

PRESS RELEASE

Jaap de Vries | solo exhibition

03 April 3 – 15 May 2010

Opening | Wednesday 21 April | 18 – 21h

LOCUSLUX Gallery presents a new selection of works on paper and aluminium by Jaap de Vries.

In contemporary art there are no longer any limits on the material the artist uses to create his world. Therein Jaap de Vries (b.1959) carves-out his particular route, and from the start he has chosen unusual surfaces for his paintings. He is a thoroughbred painter, but canvas has never been his material. For a while he painted on paper that he then cut into strips and used to fabricate an image. Layered into form, layered into meaning. After that it was watercolour, a traditional medium, which made it possible for him to accelerate the image and optimise the expressive power of the paint. Because what Jaap de Vries thinks and intends to do, beyond his own rationale, is to give the material its own chance. In unexpected twists, in coincidences, even in mistakes. A spot of colour can at once appear and cause a stir, just because it is there, without having been conceived. Sometimes beauty is something one receives as a gift.

For several years now, de Vries has been painting on offset printing plates, a totally unconventional painted image carrier but an excellent way for him to intensify that which began with watercolour on saturated paper. Allowing for new possibilities, those of reflection, for example. Offset plate, itself mirror-smooth, is an ideal surface for his swift, thin and transparent painting technique, which ultimately gives form to what his role as an artist has always comprised, activating in the viewer moral reflection, as uncomfortable as it is inescapable. His work presents to us a mirror of emptiness and threat, a laden world that despite its beauty is hostile.

With Jaap de Vries there is a unity of form and content. Medium (painting), conveyor and message are united in the painted image that is itself immaterial. As per Magritte's *La Clef de Champs*, painted in 1936, showing a room with a window looking out onto a landscape. But the window is broken and in the shards that have fallen onto the floor we see fragments of the landscape, like mirrors that have retained the image. As in Jaap de Vries's paintings, the mirror and the image are allied. His way of working is a paradox. He takes the mirror of the raw plate away in order to enable more mirroring. The paint transforms the literalness of the reflecting offset plate into a substantive message that incites us to reflect.

de Vries's painting of a concrete clad interior space, 'In search of the most explicit', is bare and inhospitable, and atrociously memorable. The absence of humans here hurts. 'Broken Glass' reveals a window containing bullet holes in which we see the affected reflections of officers in combat gear, grim symbols of power. And like the girl in 'Violet', of whom we see no more than the shape of the head, the eyes, the dried paint. Deeper than the skin of paint we do not come, the internal remains closed and we remain outsiders. We see someone who is not there. What we are left with is the immateriality of the image, the mirror of our self. Dark matter.

Frits de Coninck, Art Critic
March, 2010

Jaap de Vries presented works in a solo at LOCUSLUX Gallery in October 2008. A selection of his works will be shown during Art Amsterdam 2010. In July of this year, 20 Hoxton Square Gallery will present works by Jaap de Vries in a solo exhibition.

Location

LOCUSLUX Gallery
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Opening hours: Wed – Fri 14-19h, Sat 12-18h, and by appointment.