

WILLEM DE ROOIJ  
JUNE 30 - AUGUST 5, 2011  
OPENING RECEPTION THURSDAY, JUNE 30, 6-8PM



Friedrich Petzel Gallery is delighted to announce *Crazy Repelled Firelight*, a solo exhibition by Dutch artist Willem de Rooij.

Since 2007, Willem de Rooij has been producing abstract weavings that aim to generate meaning through the material they are made of, not through external references. The first weavings of this kind, originally produced for the 2009 Athens Biennale and shown in this exhibition, titled *Silver to Gold* (2009/2011). This artwork was industrially produced at Van Maele linen manufactures outside of Brussels and consists of five stretched pieces. The material developed for this work is a mixture of unbleached Belgian Linen and silver and gold-colored polyester threads. Through a step-by-step transition the monochromatic silver panels gradually change to gold through adjustments in the mixture.

Joining *Silver to Gold* in his exhibition, de Rooij has produced four new handwoven works. These works show a gradual transformation in color through the production of the material they are made from. The first handwoven artwork, *Black to Black* (2011) gradates from shiny black to matte black. Rather than a treated surface, like that of a painting, this fabric panel is woven on a loom by placing black cotton lengthwise (the warp) and weaving 10 different mixtures of polyester sewing thread as well as reflecting synthetic strips crosswise (known as the woof). The second woven panel, *Black to Brown* (2011) also has a black cotton warp as a base that is then shot through with 10 different mixtures of black and brown polyester sewing thread, producing a slow gradation from black to brown. A third artwork, *Digot Lovers* (2011) an anagram of the words "silver to gold," combines unbleached linen with silver and gold-colored polyester threads, gradating color from the unbleached linen to a combination of silver and gold thread which approach from either side of the lozenge. The fourth handwoven work on display, *Mechanize Her Jenny* (2011), is a pink monochrome produced from unbleached linen and a woof plied of 10 different shades of pink polyester sewing thread, so that the resulting image fluctuates in color depending on the physical position of the viewer. These four artworks were produced by Ulla Schünemann on a 200-year old loom at Handweberei Geltow outside Potsdam, Germany.

Willem de Rooij's work is determined by the selection and combination of images in diverse media, such as sculpture, film, photography and text. His work analyzes the conventions of presentation and representation and assesses the tension between socio-political and autonomous image production. Where early film installations already had a sculptural quality, de Rooij's most recent exhibitions became works of art in their own right, often incorporating found materials or appropriated works of art.

*Bantar Gebang* (2000), a 10-minute single take 35mm film, shows an early morning scene in a slum area in Jakarta, Indonesia. While the sun rises, the colors of the landscape are in constant flux. *Orange* (2004), a slideshow comprised of eighty-one 35mm slides that are all a different shade of orange, was shown at Friedrich Petzel Gallery in 2006. A wall text that accompanies this work associates

prisoners' attire on Guantanamo Bay with national identity in general and that of the Netherlands in particular. *Bouquet V* (2010) is a flower arrangement that exists of 95 different flowers, each individual species or type being present only once. *Bouquet VI* (2010) juxtaposes 100 black tulips with 100 white tulips. These works all test the capacity of supposedly objective entities (color, form, material) to simultaneously evoke and question social and political structures: difference, individuality, majority, change, and polarization.

The notion of referentiality, and more specifically the development of strategies to bypass external references became important parameters in de Rooij's work over the last 5 years. *Intolerance*, shown at the Neue Nationalgalerie in Berlin in the autumn of 2010 is the most recent in a series of temporary sculptural installations that investigate whether it is possible to produce new works out of existing objects and artworks, rather than to use them as references.

Willem de Rooij studied at the Gerrit Rietveld Akademie in Amsterdam from 1990-95 and at the Rijksakademie from 1997-98. He has been a tutor at De Ateliers in Amsterdam since 2002 and Professor of Fine Arts at the Städelschule in Frankfurt am Main since 2006. De Rooij lives and works in Berlin. De Rooij worked and exhibited together with Jeroen de Rijke until 2006, followed by exhibitions at K 21, Düsseldorf (2007) and at the Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna (2008). He received a Robert Fulton Fellowship at Harvard University in 2004 and represented the Netherlands at the Venice Biennale in 2005. His works are in the collections of the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin, MUMOK, Vienna, and the Museum of Modern Art in New York. De Rooij will participate in group exhibitions at the Kröller Möller Museum, Otterloo, the Centro Galego de Arte de Arte Contemporanea, Santiago de Compostella, and PS1, New York later this year. A new installation at Bentheim Castle, Germany and a large solo exhibition at the Kunstverein Munich, Germany will open early October.

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