

jeanine hofland contemporary art

Herkomst: Particuliere verzameling
Opening Saturday 7 September, 17.00h-19.00h
until 21 September 2013

Artists: Ivan Argote, Gregory Buchert, Svenja Deininger, Jasper Hagenaar and Christophe Lemaitre, and works from a reproduced art collection (Breitner, Israels, Mondriaan)

Jeanine Hofland Contemporary Art proudly presents 'Herkomst: Particuliere verzameling' (provenance: Private collection), a two week project about conserving and relating to an original art work. The project derives from a peculiar story about an entrepreneur who passionately collected works by end nineteenth to beginning twentieth century Dutch artists. Artist who found their origin in the impressionist brushstroke and - direct or indirectly - had a connection with the Dutch city of The Hague; the area where the collector was born and spent most of his life. The collection comprises important works by George Hendrik Breitner, Isaac Israels, Johan Bartold Jongkind, Jacob Maris, Anton Mauve, Piet Mondriaan, Jan Toorop and Johan Hendrik Weissenbruch amongst others. Works that are categorized in art historical periods like 'De Haagse School', The Amsterdam Impressionists, Neo-Impressionism, and the Dutch/Belgian variant to Fauvism; Luminism.

The collector enjoyed living amongst those master pieces and lend them whenever he could to museum exhibitions, though in the last chapter of his life his mind drifted more and more from common sense. More than once he left his front door wide open when leaving for small grocery shopping and he began using his beloved paintings to block his door, preventing them from theft. After a few of those incidents the insurance company forced his family to bring the collection to a well conserved area, whilst the collector had only one strong wish left of spending his last days together with the collection. The arisen moral dilemma of doing what is best for the conservation of the art versus fulfilling the man's last wish, brought the family to the compromising solution of reproducing a significant part of the collection and to bring the authentic works to an official depot. The collector saw his last wish fulfilled, although he never knew he overlooked in his last days a fictitious reality of his carefully amassed art collection.

Within the realm of this particular account of the collectors' last days, the gallery has initiated a small project-exhibition that focusses on the conservation of art outside of the context of the museum and how one relates to the authentic in its broadest sense. Alongside a few of the reproductions of the collection, abstract painter Svenja Deininger and figurative painter Jasper Hagenaar have placed at their disposal a work that has been reproduced in China upon request of the gallery via digital mediation. The widespread of Western impressionist and neo-impressionist art has created a vibrant market of souvenir kind of replica's of mainly paintings by Van Gogh, Monet and other iconical figurative art works. Interesting is that this market mainly consists of figurative paintings and hardly sells any replica's of abstract art. Alongside those two original works the gallery will present the outcome of the customized labor and a factual description of the process. Exemplified by this empirical experiment, and within the context of the exhibition at large, the gallery aims at challenging questions, as similarly addressed in the well known essay 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' (1936) by German cultural critic Walter Benjamin. Are we for example still able to recall the authentic art work in our mind, with all its subtle details, when we are constantly and more over confronted with either photographic (books, internet, posters) or customised painted reproductions of the original? Does the reproduction only uphold the resemblance of an instant gaze? And what distinguishes the brushstroke of craft from an autonomous one? Questions which comprise elements which are as well important within the specific practices of both artists, as Hagenaar deals with the painterly remake of existing imagery and subjects and Deininger's practice deals with the artist's own arduous labor, wherein the eventual composition is an assemblance of deliberate decision making of the process itself.

In the video work 'Feeling' Colombian artist Ivan Argote pushes the idea of the authentic towards the area of the initial intention of the artist versus its purely object related analysis and conservation. In this video the artist dances in front of a Malevich painting inside of a museum and submits himself to its initial spiritual meaning as expressed by Kazimir Malevich in his 1927's Manifesto on Suprematism. Contrary to this video work, the video work 'Domesticated Museum' by French artist Gregory Buchert deals with (minimal) art pieces that, for whatever reason, were stored and eventually integrated as applied furniture into the homes of the artists who once made these objects as autonomous art works.

On Saturday 14 September, as part of the lecture series of the project, artist and researcher Christophe Lemaitre will give a performance lecture on his research on hypothetical substitutions within art and 'things that have been works of art (but are not anymore)'. And - as a prelude to the opening of this two week project - representatives of private, corporate and public collections will share their thoughts on conserving art outside of the context of the museum on Saturday 7 September.