

Bob Roes “The Moment is yours”

Exhibition in Aporia gallery from 17 March to 14 April 2018

Introduction

Belgian artist Bob Roes was born in 1969. He lives and works in Turnhout. Roes studied plastic arts in Ghent. He was a pedagogical educator and taught plastic arts in high school before deciding upon a carrier as an independent contemporary art painter.

Apart from oil painting he builds installations and creates sculptures. In his free time he is an admirer of French avant-gardist and contemporary arts revolutionary Marcel Duchamp.



In Aporia’s “The moment is yours” exhibition, Bob Roes shows **oil paintings** about particular moments in the past which have since then been fading away. The paintings are imagined based upon anonymous photographs which Roes uses in an effort trying to grasp as intangible moments in the past. The resulting paintings picture the almost impossibility to reframe the emotional framework from given instants in the past - it seems that such moments can only be reminded as a best possible approximation of what has been.

These instants of the past as photographs can only be thought of without ever becoming tangible again. For Roes and from his painterly perspective they open up new horizons.

About the exhibition “The Moment is yours”

The exhibition of paintings is called “The moment is yours” in which Bob Roes combines landscapes with images dealing with the alienation of man from his past and perhaps (thus) from the his present life.

The exposition is about the incapability to conserve the human mental condition as it was at a particular moment since it has constantly been evolving during one’s live time. It hints towards an emptiness of the earthly passage of man and is to be understood as an encouragement to aim for the best possible.

For Roes the best way to capture an impression of the past in a painting is the use of taking photographs as a basis. However, he feels that it is impossible to frame the human figure as a whole, as an entire psychological entity in a photographic picture. This is even true when the depicted subject on the photographs, is our own. As a matter of fact, as we are looking at our own picture, it is as if we are looking at someone else, a stranger. Indeed, we can never say that images of ourselves are identical to what we were at that moment in the past, that is from a psychological point of view. This is what is of interest to Roes; the loss of our own psychological being in pictures and probably more broadly; in the world we are living in. The human psychological condition cannot be framed in pictures and cannot be seen. It looks as if we are alienated from our own being when looking at pictures. Especially when we look at images from the past, it seems that we are alienated from ourselves. Sometimes it is hard to recognize ourselves from a physical point of view and more significantly, from an emotional perspective. The question “who was I then?” gains relevance.



What strikes immediately in Roes' approach to painting is the act of 'not painting' as well as the blurring of the human head. For Roes it is the best possible way to document the image of a person. For him, this way of painting becomes a statement about the non-reproducibility of any emotional assumption from a physical appearance when looking at pictures. As such, Roes indicates that painterly reproductions of the past lack

validity because the psychological content has evolved or got lost since the picture was made. The value of any painted image resulting from a mere mimesis approach lacks truthfulness given the constant development of the human psychological framework in time. Roes denies the portrayal of the human head as a means capable of bringing added value to the psychology of the subject.

In the same vein the vertical line which is prominently painted across the painting's surface, may be considered as an addition to the questioning about the validity of the image and depicted subject. However, now it seems more to represent a discontinuity in time with regards to the painted figure; does the image want us to consider a 'before' and an 'after' of an unknown event in the course of the subject's itinerary? Or does it indicate the presence of a second figure hidden within the deepest of our being? Or does it represent a split of the figure's personality in the literal meaning of the word? If these possibilities would be the case, it takes courage to admit the existence of another or a split ego in us. Nevertheless, it is probably as human and natural as the human psyche can be and Roes gives this human aspect shape into his paintings which is providing the work at least with a second rather grim layer.

Aporia gallery presents Bob Roes – The moment is yours – 17th of March – 14th of April 2018

This layering is interesting because they bring into account possibilities of another ego in the fabric of our individual existence and at the same time, pin points to the darker side in each of us.

Bart Roefmans, Aporia gallery Brussels, 14 February 2018

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