

Quest for silence

The numerous small and medium-sized paintings hanging and standing around in Hans Boer's atelier, all unmistakably belong to one specific family. What stands out is that most of these works feature a distinct horizontal or vertical surface division, allowing them to be easily associated with landscapes. [...] Nevertheless, these works are not actually landscapes at all, because in that sense they are far too abstract. Hans Boer: «I do not mind viewers visualising landscapes in my work, however my intention is to exceed reference.» [...] This fascination with the visibility of time passing away is also evident in the way he works: «After outlining the main shape with charcoal or paint, I start painting layer for layer. With alkyd (fast-drying-oil paint) one can easily paint wet-into-wet, allowing the colours to mix perfectly. [...]

Hans Boer manages to impart a completely unique personal sense of silence and monumentality to his work. This has everything to do with the way he applies his visual means of expression. His earlier mentioned distinct horizontal and vertical surface patterns, provide his paintings with a certain calm motionlessness. And the predominant by earthy and muted colours add to this serenity. However, there is yet another dimension to his work. The peacefulness of his compositions is subtly challenged by the movement of his brush stroke. As if, within a stable and fixed setting, room is literally created for uniqueness, commotion, maybe even for volatility. This kind of duality is also illustrated by shapes and colours, which often have their counterpart elsewhere within the painting's plane. More than in an oppositional sense, this is about balancing shapes and colours, which augment each other, need each other and together enhance the harmony and peacefulness in the painting. Yet here as well, he carefully sees to it that doesn't become - in his own words - a cheap gimmick, that it exceeds mere decoration: all for the «higher goal» of content. He notes: «In fact I am continuously stripping the unnecessary, reducing the level of detail and thus ensuring that the viewer doesn't lose him or herself in these things. Especially recognisable shapes or - for instance - human figures, can be quite distracting and get in the way of things. Viewers are inherently focussed on such things, allowing it all quite easily to become a bit anecdotic. That's not useful at all for what I am trying to say. To me it's about silence, which my work should contain, the deterioration, the beauty, while simultaneously this same beauty should have a little edge to it, because that's what makes it exciting.»

Ankie Boomstra, curator, writer: from her preface to the catalogue «Hans Boer. Quest for silence», Groningen 2018

*Hans Boer (*1947 Amsterdam) lives and works in Groningen. He studied painting at the Rijksakademie Amsterdam. Since 1975 he works as an artist. Since 1987 his work is shown in one-person and group exhibitions mainly in Holland. It is in numerous private and public collections, among them the collection of the Museum Voorlinden (Caldic Collection), Wassenaar, the Museum Belvédère, Heerenveen, the Wilploo Collection.*

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Poster AL18-35, 2018, alkyd on canvas, 50 x 60 cm

Reverse AL18-45, 2018, alkyd on canvas, 90 x 80 cm

HANS BOER

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November 16, 2018 – January 11, 2019

Opening November 16, 7pm



