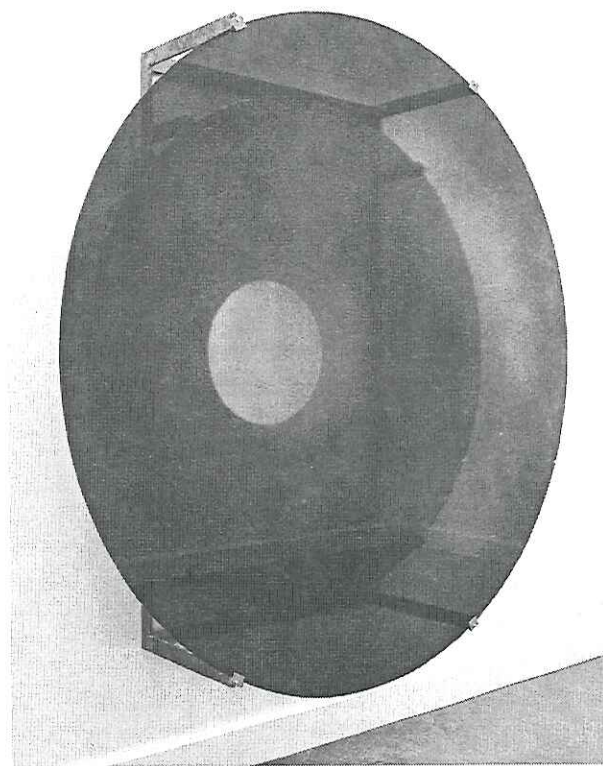
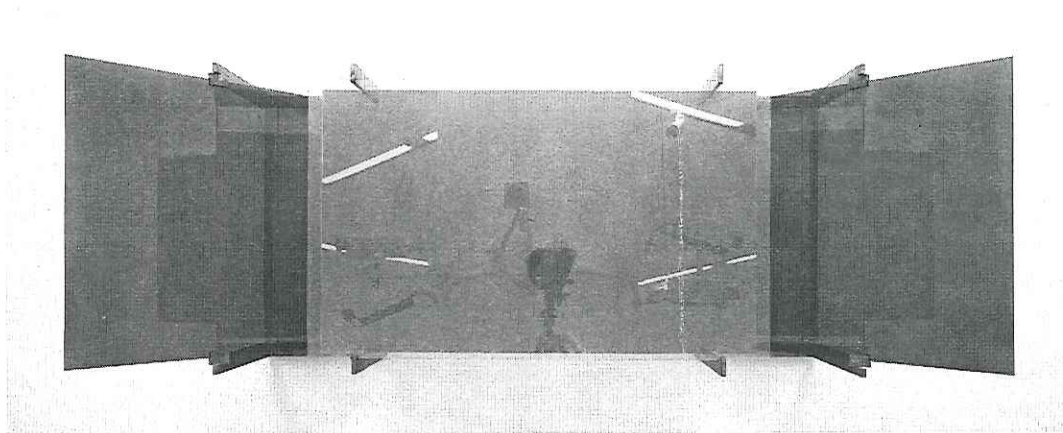


Sight and Non-sight

There's a border in much of Niek Kemp's work, a kind of invisible edge between aggression and beauty that marks his sculptures out for me. It is not only there in the formal awkwardness of the works and their obscured images sitting behind or within the frame. It is as much in the way the works play with, and ultimately deny, our deep felt desires to see everything, to get an overview and therefore to imagine we understand. In looking, we are often too busy interpreting, making assumptions, recognising and discarding. The simple act of seeing gets lost. I think Kemp's wants to give us a chance to see without mental blinkers again.

A perte de vue means something like 'at the edge of losing sight'. The work asks us to identify the forms, to recognise the square cameras and, on its opposite side, the round eye. It wants us to think about the links between one and the other, between bodily seeing and seeing through a machine. Yet it also requires that we physically move, it refuses to mark out one special position above all others from which to 'capture' its visual essence. Or, maybe if we put our eye in the hole in the wall and looked out at the surrounding museum would we have that feeling – and that is something we can only imagine, not experience. We are then excluded in some way, as a way to anger us or make us think about the eternal triangle of artist, work and viewer. Whatever feeling it leaves, the exclusion also forces us to think about the act of sight, and its weakness as a faculty in the face of this work. The confidence of the regular museum visitor is a little destabilised perhaps, the public space of the museum is enclosed and privatised for the work itself.



À perte de vue, 1988

This play with the institution is a secondary aspect of much work by Kemp. He doesn't want to comfort or satisfy the museum and its audience. Perhaps in those terms the work is very Dutch in that it presumes that a social system, of museums and art institutions (as well as audiences), already exists. From our 21st century point of view it is perhaps not longer so obvious. But already in 1988, before the fall of socialism and the real decay of the social democratic state, Kemp is searching for something beyond the simple maintenance of the system. If *A perte de vue* is understood as provocative of the museum, it is only as a way to suggest how the museum can be used. The work, in all its formal clarity and reliance on the museum as a space for art, suggests that the viewer has to get beyond that and into a place for thinking about looking – and asks us to think about why we should value that opportunity at all.

Charles Esche, Van Abbemuseum,
November 2004

Concerning the Birth of Love

Here is what happens in the soul:

1. Admiration.
2. You think, 'How delightful it would be to kiss her, to be kissed by her,' and so on...
3. Hope. You observe her perfections, and it is at this moment that a woman really ought to surrender, for the utmost physical pleasure. Even the most reserved women blush to the whites of their eyes at this moment of hope. The passion is so strong, and the pleasure so sharp, that they betray themselves unmistakably.
4. Love is born. To love is to enjoy seeing, touching, and sensing with all the senses, as closely as possible, a lovable object which loves in return.
5. The first crystallization begins. If you are sure that a woman loves you, it is a pleasure to endow her with a thousand perfections and to count your blessings with infinite satisfaction. In the end you overrate wildly, and regard her as something fallen from Heaven, unknown as yet, but certain to be yours.

Leave a lover with his thoughts for twenty-four hours, and this is what will happen:

At the salt mines of Salzburg, they throw a leafless wintry bough into one of the abandoned workings. Two or three months later they haul it out covered with a shining deposit of crystals. The smallest twig, no bigger than a tom-tit's claw, is studded with a galaxy of scintillating diamonds. The original branch is no longer recognizable.

[...]

The phenomenon that I have called crystallization springs from Nature, which ordains that we shall feel pleasure and sends the blood to our heads. It also evolves from the feeling that the degree of pleasure is related to the perfections of the loved one, and from the idea that 'She is mine.' [...]

A man in love sees every perfection in the object of his love, but his attention is still liable to wan-

der after a time because one gets tired of anything uniform, even perfect happiness.[...]

This is what happens next to fix the attention:

6. Doubt creeps in. First a dozen or so glances, or some other sequence of actions, raise and confirm the lover's hopes. Then, as he recovers from the initial shock, he grows accustomed to his good fortune, or acts on a theory drawn from the common multitude of easily-won women. He asks for more positive proofs of affection and tries to press his suit further.

He is met with indifference, [...] coldness, or even anger if he appears too confident. [...]

The lover begins to be less sure of the good fortune he was anticipating and subjects his grounds for hope to a critical examination.

He tries to recoup by indulging in other pleasures but finds them inane. He is seized by the dread of a frightful calamity and now concentrates fully. Thus begins:

7. The second crystallization, which deposits diamond layers of proof that 'she loves me.' Every few minutes throughout the night which follows the birth of doubt, the lover has a moment of dreadful misgiving, and then reassures himself, 'she loves me'; and crystallization begins to reveal new charms. Then once again the haggard eye of doubt pierces him and he stops transfixed. He forgets to draw breath and mutters, 'But does she love me?' Torn between doubt and delight, the poor lover convinces himself that she could give him such pleasure as he could find nowhere else on earth.

It is the pre-eminence of this truth, and the road to it, with a fearsome precipice on one hand and a view of perfect happiness on the other, which set the second crystallization so far above the first.

The lover's mind vacillates between three ideas:

1. She is perfect.
2. She loves me.
3. How can I get the strongest possible proofs of her love?

The most heartrending moment of love in its in-



Jeroen de Rijke / Willem de Rooij,
Crystals 1-XII, 2003.

fancy is the realization that you have been mistaken about something, and that a whole framework of crystals has to be destroyed. You begin to feel doubtful about the entire process of crystallization.

Text from Stendhal, *Love (De l'Amour)*, 1822),
English translation by The Merlin Press, 1957.

Text chosen by Eva Meyer-Hermann,
Van Abbemuseum, November 2004

'Nothingness'

Lily van de Stokker has been drawing with felt tip and coloured pencils since around 1988. Some of these drawings are executed as murals, which like the drawings are characterised by bright colours and a wealth of extravagant forms, interspersed here and there with affectionate words (i.e. *schatbolletje* or, in English, 'little sweetie pie'), friends' names, trivial messages about everyday life or a statement about art, which quite often exercise the funny bone. For instance, 'Extremely experimental art by older people', or 'If I would again organize a gallery it would be family oriented'.

Despite the simplicity of her work and the controversy it arises concerning its content, Van der Stokker can pride herself on having a successful career as an artist. In the late nineteen eighties her work could chiefly be seen on the artists' initiative circuit, while in the nineties interest for her work increased abroad. Noteworthy is the fact that outside the Netherlands Van der Stokker was frequently invited to participate in group exhibitions, where her work was seen in association with that by artists like Daniel Buren, Sol LeWitt, Allan McCollum, Richard Serra, Peter Halley and Imi Knoebel. After participating successfully in several such exhibitions, she also had a definitive breakthrough in the Netherlands with the solo exhibition 'Beauty, Friendship and Old Age' at the Museum of Modern Art, Arnhem, in 2003.

Many art critics cannot believe that Van der Stokker has no other purpose with her work than to be seen as a kind person. "This is very important for me and so that's what my art should be about. It's very simple. There's nothing deep about it". Such an attitude evokes mistrust. The decoration, the use of fluorescent colours in combination with fluffy texts could indicate a lack of depth to

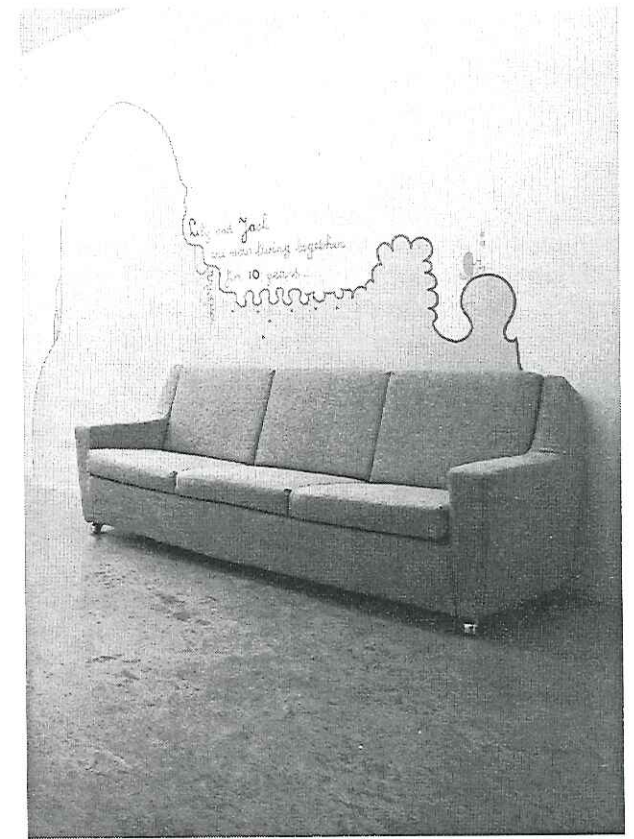
the work, especially since the double meaning of irony appears to be missing. Her drawings and murals could be seen as unambiguous, infantile and pubescent like the scribbles of preteens in their diaries. Seen this way, Van der Stokker's work has everything that is missing in a 'good' art work.

Why, then, have I been such a fan of Van der Stokker's work all those years? Perhaps because I've had my fill of it so much. The work evokes questions on the status of 'high' art and the set of criteria on which this is judged. I like her work due to the sensual, feminine nature with which she sets about looking at the cool male domination of the art world – at least that is what I think. Admittedly, the artist herself does not do anything towards that – the work is what it is, but it could also be something different.

Actually, it is strange that the absence of a 'pose' and Van der Stokker's adolescent innocence evokes mistrust. She demonstrates that art can be accessible, optimistic and convivial. Art as a warm bath. That is something you need to get used to.

Van der Stokker's work provides no answers to questions and offers no key to understanding it. The artist herself always seems genuinely surprised when confronted with various interpretations of her work. She reflects on these for a long time. Notwithstanding, a psychological effect of the drawings and murals cannot be denied. Their overt affirmation, the flowers and the colours that would not be out of place in a child's bedroom, evoke a sense of unease. Something this sweet is suspect.

I enjoy Van der Stokker's work because, in it, representation and imitation are exchanged for real life. She appropriates the decorative with which she enriches formal abstraction. By focusing on the positive and superficial she seems to parody



Installation, Galerie Air de Paris, 1998.

metaphorical complexity. But who dares to maintain that life itself is not complex? Van der Stokker creates a mental space in which you can literally stay a while. I would like to sit down on a sofa under the mural entitled *Come on, get on with it* and daydream about 'nothingness'.

Diana Franssen, Van Abbemuseum, October 2004

Cycles

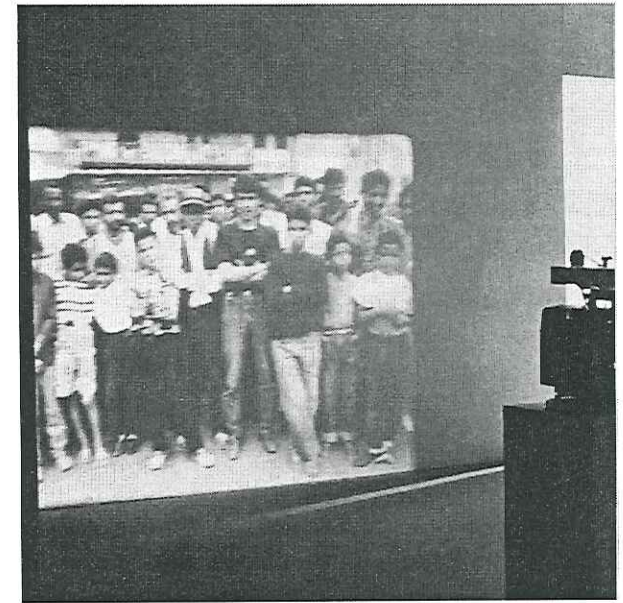
Handstand, Circle, Bicycle, Pancake, Football, Wave, Skytypers – the works of Marijke van Warmerdam in the collection of the Van Abbemuseum have simple titles which as key words describe quite accurately what is being shown. The works date from between 1992 and 1997, a relatively short period in which, however, a clear line can be identified. All of them have one major feature in common which comes down to the cyclical progress of a straightforward action: a handstand being repeated, looking about you in the centre of a group of spectators, riding around in circles on a bike, tossing a pancake, bouncing a football on the head, the ceaseless rowing of a row boat and five small planes flying in formation crisscrossing the sky. A storyline is absent, there is hardly a build up of tension at all and there is no ending, apart from in the case of *Football*, where the young footballer finally loses control over the ball.

Described in this way, the works seem tedious, monotonous and boring. Yet they have a compelling force that captures your attention, precisely because of this monotonous repetition. These works have an hypnotic effect that can lead to a trancelike state, in the same way a hypnotist swinging a watch in front of your eyes can induce a state of stupor, during which your thoughts can be guided in any direction.

Handstand (1992) is a film in which the underneath part of the projected image is on the floor, so that it seems as if the girl is doing handstands against the wall of the exhibition space. The film consists of a loop of unknown duration so that it is not easy to discover when the cycle ends and when it begins again. Small nuances in the way the girl begins her handstand and the way in which her skirt drops down form some indication of the length of the loop. *Bicycle* (1994) is a video of a girl on a bike riding circles around an

empty room while occasionally ringing her bell. The sound of the bike's bell blends with the sound of a distant carillon, which lends a poetic dimension to the work. The continuous repetition of the sounds has a mesmerising effect. *Pancake* (1995) is a silkscreen print on paper and aluminium, which depicts a tossed pancake in full flight. The work shows a cook's dexterity in quickly tossing a pancake so that the other side can also be cooked. The pancake has been frozen by the camera as it flips over and now hangs forever in space above the pan like a full moon. *Football* (1995) is a video screened on a monitor. This equipment is on a pallet – a truly Spartan presentation. In the video we see a young boy continuously bouncing a ball on his head until he finally loses concentration and the ball falls to the ground. This climax is an interesting break in style with regard to the other works in the collection which have no development or ending whatsoever. *Wave* (1997) is an audio work in which there is not anything to see, aside perhaps from the mental image conjured up by a sound going back and forth through the museum of a rowing boat being rowed. The creak of the rowlocks, the splash of the oars and the ripples of a swell create a stream of images that can best be described as the Platonic idea of a rowing boat. *Skytypers* (1997) is a film in which five small skywriting planes flying in formation draw white lines in the sky, like abstract, Morse code-looking patterns, the message of which remains a secret.

Finally, *Circle* (1992) is a film projection of a group of people standing in a circle on a square in Marrakesh watching a film camera rotating slowly on its vertical axis while they are being filmed. In the installation in the museum the film projector takes the place of the camera and rotates at its same speed. As a result the projector looks like a turning searchlight that makes the spectators in the circle visible. In the recorded reality the circle of spectators are looking at the rotating camera. In the recording of the reality it is the museum visitors that look at the circle of spectators. The



Circle, 1992.

original onlookers have become those that are looked at, while museum visitors feel they are being looked at when they are actually the lookers.

Frank Lubbers, Van Abbemuseum, October 2004

Ger van Elk

Tot 2 januari 2005 vindt de oplettende bezoeker vier werken van Ger van Elk verspreid over het museum. Het is geen toeval en een indirecte uitnodiging om wandelend door het museum verschillende verbanden te verkennen. In de tentoonstelling 'Een op een' in de oudbouw, samengesteld door Christiane Berndes, wordt nog tot eind dit jaar *The Absorption of the Shadow* (1969) in een internationale context met onder anderen John Baldessari, Richard Long, Bruce Nauman, Bernd & Hilla Becher en Guilio Paolini getoond. Het dubbele fotowerk *The Discovery of the Sardines* (1971) vormt in de nieuwbouw de verbinding tussen de collectiepresentatie met schilderijen en fotoboeken van Ed Ruscha en *Dark Shadow no. 8* (1974) van Gilbert & George. En in de tentoonstelling NEDERLAND NIET NEDERLAND ten slotte, brengen we *The Adieu IV* (1974) en 'Train Painting' *Adieu* (2002) in combinatie met een werk van Stanley Brouwn.

Deze reeks vraagt om meer uitleg maar wat volgt is zeker geen wiskundig bewijsstuk of een gebruiksaanwijzing. Ik kan u uitsluitend een korte rondleiding geven in een paar kamers van mijn 'musée imaginaire'.

Eigenlijk is het een verhalenbordeel met Van Elks dubbelzinnige afwijzing van de klassieke kunstopvattingen over de representatie van de werkelijkheid en de fotografie als blikvangers. Op de trappen vlakbij de ingang zitten twee heren in maatpak te poseren. In 1969 schrijft Ger van Elk een tekst over deze twee onbekende Londense beeldhouwers voor Museumjournaal. Hij citeert in de tekst uit een 45-toerenplaatje dat hij van hen cadeau heeft gekregen: "Good evening to G and E van Elk in Holland From Gilbert and George in London. We bring to you tonight a special piece, a

new piece, a piece exclusively for you It is entitled when art becomes good (...)". Ze bezingen op de single hun bewondering voor zijn 'goed geschooren cactus' en hun ontmoeting in Londen. Een vriendschap voor het leven is geboren en Van Elk speelt een instrumentele rol wanneer ze op 22 november 1969 vier en half uur met in verschillende kleuren gemetalliseerde gezichten en handen plaats nemen op de trappen van het Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam. Hij brengt Gilbert & George ook in contact met Art & Project, de Amsterdamse galerie van Geert van Beijeren en Adriaan van Ravensteijn.

We wandelen verder naar een volgend verhaal over portretten, landschappen en hun gecomponeerde relaties. Het Van Abbemuseum bezit één van de vier schilderijen uit de Adieu-groep van Ger van Elk. Het zijn onregelmatige rechthoeken en het betreft schilderijen van een schilderij: tussen geopende gordijnen verschijnt of verdwijnt een klein doek op een ezel. We ontwaren, amper zichtbaar, een herfstlandschap met een pad waarop de figuur van de kunstenaar met zijn hand ten afscheid zwaait. Eigenlijk gaat het om gefotografeerde schilderkunst of de manipulatie van verschillende media, een inscenering met talrijke verdubbelingen en verwijzingen. De kunstenaar bewerkte een fotomontage met sensuele kleurtonen en verftoetsen. Vervolgens heeft hij het geheel opnieuw gefotografeerd, vergroot en beschilderd. In 2002 keert hij met 'Train Painting' *Adieu* terug naar de compositie en het motief uit 1974. Het toneeldoek is niet veel meer dan een decorstuk en het schilderij op de ezel is zelf een onregelmatige rechthoek geworden. Er rijdt een trein door het verstilde schilderkunstige landschap - nog steeds rijk aan referenties naar zowel de Nederlandse Gouden Eeuw als het impressionisme en postimpressionisme, zelfs al heeft Van Elk nu ingezoomd op de oorspronkelijke voorstelling. Aan de horizon valt de avond. Op de voorgrond bevinden zich verkeers- en naamborden. De pijl wijst naar links, weg van de voorstelling.

Een blauwe gedaante staat met zijn rug naar ons gekeerd, schijnbaar tegen een boom. De trein en de figuur verhouden zich in een vreemd perspectief tot elkaar.

We gaan even terug in de tijd, naar het begin van de jaren zestig. Ger van Elk gaat in Los Angeles studeren. In 1964 verschijnt daar de eerste publicatie met foto's van Ed Ruscha. Hij is de eerste om fotografie systematisch te hanteren als representatiemiddel. Hij produceert tot en met 1978 in totaal 17 publicaties. *Dutch Details* is een zeldzaam voorbeeld uit Ruscha's serie. De productie valt samen met zijn deelname aan 'Sonsbeek buiten de perken' in 1971. De kunstenaar fotografeert het landschap in Veendam, Stadskanaal, Musselkanaal en Ter Apel telkens op een brug die hij tijdens zijn wandelingen tegenkomt. Het ligt in een vitrine en op het glas bevindt zich een diskman met het geluidswerk *Image - Memory - Story. Recalling the books of Ed Ruscha* (1997) van Manon de Boer. Ze vroeg Carel Blotkamp, Dora Garcia en Chloé Martin om uit hun geheugen te vertellen over de fotoboeken. Ik laat me meevoeren door hun herinneringen, beschrijvingen en reconstructies. Vervolgens keer ik terug naar Ger van Elk, naar een volgende kamer in mijn imaginair museum, waar *The Discovery of the Sardines* samen met het foto- en tekstwerk *Where's Al* (1972) van zijn goede vriend Allen Ruppersberg wordt getoond:

He: *Where's Al?*

She: *I don't know. Probably out in the valley. Fantasy can't compete with reality you know.*

He: *Yeah, I know.*

Phillip van den Bossche, Van Abbemuseum, oktober 2004

Op de leestafel NEDERLAND NIET NEDERLAND in de bibliotheek vindt u een aantal visuele sporen en bronnen bij deze tekst.

Brushes with Time

Six paintings in this room have been hung in a carefully considered manner. Two works by Ben Akkerman, next to each other, show patterns of lines criss-crossing each other, applied in slight relief. The relief is greatest where the lines cross. The lines of the grid run horizontally and vertically on one canvas. They do not touch the edges. The other canvas has diagonal lines, above and left, up to the canvas edge. The sides are painted with the main colour. A small diptych by Bert Loerakker shows four dark blue circles, at first glance barely distinguishable from the black background, alongside an off-white plane in which a rectangle has been cut out. Apart from the edges of the open rectangle, the other edges are unpainted. The two paintings on the wall opposite to these together form one painting. The left canvas has everything the right-hand one does not have – heavy yellow brushstrokes and wild brown scratches in wet paint. The grey right-hand side appears slightly decorous in comparison to this. Loerakker's third diptych combines an off-white plane with red horizontal and vertical stripes scattered over a thinly applied grey-green background. The last painter, Marc Mulders, applies dark red, brown, black and dark green impasto onto the canvas. The thick paint is mixed and flattened with brush and palette knife. If it was not for the fact that this painting still has a title, its representation might escape us. The paint is in the foreground in all these canvases.

It is only since about ninety years ago that paintings can be seen with only paint on them. Before that a painting obviously consisted of paint, but the paint had to represent something actual other than paint. The depicting of reality forms the longest chapter in the history of painting: the space of the landscape and architecture with people,

animals and things within it. In the seventeenth century there was even a clear hierarchy of subject matter. At the top of this ranking of genres was the history work, the biblical or mythological depiction, and at the bottom the still-life, inanimate nature. However, always the painting was focused on rendering the subject as good and as accurately as possible.

If you follow the view of those who have written about painting throughout the centuries – and we can do this because along with their writings many of the canvases and other paintings described have remained preserved – then it is not so amazing that the brush stroke came to be something in its own right. After the sixteenth century, when painting had largely conquered the reality, the personality of the painter and his way of painting came to the fore. In the eighteenth century, a portrait by Titian, for instance, was bought not because of the importance of the person portrayed, but to own a work by this famous Italian painter. Soon after his death, Titian's manner of painting was more important than what he painted.

Diderot, the forefather of art criticism, was one of the first to place the art work above the subject being depicted. In the middle of the eighteenth century, when he writes about the French painter Chardin, he praises the spaciousness and unrestrainedness of his way of painting. A good painting has something intrinsic that cannot be derived from the subject – nature, that is. The still-life, once so detested, was apparently the definitive painterly subject. After that, painting as a realistic representation of reality gradually came to an end, partly as a result of the advent of photography. In 1912 the poet and art critic Guillaume Apollinaire wrote: "Verisimilitude no longer has any importance, for the artist sacrifices everything to the composition of the picture. The subject no longer counts, or if it counts, it counts for very little. If the aim of painting has remained what it always was – namely, to give pleasure to the eye –

the works of the new painters require the viewer to find in them a different kind of pleasure from the one he can just as easily find in the spectacle of nature".

Then suddenly everything went quickly. The restrained geometric abstraction of Pre-Second World War was then followed by a wilder, more painterly version. In retrospect, it seems that artists down the centuries went at painting with an increasingly more powerful magnifying glass: from large and dramatic representations to more modest scenes in which the manner of painting became more important, more intimate yet also more bold, to paintings where the nature of painting is the object, like these in this room: only paint on the canvas, the paint surface, the skin, the brushstrokes, the stripes and cross-hatchings of the palette knife. We do not do these works justice if we claim they are about analysing painting, an investigation into the method and the means. Not that that is not true, but these works are just as much about the feeling that this pure manner of painting can bring about by closely looking at what is happening in the painting. We see only the trace that has been left behind in the paint. Or the trace that has been erased by the painter. Not the 'what', but the 'how' is important here.

The collage of Marc Mulders is another story...

Willem Jan Renders, Van Abbemuseum,
November 2004

Dear Mark

Thanks for the email. You asked whether Phillip and I were planning to show *Chair/Staged Android (Reduced to 88%)* from 1996-1998 in the exhibition 'NETHERLANDS NOT NETHERLANDS'. Yes, that is certainly what we would like to do. This will be the first time we'll be showing the work in the museum and we think it would be a good idea if you come and help us set it up. I'm looking forward to seeing the installation again and am really curious about how it will work in the space we've selected. Perhaps we can show *Short Sad Thoughts* from 1990 in the same space? In the book *Mark Manders/Singing Sailors*¹ you mention there is a link between both works. You describe *Chair/Staged Android (Reduced to 88%)* as a spatial photograph, as an exact copy of 88 per cent of a work you exhibited at De Appel, Amsterdam, in 1997: "It is a camera type machine whereby the back part is leaning against a chair". In the same book you describe *Short Sad Thoughts* as the replicating of a moment in time. "This work consists of two hanging copper wires which appear to be at the mercy of an immense force of gravity. In reality I had to bend the copper over. I then repeated this action exactly. [...] This replicating of a moment in time is the first attempt to acquire a passing of time. A passing of time that is worked out in a different way again in *Chair/Staged Android (Reduced to 88%)*."

I also thought of a combination in conjunction with photos from the book *New Anniversaries*.² When I visited you a while back in Arnhem you told me you sometimes display the photos next to each other on the wall. What do you think? The photos also unravel time in individual fragments. For me there're more links between these photos and *Chair/Staged Android (Reduced to 88%)*, but I find it too soon to describe these. I'd first like to see the works next to each other. Of course we

can also think about exhibiting *Provisional Floorplan 'Self-Portrait as a Building' 3-5-1996*.³ By so doing we can indicate the relationship between your work and the building. Or is that too didactic and we could perhaps better include the floorplan in the information text?

You state in your email that this is the first time *Chair/Staged Android (Reduced to 88%)* is being shown in the Netherlands. The work was bought in 1999. I recall that as a result of the exhibition 'NL' we decided to supplement your work already in the collection with a new piece. What intrigued me about this installation was that it was an exact copy of a work you exhibited at De Appel in early 1997 and then destroyed. Thus I imagine the first version was only made to serve as the 'original' for the 'reproduction' or the 'recording' of the version reduced to 88 per cent. A fascinating thought. And then there is the blackness. You called it a 'thin black layer of night', I recall, lying over everything and which you could interpret as melancholy. As if the work was mourning the loss of the original.

When we bought the original this was installed at the Kunstverein in Bonn. It was on view there with work by other artists in a large open space with daylight lighting from above. The next installation was in 2001 at the exhibition *Post-Nature; Nine Dutch Artists*⁴ in Venice. There the context was completely different. *Chair/Staged Android (Reduced to 88%)* was shown in a small space in Ca' Zenobio, a Venetian palazzo that chiefly derives its beauty from the loss of a rich past: drab green walls, faded curtains, dark panelling. Because of its blackness the work appears to incorporate the history of the building, or perhaps even to produce it.

We're now going to install it in a white cube. The space borders a darkened room in which we're showing the 16mm film *Crystals 1-XII*, from 2003, by De Rijke & De Rooij. This depicts shots of crystallisation processes many times enlarged

and speeded up. The black plane of projection gradually fills up with multicoloured structures. I know you're interested in the structure of thinking. Some time ago you recommended the book *A New Science of Life* by Rupert Sheldrake.⁵ In this he advances the hypothesis that morphogenetic fields are responsible for the characteristic form and organisations of systems at each level of composition. And that these fields in their turn derive their structure from previous morphogenetic systems. Does an investigation into the 'how' bring us closer to the essence of things than the question of 'why'?

See you on 8 November.

Best wishes

Christiane Berndes, Van Abbemuseum,
1 November 2004

¹ *Mark Manders/Singing Sailors*, eds M. Manders and R. Willems, ROMA Publications, Arnhem 2002, p.65

² *New Anniversaries*, Mark Manders in association with Marije Langelaar, ROMA Publications 31,2001

³ *Self-Portrait as a Building* is a fictional construction – a building that expands and contracts and in which all works – for Mark Manders a work is a materialised thought – have a place.

⁴ *Post Nature; Nine Dutch Artists*, curated by Jaap Guldemond and Marente Bloemheugel, Van Abbemuseum Eindhoven, at the request of the Mondrian Foundation, Venice Biennale 2001.

⁵ Rupert Sheldrake, *A New Science of Life*, 1993.