

Goele De Bruyn_Clean Speech & Soap_11.10.2013 > 17.11.2013

The oeuvre of **Goele De Bruyn** (1963) includes sculptures, drawings, installations, spatial interventions and moments of public staging. Her work often plays upon the border between the functional and the non-functional. Often subjects or items from earlier works are reused, imitated or reintegrated in a modified form. The profusion of possibilities for reuses formulates a potential new beginning. A fundamental concept found subcutaneously within the cyclically evolving oeuvre of Goele De Bruyn, is multifaceted concept of beauty and the manner in which it moves in daily life. Multiple linguistic meanings also form a leitmotif in her artistic research. Beauty can be an aesthetic experience as well as one that arises from the removal of injustices or uncleanness. The artist often makes use of absorbent materials that emphasize the deletion, extraction or elimination of contaminations. On a more complex level she links aesthetics to ethics, where the idea of cleaning takes on a more social connotation. At the same time, this is also one of the ways to achieve a work of art. The artist herself philosophically sketches these elements of the creative process as a mechanism in the yearning for authenticity and purity in combination with the urge for change that leads towards a form of consolation or protection in ordinary life.

The work located in the passage section of the studio is titled, *Z.t. (les mains sales) 1998-2...*. The re-presentation of this installation entails a long development history that span the materials' origins prior to being involved in any trace of an artistic inquiry regarding aesthetics. In 1998 Goele De Bruyn began asking people in her local area for their soap bar remnants. These soap remains were gradually catalogued very carefully. Over the years, the collection grew in a non-systematic rhythm. A residency in China in 2011 led to a condensed re-enactment of this work in Beijing. After the second part of the residency in 2013, the respective collections are brought together in Netwerk, where the new soap residues collected in China will be installed in a performance-like manner during the opening weekend. The two separate tables of neatly arranged objects are almost entirely stripped of traces of functional household purposes and present themselves as precious gemstones in a setting that generates a tabula rasa effect. In essence, products intended for cleaning are removed from their original status and – through the process of having been weathered and arranged in an artistic context – become re-valued into an organised collection of minerals or archaeological finds.

A work never shown before *Z.t. (laten we het begin vergeten)* 1998-1999 consists of 23-sheets of painted tissue paper that are hung on steel cables. The transparent pastel-coloured forms upon the paper are based on coloured-in photograph fragments of old greeting cards that mark important and celebrated moments in the life-cycle of women from birth to the wedding's night. The narrative vanishes through the omitting of the black and white images from the colour photos.

They seem to be absorbed memories, which, cleansed of individual and sentimental connotations by a form of painterly osmosis and functionality of the material used in abstract-suggestive forms, appear in the exhibition space. The work points to the loss of an origin, but also the need to return to one. Each sheet contains one printed-by-embossing letter and the composition as a whole forms a sentence that refers to the principle of the clean slate, something that is present throughout the work of Goele De Bruyn.

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