

Lily van der Stokker
29 Apr/18 Sep 2022



Image credit: Lily van der Stokker, *Easy fun*, 2003.
Courtesy of the artist and Kloostervelde Berlin

This spring, Camden Art Centre presents the first institutional solo exhibition in London by Lily van der Stokker (b. Den Bosch, Netherlands, 1954), one of Holland's most important and celebrated contemporary artists.

Working prolifically, van der Stokker draws her images quickly and intuitively on paper, later configuring them against one another for the specifics of each space, scaling them up to their distinctive monumental size and executing them with exacting precision directly onto the gallery walls. Her exhibition at Camden Art Centre will bring together a group of new and recent works reflecting this extraordinary moment and addressing ideas of change, belonging, work, home, illness, society, friendship, finances, complaints and care. The exhibition will present 12 new specially installed wall drawings across Camden Art Centre's iconic galleries, as well as original drawings on paper and works on canvas drawn from the last 30 years.

Van der Stokker's monumental wall paintings – with their pastel colour palette and highly decorative motifs which include flowers, clouds, patterns and curlicues – play on apparently clichéd stereotypes of femininity, but her work has a depth and toughness that belies its saccharine aesthetic. For more than 30 years she has immersed herself in the supposedly mundane material of everyday life, taking seriously the intricacies of the small, the personal and the overlooked, while at the same time forging a radical feminist practice in a language she has made entirely her own. Behind its apparent softness and sincerity – once described as 'so sweet it can kill' – her work remains both provocative and radical.

Optimism, joy, frustration, gossip and the petty trials and tribulations of everyday life are given a wide birth in most artistic practices, whilst work which centres the domestic and decorative has traditionally been seen as the antithesis of serious contemporary visual art. Van der Stokker's work disrupts such hierarchical considerations, challenging conventional conceptions of artistic value and merit, whilst firmly positioning itself within the legacies of feminist, post-minimal and post-conceptual art. Despite its exuberance and frivolity, its unabashed humour (both sugary and dark), and its lively, child-like joy in the ugly, the sweet, the beautiful and the silly, her work takes itself and its subjects seriously; reclaiming themes and aesthetic languages that have been routinely devalued, derided and disparaged for centuries by a patriarchal culture that has consistently denigrated the feminine, and feminised what it considered superfluous or 'other'. At a time when we have all been forced to make drastic and once unthinkable changes to our lives, van der Stokker's longstanding engagement with the 'little' themes of family, relationships, work, home and the domestic, feel more appropriate, more timely and more important than ever.

Notes to editors

For further information, interviews and images please contact:

Sam Talbot, sam@sam-talbot.com // +44 (0) 772 5184 630

Mary Doherty mary@sam-talbot.com // +44 (0) 771 6701 499

Biography

Lily van der Stokker lives and works in Amsterdam and New York. Selected solo exhibitions: Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zurich (2019); Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (2018); Hammer Museum, Los Angeles (2015); New Museum, New York (2013); Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam (2010); and Tate St. Ives (2010).

Camden Art Centre

Camden Art Centre is a place for world-class contemporary art exhibitions and education. Situated in Hampstead, North London (charity number 1065829) Camden Art Centre is a place for art and artists; a place for the curious, the novice and the expert alike. It's a place to see, to make, to learn and to talk about contemporary art, whether in our building, attending off-site projects or via our digital forums. Founded by artists in 1965, the Centre continues to be a space for the most vital and diverse mix of practices and ideas and is dedicated to supporting artists at every stage of their careers.