

Lily van der Stokker  
*I Am Going To Sleep Now*  
*Drawings: 1988-2022*

kaufmann repetto is glad to present *I Am Going To Sleep Now*, Lily van der Stokker's fifth solo show with the gallery. Featuring over 40 works spanning more than three decades, the exhibition offers an unprecedented focus on van der Stokker's drawings, which have been at the core of her creative process since the 1980s. Her ongoing practice takes a conceptual approach, where an unheroic standard sheet of paper and a set of coloring pencils become the territory of boundless expressive possibilities, and of uninhibited artistic self-determination.

Throughout Lily van der Stokker's oeuvre, conventional conceptions of artistic value are subverted by a playful, yet double-edged radical insistence on themes which have been routinely excluded from the realm of high culture. Stemming from her visual strategy which is generally denigrated as a taboo for 'serious' art - the deliberate choice of the feminal, floral and curlicued ornaments and a palette of pleasant, cheerful colors -, van der Stokker addresses the banality of everyday life and domestic duties, age and healthcare, household administration and private financial matters. This wide survey of subjects unfolds before the viewer's eye within the current presentation, where dozens of drawings executed between 1988 and 2022 are displayed throughout the gallery. They are hung upon different wallpapers, each adorned with a neat, pastel-colored geometric pattern, all based on designs which had previously been developed through drawings. While the wallpaper conveys the idea of the meticulous, and somehow despondent coziness of a petty bourgeois home, the intervention on the four-meter high walls of the gallery simultaneously alludes to the potential expansion of the artist's practice, bringing to mind her renowned large-scale wall paintings in public spaces and institutions.

The creative tension between this monumentalized domestic setting and the predominantly small-format drawings sets the tone for the viewing experience. A vast array of clouds, sofas, kitchen furniture, flowers, amorphous coiling forms and cartoonish bubbles in soft pastel hues populate the works.

Many of the drawings include textual inscriptions which range from short slogans to more elaborate, often puzzling statements. Curt, affirmative messages seem to advertise the intrinsic value of the artwork itself, like 'Good', 'For Free', or 'Friendly artwork', while others externalize quirky, introspective thoughts, like 'Oh No it is 2003', 'I have £25 in my pocket 'or 'I am ugly'. Several pronouncements address the matter of aging; some are sober, factual annotations - 'Lily is 41 Jack Is 57' or 'I Am 42' - while others are complex, nearly aphoristic sentences like 'Old people making Art that is spectacularly interesting'.

The smallest of the gallery's rooms is entirely dedicated to the series *Televisiongarden* (1989), inspired by van der Stokker's reading of texts by Italian designer Andrea Branzi, who was then part of the influential Memphis group. In

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response to Branzi's prediction of a future in which mankind would no longer be part of Nature, but would only experience it through digital screens, the artist envisions a paradise confined to the oval shape of a television screen, filled with grass in various colors and a single chair to sit on.

The late 1980s also coincided with the moment in which van der Stokker established drawings as her primary means of expression and started to consider them as resolved and complete works of art in their own right. During this time she lived in the vibrant cultural scene of New York's East Village and ran a gallery herself. She experienced the post-modern breakdown of aesthetic rules and witnessed the rise of new art forms such as graffiti, performance, experimental film, and punk music, as well as of new groups of post-conceptual artists, like Douglas Crimp's *Pictures* generation and text-based work by feminist artists like Barbara Kruger and Jenny Holzer. Stimulated to define her own artistic position, van der Stokker's perception of the four corners of a modest sheet of paper became the territory in which she could do anything she wanted: designing, fantasizing, questioning the role of the artist and the value of an artwork, dwelling on 'forbidden' subject matters and subvert aesthetic expectations. When wall paintings entered in her practice in the early 1990s, another layer of complexity was added to this strategy - each of her murals were (and still are) based on a drawing, which are then projected onto the wall and painted on a large scale by the artist's assistants.

Throughout her career the van der Stokker made hundreds of drawings for wall paintings, many of them were never executed. In taking advantage of the recent pandemic lockdowns, she spent the last couple of years revisiting her own archive, by signing, titling, and dating her drawings, as well as completing and repairing older, unfinished pieces. This systematic archival inventory also confers a further momentum to the conceptual approach underlying van der Stokker's practice, firmly establishing the drawing as a visual and communicative code, ready to be activated in various scales and on various occasions.

Lily van der Stokker has exhibited internationally, with solo exhibitions including those at Camden Art Centre, London; The Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zurich; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; SCAD Museum of Art, Savannah; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam; Tate St.Ives, Cornwall St.Ives, St.Ives; Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven; Museum Ludwig, Cologne; and Le Consortium, Dijon among others. Her work has also been included in group exhibitions at the Kunstmuseum Basel, Basel; Frac Normandie, Caen; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; The Art Club of Chicago, Chicago; Centre Pompidou, Paris; New Museum, New York; Aspen Art Museum, Aspen; and Villa Arson, Nice; among many others. Van der Stokker has completed numerous monumental public art projects such as the Celestial Teapot, Hoog Catharijne, Utrecht, (2013) and Pink Building during the World Expo in Hannover (2000). Van der Stokker's work is in many permanent collections, including those of Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Museum of Modern Art, Arnhem; Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam; Jumex Collection, Mexico City; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; Centre National des Arts Plastiques, Paris; Le Consortium, Dijon; Musée des Beaux Arts de Nancy, Nancy; Bonnefantenmuseum, Maastricht; Worcester Art Museum, Worcester.