

Erik van Lieshout

René Daniëls

4 March - 15 April 2023

Galerie Gudio W. Baudach is pleased to present its fifth solo exhibition with works by Erik van Lieshout. Van Lieshout (born 1968 in Deurne) is one of the most important artists of his generation in the Netherlands. He is best known for his films and drawings, in which he addresses a wide variety of topics of cultural and socio-political relevance, regularly appears as the actively guiding character, in order to dissect the issues at hand with full personal commitment. The exhibition is dedicated to Lieshout's latest major project titled *René Daniëls* after its protagonist. On display is a film of the same name as well as a series of works on paper and canvas created in context with it.

René Daniëls (born 1950 in Eindhoven), the main figure in Van Lieshout's film, is one of the best-known Dutch painters of the late twentieth century. In the early 1980s, he gave the medium, which was already considered anachronistic by many at the time, a new relevance by combining color, figuration, abstraction as well as language poetry - inspired by René Magritte, Marcel Duchamp and Marcel Broodthaers, among others - to create a contemporary art in the spirit of post-punk, thus having a lasting influence on the further development of painting, not only in the Netherlands.

But just as quickly as his work gained international attention, he and his career were abruptly thrown off course in 1987, when Daniëls suffered a serious stroke from which he never really recovered. René Daniëls' health is still severely affected by the consequences. Nevertheless, he resumed painting already years ago. The works created since then have a quality all of their own, but are very different from the paintings which have maintained René Daniëls' fame since the 1980s.

Erik van Lieshout, in turn, has been familiar with the early works of René Daniëls since his student days. The preoccupation with other, mostly Dutch artists, e.g. Piet Mondrian, is also frequent in his practice. Even René Daniëls has already appeared as a reference in his work, not least in Lieshout's first exhibition with the gallery in 2009, which was significantly about the complex of making art under the sign of illness and crisis. When Daniëls was awarded a lifetime achievement prize at the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven in the summer of 2019, Van Lieshout, who was present at the ceremony, came up with the idea of making a film about him. The two had met a few times before in an art context, but without knowing each other any better. On the basis of Daniëls' agreement, an intimate, equally sensitive and thoroughly cheerful artists' portrait of a special kind was created in the course of the following year. *René Daniëls* is a film that questions what it means to be an artist and at the same time tells of the attempt to enter into dialogue with a fellow human being for whom normal conversation is impossible and for whom, apart from curt yes and no answers, facial expressions alone allow conclusions to be drawn about his thoughts.

For the shooting, Daniëls and Van Lieshout met repeatedly in the course of 2020. The resulting film, which is mainly based on these encounters, is easily recognisable as Van Lieshout's work by the editing and characteristic montage technique, even though it comes across as comparatively quiet, less enervating than usual. It deals rather marginally with the widely recognised importance of Daniëls' early work and his international ranking as an artist based on it. The focus is on the here and now, showing the present everyday life of René Daniëls, who as a person, even before his illness, likes to surround himself with a certain mystery. As Van Lieshout shows us, Daniëls' daily routine is shaped by his current artistic practice and by the presence of Marleen Gijsen, his girlfriend in his teenage days, who has been looking after the artist since his stroke and also manages his work. Above all, however, the film tells of Van Lieshout's persistent efforts to reach a direct personal exchange, including not least questions about art and painting, with René Daniëls, who is hardly able (and perhaps not particularly willing) to communicate.

In addition to the almost 50-minute film, which is shown as a wall-sized projection in a cinema atmosphere, the exhibited works on paper and canvas, all of which were created during and after the shooting, appear as equivalent, albeit formally different results of Van Lieshout's engagement with René Daniëls. On view are portraits based on film stills as well as appropriations of individual early works in the form of Van Lieshout-typical collages and paintings, i.e. pictorial approaches to the person of René Daniëls on the one hand, and decisively set reinterpretations of moments of his painterly oeuvre on the other.

Erik van Lieshout lives and works in Rotterdam. His work has been widely shown in institutions and important international exhibitions at home and abroad, including Marta, Herford, 2022, KINDL - Centre for Contemporary Art, Berlin, 2021, Museum Kunstpalast, Dusseldorf, 2020, Albertina Museum, Vienna, 2019, MMK - Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, 2018, Centraal Museum, Utrecht, Lenbachhaus, Munich, Kunstmuseum, Bonn, MOMA, New York, 2017; Kochi Biennale, Kochi (IN), Wiels, Brussels, 2016, SMAK, Ghent, Kunsthaus Zurich, 2015, Manifesta 10, St. Peterburg, Witte de With, Rotterdam, 2014, 55th Venice Biennale, 2013. Currently, works by him are on display in the exhibition *Ridiculously Yours! Art, Awkwardness and Enthusiasm* at the Bundeskunsthalle, Bonn.

Erik van Lieshout is represented in numerous public collections, including the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, Centraal Museum, Utrecht, Albertina, Vienna, Kunsthaus Zurich, MOMA, New York, Museum Kunstpalast, Dusseldorf, MMK - Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt, Lenbachhaus, Munich / Kunstmuseum, Bonn (KiCo Collection), Bundeskunstsammlung, Bonn, Marta, Herford, Museum Ludwig, Cologne.

The film *René Daniëls* was realized with the financial support of Mondriaan Fund, Stichting Art Dock and Netherlands Film Fund. Its premiere took place in 2021 at the De Pont Museum in Tilburg (NL).