

GALERIE ONRUST AMSTERDAM

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Han Schuil

Recent paintings

20 October through 17 November 2007

gallery hours: Wed – Sat 13.00 - 18.00 hrs
and Sunday 4 November 14.00 - 17.00 hrs

How can ostensibly contradictory qualities be combined in a painting in such a way that it becomes convincing as a work of art? For Han Schuil, the answer to that question lies in the work itself. Since the mid eighties he has been painting on aluminum; these strong images draw the eye due to their frontality, plain forms and radiant contrasting colors. But his work is not as unambiguous as it seems at first sight. Schuil's paintings link the appearance of clarity to a certain friction beneath the surface. Sometimes the optical effect of the colors and forms bonds closely with the qualities of the aluminum; other times it works against those qualities. And then there is his language of forms, which defies any description in terms of figuration and abstraction. Such designations are pointless in Han Schuil's view. The abstract is, after all, that which cannot be made visible; but visibility is precisely what characterizes his work as an artist. He lets himself be guided by images that he comes across in everyday life, images not sought but recognized and, in his paintings, transformed by him into new images. Several of the works now being exhibited involve a motif that he had used earlier in a large diptych from 1994. In that work it took the shape of two eyes appearing in darkness. In works from the recent period these cartoon-like eyes have assumed monumental proportions. The fact that Schuil has chosen this particular motif from the thousands of images that he sees every day has to do with its both terse and alienating simplicity. The oval-shaped pupil – complete with its little contrasting star or even a characteristically wedge-shaped omission – functions as a kind of (punctuation) mark. In Schuil's adaptation of the motif, that compactness has become even more forceful without any loss of associative meaning. Beneath the frontal, emblematic images lurk the face and other curves of a creature not unlike Betty Boop.

In other works, too, the flatness of the surface and the spatial effect of colors and forms give rise to a suggestive and ambiguous relationship, as in the painting where the motif of the pupil has taken the shape of a sculpturally painted red drop held in a space that seems to shrink and recede by turns.

In a number of Schuil's recent works, the activeness and spatial quality of the image surface is not merely optical, but the consequence of a vigorous treatment of the aluminum support which has been folded into a 'box'. The resulting dents contrast with the sharp folds of the box shape that has remained intact to a certain extent. An association with the contorted metal of a car that has been in an accident is fairly obvious, but this falters with the realization that the texture of the folded surface has remained smooth and undamaged. Depending on its shine or its matte quality, the intensely colored surface absorbs light or reflects it, in almost the same manner as the robes of saints in medieval paintings.

Schuil's motifs are very diverse in terms of their nature and origins. In this exhibition they can be traced back to heraldry, car accidents, eyes and mailboxes, but delta wings and strips of peat are also part of his repertoire of motifs. The fact that his paintings are distinctly recognizable has to do with the way in which the motif has been transformed into an image. That often lengthy, partly rational and partly intuitive process has, in fact, been compared by Schuil to the chemical process of purification. But in addition to purification, one can also speak of expansion and enrichment during that transformation. Schuil is a pure painter. The strength of his images is founded not only on the isolation and intensification of the motif, but on their physical manifestation as well. The shine or the contrary matte quality of various types of paint used by him, the way in which the paint is applied, but also the presence of rivets by which the sheets (aluminium) are held together or irregularities caused by the folding and bending of the material: all of those elements contribute to the impact of his images, which do not reveal themselves in a single glance but ask for visual exploration.

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untitled, 2007, alkyd and laquer on aluminium, 60 x 60 x 15 cm



untitled, 2007, alkyd and laquer on aluminium, 83 x 83 x 4 cm

Han Schuil

Voorschoten, 1958

Education

1979 - 1981 Academie voor Beeldende Kunsten,
Rotterdam

1981 - 1983 Ateliers 63, Haarlem

One-man exhibitions (from 2000)

2000 *Schilderijen/Paintings 1983 - 1999*, Stedelijk
Museum Amsterdam 9 (cat.)

Galerie Conrads, Düsseldorf

2001 Galerie Onrust, Amsterdam

2004 Galerie Conrads, Düsseldorf

Galerie Onrust, Amsterdam

2006 *The White Cliffs of Düsseldorf etc.*, Konsortium,
Düsseldorf (with Tim Ayres)

2007 *Han Schuil Malerei*, Galerie Barbara Oberem,
Bonn

Hard Edges Sharp Bullets, Pictura, Dordrecht (with
Rinke Nijburg)

Galerie Onrust, Amsterdam

Group exhibitions (from 1999)

1999 *Troublespot painting*, MUHKA en N.I.C.C.,
Antwerpen, België (cat.)

Panorama 2000, Centraal Museum Utrecht,
Utrecht (cat.)

2001 *Schoon, W139*, Amsterdam (site specific werk)
Four Dutch painters, Galerie Gebr. Lehmann,
Dresden, Duitsland

2002 *Een collectie in beweging- aanwinsten 2000-2001*,
Stadsgalerij Heerlen (cat.)

Station 2 station, Brugge, België (cat.)

Een collectie/A collection, Noordbrabants museum,
's Hertogenbosch (cat.)

2003 *Die Realität der Bilder*, Zeitgenössische Kunst aus
den Niederlanden, Staatliches Museum Schwerin
& Stadtgalerie Kiel, Duitsland (cat.)

Tot zover/Up To Now, Stedelijk Museum

Amsterdam, Amsterdam

Samenscholing, Werken uit de collectie van het
Centraal Museum, Centraal Museum, Utrecht
(cat.)

2004 *Encounters with Modernism*, o.a. Shanghai Art
Museum, Singapore Art - Museum, Pinacoteca
São Paulo en Museo de Arte Moderna Rio de
Janeiro (cat.)

The Shining, Aschenbach & Hofland Galleries

2005 *Later on we shall simplify things*, Centre Cultural
Andratx, Mallorca, Spanje

Bis an den Rand der Malerei, Galerie Barbara
Oberem, Bonn, Duitsland

Later on we shall simplify things, Stadsgalerij
Heerlen (boek)

2006 **BSTR*CT*, Kunstruimte 09, Groningen

2007 *21 years later*, Werken uit de collectie van Bert
Jansen en Art Affairs, Art Affairs, Amsterdam