

Since his start in the 90's, Willem De Rooij's work experiences a new intermediate visual world and analyses the conventions between images and representations.

This world is coming after the project of Conceptual Art, after Institutional Critique, after the deep melancholia of postmodernist era, and after all kind of polemical acts of reappropriation and decontextualisation. Willem de Rooij's explores different possibilities to escape from this finite/infinite dialogue between the post and the neo. And to see how complex layers of information can be condensed in one single form : a weaving, a flower bouquet, a photograph, a film or an exhibition. How it makes us revise the so-called notions of referentiality and autonomy, the questions of the medium, the history of language and translation, but also and mostly the idea of contemporaneity. Each one of De Rooij's exhibitions recalls this fundamental questioning: how to be a contemporary, how to live in the same world, at the same time, to find inspiration in the same cultural sources, to deal with the same clichés and icons, to face identities and representations, and how to think the beauty and the exhaustion of the present?

In 2002, De Rooij began a series of projects in which he collaborates with florists to realize opulent flower arrangements, where the tension between artistic autonomy and social reality becomes particularly hard to overlook. Most of De Rooij's Bouquets have been visually elaborated, highly regimented, incorporating numerous species of flowers and plants. Like for example in *Bouquet V* (2010), where ninety-five species of flowers have been combined here to form a bouquet that is presented on a freestanding pedestal. Not a single flower is repeated in this arrangement. Yet the individual flowers are only distinguishable from one another by tiny nuances. This beautiful sculpture is a lesson in perception that also makes one curious to see what further transitions De Rooij has in store.

Since the beginning and in many instances De Rooij's installations included the work of other artists and artefacts from historical and anthropological collections that relate to his own works, forming temporary groupings, which create new layers of meaning. Different formats and shared authorship have always been important in De Rooij's concept and are the central axis of his new monumental installation of the Fong- Leng's streetwear collection. Known for her unique and often extravagant garments, she sees her creations as sculptures rather than clothes, and repeatedly described the production of her pieces as a process of construction, or building.

Besides these impressive creations Fong Leng also designed more wearable clothing, less labour-intensive. This low production is the new material of de Rooij's display that embody the ambiguity, the structural polarity, the abstract concepts of opposition, contrast, transition, and nuance.

Stéphanie Moisdon

This exhibition at Le Consortium is the third spot of a four-step exhibition, starting in Arnolfini – Centre for Contemporary Art in Bristol in November 2014, then at Petzel Gallery in New York in April 2015 and finishing in MMK-Museum für Moderne Kunst in Frankfurt in 2016. Each of these three shows highlights a different selection of De Rooij's works from the last ten years.

This first monographic exhibition of De Rooij in France centers on a selection of the Bouquets series, combined with a huge installation based on fashion design of Fong-Leng.

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