

YASSER BALLEMANS

CARRUS NAVALIS

Carnival is a time in which the world is temporarily turned upside down. Not the Major but Prince Carnival is in charge. Whole cities change into a big decor in which intensive partying and masquerades goes hand-in-hand with political criticism. Ballemans sees Carnival as a challenging stage for Fine Art.

For his exhibition at JOEY RAMONE Yasser Ballemans realized work in which he investigated his personal aesthetic relation to a massive event like carnival. This resulted in a series of small pieces of various techniques that play with the borders between *the object* and *the artwork*, the *model* and the *real object* and Art and Carnival.

The title Carrus Navalis refers to one of the theories about the etymological history of Carnival and emphasizes the ever-changing codes and rituals during this intriguing and ancient celebration.

In his earlier ceramic work Ballemans investigated the progressive quality of ornaments and decoration. In his more *social* work he investigated how art can manifest itself in the context of a big cultural event like Carnival. For this project he made an exhibition about Art and Carnival at exhibition space KOP in Breda and together with students and psychiatric patients he participated at the carnival in Curaçao in collaboration with Instituto Buena Bista.

CHRISTINA CALBARI

FANTASIOSIS

The exhibition entitled Fantasiosis consists of drawings with chalk on black surfaces that spread out along the gallery space. The theme of the exhibition, which is a continuation of previous projects on a school blackboard, focuses on memory, on childhood trauma, relationships of power and enforcement and on search of self and identity.

The works depict an elliptical iconography sometimes through a seeming naivety in the execution of the drawing and sometimes through an obsession for detail. The drawings are carried out through improvising with a continued process of writing and erasing, which seeks to emulate the process of revocation of memory and unconscious fantasies.

Thereby a timeless and absurd universe develops gradually, inhabited by children/creatures, often asexual, placed between fragments of a threatening nature. In this unfamiliar landscape fragmented fantasies awake and dark threats surge. The figures emerging from the dark communicate their existential distress thanks to their gaze, entangled in an entrapped existential condition, which oddly enough feels intimate and tender.

The vulnerable creatures, despite their fear, seem to become in their turn aggressors who sarcastically recycle the violence and threat and ultimately project the fears and sorrow of the human soul.

ENCOUNTERS & CONFRONTATIONS

Harm Weistra's work tends to radiate a latent disturbance, but always simultaneously a disconcerting beauty. Most of his work is on the one hand touchingly beautiful, on the other hand painfully disruptive. The inherent visual seductiveness, along with the consciousness that his work evokes, complicates the reception of its manifold layers of meaning. By creating disruptive situations and by breaking the passivity of the spectator, his work references avant-garde theory as well as emancipatory movements.

Weistra's work questions the apparently rationally and logically but often culturally entrenched beliefs and opinions. Most of his work demonstrates how life extends beyond its own subjective limits and often tells a story about the effects of an open society with ubiquitous interactions, since the Internet is a dominant platform for (anonymous) human debate. Although storytelling is inherently constructed, the artist's intention is to serve the story as open as possible, without manipulating the viewer in a particular direction. Nevertheless, his stories challenge the binaries we continually reconstruct between self and other, between our own *savaged* and *civilized* selves. As a result, the work often leaves the viewers orphaned with a mix of conflicting feelings and thoughts, inviting them to take a position.

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