

Introduction by Rogier Ormeling about the collection of Henk and Leonie PijnenburgI MISS YOU

You have all received an invitation, by post , e-mail or otherwise, with a picture of Henk's latest purchase: a sculpture of a pregnant man from the Spanish artist Samuel Salcedo. When Henk asked me several times what I thought of it, whether he should buy it or not, I brought heavy cannons to bear in order to prevent him from buying it.

"Henk", I said, "buy it, but accept that quite a few friends and acquaintances will no longer come and visit you, they will certainly not stay for dinner."

"Let them stay away then!", Henk roared.

"Okay, Henk" I said, "do what you must do, it's your life, but if you take this road you will find yourself alone and left behind. Alone with that pregnant man."

"What do you mean, alone?"

"Henk, again, buy it, but also accept the consequence that Leonie will pack up her things and file for a divorce."

"If that is the reason she's leaving me, well let her!", Henk roared.

"Think of the children, Henk, don't you see this sculpture is repulsive!", I finally tried.

"It is touching as well", he answered decidedly. This was too much for me. Which does not alter the fact, Henk, and I am telling you now, that I seriously doubt if I will send a congratulation to this surrogate father.



Samuel Salcedo, 52x51x15, 2009

**...IK MIS JE
I MISS YOU**

**26 augustus
t/m 2 oktober**

De verzameling van
Henk en Leonie Pijnenburg
door de ogen van
Rogier Ormeling
gespiegeld aan
kinderlezingen

Opening:
Vrijdag 26 augustus
19:00 uur

Inleiding:
Rogier Ormeling
kostenloos: gratis

Krabbedans
Oudeplein 20 De Witte Dinsel
5611 XP Breda
T 040 201 88 999
www.krabbedans.nl

Openingstijden
Di-Vri 10:00 - 17:00
Vrij: 11:00 - 20:00
Za: 11:00 - 17:00
So: 11:00 - 17:00

voor meer informatie over de
tentoonstelling zie website:
www.krabbedans.nl

Foto: Guido van Hartings DeLuz
Repro: G. van Hartings
Foto: 1028 410702
Repro: www.papierwerk.nl, foto: 1028 410702

Repulsive , touching, hilarious, the sculpture is full of contradictions, so it evokes mixed feelings and thoughts. It could be seen as a personification of the duality of nature, as a blend of the male and female principle in one image.

We could also consider this as a hilarious representation of a male deficiency, in other words, the male envy of giving birth. At the same time it is the acme of unnaturalness, so pre-eminently a cultural and artificial product, in other words: an ultimate work of art. The pregnant man as the apotheosis of a culture that tampers with Mother Nature, trying to get the better of her. A hysterical apotheosis, though, as the Greek word hysteria means womb madness. In short, *Nine Months*, as it is called, evokes repulsion and compassion, makes you laugh and makes you think. At the end of the day, the final interpretation evades you, in other words, this sculpture remains full of ambivalence.

The same goes for most of the works in this exhibition. The duality of nature, that vortex of creation and destruction which is both womb and grave can be seen everywhere here. Many works, aesthetical as they may look at first sight, also seem to have an unsettling darker side. Take *Heilige Krieg (Holy War)* by Dennis Rudolph, a black-and-white portrait of a Wehrmacht soldier with a nimbus over his head, painted after a picture which may have stood on the mantelpiece of his proud parents.



Dennis Rudolph, Heilige Krieg, 56x35, 2006

Or take Andrea Lehmann's double portrait of Mr. and Mrs. Kemmler: William has put his hand on his wife Matilde's shoulder. The same hand with which he would kill her later; in 1890 he was the first condemned man to take place on the electric chair.



Andrea Lehmann, 30 x24, 2009

Or take the American flag on which Lin Felton, also known as Quik, painted the image of a crucified black man.

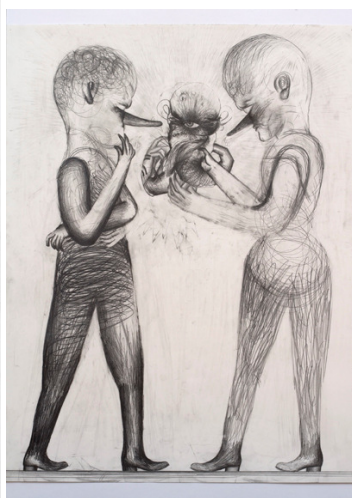


Lin Felton (Quik), American Flag, 283x144, 1998

A man carries his demons with him on his back, see Aleksandra Kopff's drawing, or is brutally taken, you might say consumed, by a fairly filled but apparently insatiable refrigerator, see Dave de Leeuw. Again and again man is involved in a bad story, his lust getting the upper hand, see Ungleicher Handel (Unequal Trade) by Sebastian Gögel. Evil of course dominates the work of Aaron van Erp who by now has painted a complete encyclopaedia of shadowy sacrificial rituals. Indeed, give a man power and he will lose control of himself, mostly. Freedom is not only a beautiful woman on the barricades like in Delacroix' painting, but freedom is also a terrorist, people will always look for evil opportunities, simply because it is possible.



Aleksandra Kopff, 21x29.5, 2011
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Sebastian Gögel, 65x50, 2006



Dave de Leeuw, 100x80, 2010

The question is: why would anyone decorate his comfortable house with works of art whose underlying message is that that man will never be able to feel at home on this planet, as there will always be a worm that works its way into his happiness? First of all because many of these works of art, in spite of their unsettling sides, in spite of the harrowing pain inherent in them, also contain an aesthetic solace. Moreover, they are not without humour. But there is a deeper reason. Drifting down a jungle river you may see a number of huts. At the entrance of the village there is usually something artistic to keep evil spirits away. Art is one of the oldest, and smartest, immune systems: great art does not keep evil at bay by ignoring it but by summoning it. It is no coincidence that all over the world you can find the same mythological stories in which the hero does not gain insight and see the light until he has descended into the underworld. The writer Paul Bowles was once asked why his main characters met such terrible fates. "In the hope to keep disaster away from me", he smiled.



Aaron van Erp, unt. 91x64, 1998
crate,



Aaron van Erp, Patient in bed with a burning
250x150, 2008

Just now I mentioned ambivalence as a common characteristic of the works of art exhibited here. Again and again you are challenged to wonder what you actually see, what is being suggested. "Insight is muddled, mystery is clear" Alberto Moravia once wrote. You might add: mystery is sensual. Have a look at *The Third Solution* by Matijs van de Kerkhof : its azure blue sky with a greenish haze over it is as sensual as velvet.



Matijs van de Kerkhof, *The Third Solution*, 70x100, 2011
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Mysterious in a quite different way, not subdued but rather explosive is *In the Beginning* by Charles Hargrove, also known as Koor, a spray-and-tag painting that hits you in the face. I said mystery: if religions and ideologies claim True Salvation then art will have to liberate us from that one Truth by travelling between the various points of view. Art must constantly remind us of the fact that reality has many faces, is even essentially unknowable. In short, it must guard mystery.



Koor, *In the Beginning*. 210x322, 1990

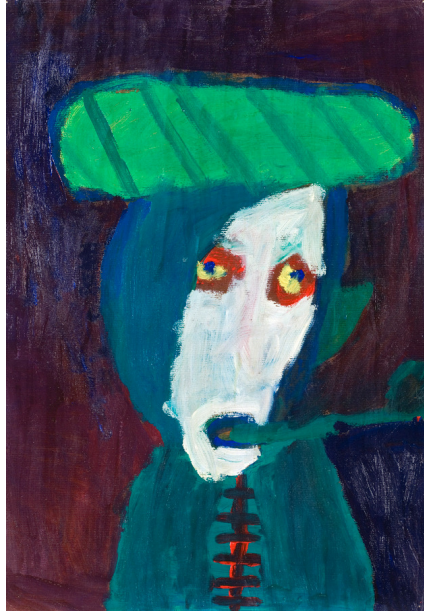
The first time I met Henk Pijnenburg was in July 2007 at the opening of a small Michael Kirkham exhibition in The Hague's Municipal Museum. We were both late, he because of a tailback, I because my train was delayed. The museum was already closing, everyone was having drinks in the adjoining municipal building. Thanks to curator Doede Hardeman Pijnenburg and I could go into the Berlage building to see the exhibition. Inside the hall security was everywhere: men and women in security vests with impressive bunches of keys and walkie-talkies who eyed us in the half-lit rooms as if not being able to decide if we were VIPs or art thieves. Once in the project room with the Kirkham expo I noticed after a while that Pijnenburg started walking up and down in an agitated way. Fine drops of sweat beaded his face, damn it, I even thought I heard him groaning softly. All signs showed that the hunter-gatherer had been hit deeply. And so it was. He kept returning to the painting *Old Man by the Lake*, on which Kirkham seems to have painted a frightening vision of his own old day.



Michael Kirkham, 200x250, 2007

As a cartoonlike alien, a strange visitant he sits by the lake, lonely. Only a robin seems to show some sort of kinship and compassion. Lean, bald, heavy glasses, practically naked like a shellfish without its shell, he is staring into what may be a hopeless future. Practically all possibilities to take his fate into his own hands seem to have been exhausted. Moreover, he is wearing completely wrong socks and sandals. While, as dating site Lexa has shown in a recent research, women completely go off men wearing white socks on their first date. It could not be more pathetic, what we see here is the perfect anti-hero. However, do not underestimate him, do not misjudge him for his socks because he seems to possess the flexibility to suddenly jump up. As a Tuscan saying goes: where there is desperation there is life.

Since our meeting in the Municipal Museum I have come to know Henk as an enthusiastic collector. And that is not an understatement. Enthusiasm comes from the Greek word *enthousiasmos* which means literally that god has taken possession of you. For Henk art is indeed divine, something that takes possession of him, sets his heart on fire, takes him back to the origin. His enthusiasm borders on hysteria. If his sensitive radar somewhere discerns the seeds of creative talent he will do anything to make it germinate and grow. Already as a primary school teacher in Helmond Mr. Pijnenkoek, as he was called, was capable of waking up unprecedented powers of imagination in his pupils. Amazing examples can be seen in the children's drawings based on van Gogh, which easily hold their own among other works.



8-9 years

Already in 1982 Henk was struck by the power of expression of Afro-American graffiti art. Since then he has brought together a unique collection of some 300 works of graffiti. You can see some splendid examples here. Discovering, that is one of Henk's greatest passions as a collector. Could it be that there is also an artist in him? "An artist does not create work, he discovers it", the French writer Malraux once wrote. Over the years Henk has discovered many young artists while they in their turn have discovered Henk. The fact that quite a few are present here, Quik, Koor, David Lindberg, Dave de Leeuw, Matijs van de Kerkhof, Aaron van Erp, Sim Cha Chi, Walter Leblanc, Janis Avotins, Leopold Rabus, Rammellzee and many other artists testifies to the special relation Henk has built up with them. They are more or less his children. And believe me, Henk will not rest until they have ended up well.

To finish: while setting up this exhibition I asked Aaron van Erp: "Are you proud of Henk?". "Yes", Aaron answered. "What about you?" he asked. "So am I", I said.
Thank you for your attention.