on scenography as well as other aspects of spatial design. He has created commissioned works as part of *Fluïten in het Donker*, which deal with the choreography of space and challenge behavioural codes within exhibition-settings. Playing with the borders of what is permissible and actively turning the visitor into the performer of his art works.

Tania Bruguera (1968, Cuba) is an interdisciplinary artist working primarily in behavior art, performance, installation and video. She has lectured extensively internationally among others at The New School in New York, The School of the Art Institute in Chicago, The Royal College of Art in London and The Museum of Modern Art in New York.

Bruguera's work researches ways in which Art can be applied to the everyday political life; creating a public forum to debate ideas shown in their state of contradictions and focusing on the transformation of the condition of "viewer" onto one of "citizenry." Bruguera uses the terms ARTE DE CONDUCTA (conduct/ behavior art) and ARTE UTIL (useful art) to define her practice.

For *Fluiten in het Donker*, Bruguera will present a re-performance of a work that deals with spatial surveillance, creating an ambience of threat, wherein every(body) present is a potential suspect.

Bruguera has participated in Documenta, Performa, Venice, Gwangju and Havana Biennales and at exhibitions at mayor museums in Europe and United States including the Tate Modern, The WhitechapelGallery, PS1, ZKM, IVAM, Kunsthalle Wien, and The New Museum of Contemporary Art. She is currently realizing a long-term project called *Immigrant Movement International* presented by Creative Time and the Queens Museum of Art

Jasper Coppes (1983, The Netherlands) graduated from the Gerrit Rietveld Academie in 2008 and is currently a fellow at the Jan van Eyck Academie in Maastricht. His practice unfolds around the transformation of spaces - through precise gestures and détournements that challenge the definition and function of 'sites.' Creating large-scale architectural installations but also creating conversations with text as 'place' and 'non-place'.

For *Fluitten in het Donker*, Coppes has developed two commissioned works. Taking the monumental architecture of the Boys' School as a lead, the artist embeds within it - a symptom. An architectural element that looks slightly out-of-place yet appears all-encompassing; like a rash - an irritating distraction that refuses to be ignored. A range of columns are added to the wide corridors of de Appel Boys' School. The potentially linguistic dimension of the spatial work is affirmed in a clandestine text, infiltrating a recent Appel publication. Both symptoms seem to camouflage with the site, working as parasites that appear as support-structures whilst disrupting regular movement within the architectural or literary space. His works are often placed as silent obstacles, in need of activation yet perpetually present.

León Ferrari (1920, Argentina) is one of the most significant artists in Latin America. Working across media as diverse as ceramics, collage, sculpture and text - his practice engages with the intersection of power and religion in his home region and beyond. León's written drawings and photo-based works dwell upon the migration of language and visual politics.

When forced into exile in Sao Paulo from 1976 to 1991 following threats by the military dictatorship in Argentina, León developed works that act as purposeful deformations and hidden symbols in the face of forced silences. During this time, León produced a series of heliographs - a selection of which are featured in this show. They present a bird's eye view of a contemporary cityscape, framed as a place where bodies are held in the grip of surveillance, ordered and regulated by the spaces that shelter us. The urban topos thus, transforms into a space of collision, imprisonment and collective chaos.

In 2007, León was awarded the Golden Lion at the 52nd Venice Biennale. Recent international shows include *Tangled Alphabets* - León Ferrari and Mira Schendel at MoMA, New York (2009), solo show at Haunch of Venison, New York (2011)

Sara van der Heide (1977, South Korea) was raised in the Netherlands. She was a fellow at de Ateliers before taking up a residency at the ISCP Program in New York. Previous exhibitions include a solo-show at de Pont in Tilburg, as well as group exhibitions at the Walker Art Centre in Minneapolis and the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam. Her work is represented in collections of the Stedelijk Museum, Walker Art Centre, Stedelijk Museum het Domein in Sittard and Her Majesty Queen Beatrix in The Hague.

On October 14 2010, Sara van der Heide painted her first watercolor drawing of the series *Hollands Kabinet*. It was the day the new Dutch government Rutte was inaugurated; a minority coalition between the liberal party (VVD) and the Christian Democratic party (CDA) that is supported by the populist right wing Freedom Party (PVV) of Geert Wilders. 'Hollands Kabinet' means Dutch government, but it is also the name for an antique Dutch storage cabinet. Everyday Van der Heide will paint a new cabinet, until the current Dutch government falls.

The 'Hollands kabinet' has a long tradition, deeply rooted in Dutch history. As a traditional piece of heritage they went from generation to generation and are still found in many Dutch living rooms today. Its origin lays in Asia, and via Africa, the Moresque influence in Spain it came to Holland around 1600. Most cabinets were produced in the Netherlands, using Dutch oak, but the more delicate versions would be made of 'exotic' wood from the colonies. The cabinet is a status symbol. Originating from a time of wealth and abundance, its closed structure guards the precious objects it stores, while the decoration on the outside are a reminder of the riches kept inside.

Jenny Holzer (1950, USA) is a conceptual artist working with the impact of words and feeling to subvert language and infiltrate public space with borrowed vocabularies. She is particularly known for her iconic work *Truisms* and her LED-sign installations that can be found at busy sites across the world. Holzer's texts – such as the *aphorisms* "abuse of power comes as no surprise" and "protect me from what I want" – have appeared in an array of mediums – posters, stickers, silk-screened paintings, tattoos, projections of xenon light and so on. She adopts mechanisms of production that resonate with popular visual culture – continually implementing means of mass generation and anonymous distribution.

Fluiten in het Donker puts on view, Holzer's *Inflammatory Essays* (1979-82): a series of texts inspired by the words of Trotsky, Mao, Hitler and Lenin; printed as colourful wallpaper. By carefully juxtaposing the verbal posturing of protest lingo, aggressive slurs and catchy aphorisms Holzer's text pieces act as intense emotional experiences for viewers – attacking and exhausting in turn.

Major exhibitions include the Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin (2001); Contemporary Arts Museum, Houston (1997); Venice Biennale (1990), Dia Art Foundation, New York (1989). Since 1996, Holzer has organized public light projections in several international cities.

Geert Jan Jansen (1943, The Netherlands) is a self-taught painter and a professional forger. Geert Jan Jansen studied Art History and organized a series of art shows before he opened his own art gallerie. Soon, he began to paint and create re-productions of famous paintings by artists like Bart van der Leek, Henri Matisse, Marc Chagall, Kees van Dongen and Pablo Picasso. His earliest forged works include Karel Appel lithographs, which were sold at extremely high prices in private auctions. Jansen and his associate eventually moved to France where they were arrested in 1994. The police seized approximately 1,600 art works at the time, amongst the forged works there were original pieces as well. Jansen states: "*But to this day, no expert has managed to distinguish real from false.*" He continues to paint 'in the style of masters' (but under his own name) and maintains an independent artistic practice. Jansen's memoir *Magenta* was released in 2008.

Fluiten in het Donker presents three drawings from the collection of Geert Jan Jansen. Two of the drawings are known to be imitations; one has been verified as genuine drawing by René Magritte.

Luciana Lamothe (1975, Argentina) trained at Prilidiano Pueyrredon Nacional School in Buenos Aires. Lamothe has developed a 'guerilla' practice, often creating works as reactions to the politics of security and the regulatory mechanisms of cultural institutions. Breaking-in, cutting away, mutilating, stealing - she leaves behind disturbing trails of her presence. Lamothe's interventions are not mere enactments of delinquency. Like her sound piece that screams "Desfasaje" - deliberate vandalism interacts with the 'out-of-sync' nature of the everyday. Her work heightens the innate chaos of the urbane only to reveal the sanity underlying madness.

Fluiten in het Donker invited Lamothe to cultivate strategic interventions within and surrounding de Appel Boys' School. She makes the institution a vulnerable place - by exposing its facade to a weapon, challenging legal limits by re-circuiting public electricity and testing in-built security systems of the space. Through violent confrontations and provocations of disorder, the artist not only addresses our internal drives to seek caution and safety but also the latent aggression.

Lamothe's work has previously been exhibited at the 5th Berlin Biennial, Museo del Barrio in New York, Galeria Oscar Cruz, (Sao Paulo) and was artist in residence at Skowhegan, (USA) Arte in Loco, (Rio de Janeiro) and Beca Kuitca (Buenos Aires).

Monika Sosnowska (1972, Poland) studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Poznań before attending Rijksakademie van beeldende Kunsten in 1999. Trained as a painter, Sosnowska moved beyond the canvas to create three-dimensional structures that conceal, reconfigure and over-turn the inherent logic of physical sites. Often embedding rooms with labyrinths, inserting secret corners and modifying walls - Sosnowska explores the morphologies of site(s) such that they not only alter the bodily experience of visitors but also function as mental terrains.

As part of *Fluiten in het Donker*, we present Sosnowska's installation, *Entrance* (first presented at Art Basel in 2003). De Appel Boys' School includes a network of connected pathways and interstitial spaces; *Entrance* echoes this architectonic language but proceeds to heighten its impact.

In 2003, Monika was awarded the Baloise Art Prize in Basel. Recent solo showings include Museo Tamayo Arte Contemporaneo, Mexico City (2011), Hauser & Wirth, New York (2010) and MoMA, New York (2006). Sosnowska was selected to represent Poland at the 52nd Venice Biennale (2007). She will be participating in *ILLUMINations*, the 54th Venice Biennale.