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Drawing archive 38, folder 6, female friends

“All my female friends have a kid, talk about pregnancy stuff”

You see a couch and a wall painting hanging over it, speech bubbles in which I write that most of my female friends have a kid, and always talk about pregnancy stuff. I am complaining here. A garbage bag is added, a domestic element, clean up that garbage (!), left at random with this artwork.

2000, I am then in my mid forties and the decision to not have kids I had made by then. This was a choice that we, the babyboomer generation of women, had. Birthcontrol, career or family. Most of my friends my age and artschool decided not to have kids. But then later I met a generation of younger women artists, and suddenly they all had a kid. I saw how for some of them it damaged their careers. And I saw their happiness and I loved their kids. I never had felt the desire to have kids and felt ok with it. But I had mixed feelings. An issue I was not able to simply wipe out of my life. I had to deal with it. Made several drawings and wall paintings of it. “Biba babyboomer”, “All my New York friends have no kids”. In the 2000’s the subject matter kept me busy, but, much earlier in 1989-90, I also made all kinds of ‘baby’ drawings. A ‘Baby’ graffiti design in 1990; a design for a painting monochrome titled “Childcare”; “Babietje” (dutch for little baby) and “Kids”, 2 wallpaintings at the Consortium in Dijon, 2002. The cute loveliness of it made me drool and enjoy. Kitsch! Cute! Smallness! New subject matter. Then on the boring subject of education of children I made a wall painting: “Happy childhood, by parents that give children goals that are achievable”, 2003. And how about the drawing, “If I would again organize a gallery it would be family oriented”, 1993. All these express the dilemma women of my generation had and still have. And how these can become subject matter for art.

“Female Friends”, acrylic paint on wall and mixed media, 380-340-99cm, Sprengel Museum, Hannover, DE, 2003