



Press release

Galerie Fons Welters

1 December 2012 – 12 January 2013

Opening: Saturday 1 December, 5-7 pm

Opening hours: Tuesday – Saturday, 1-6 pm

(The gallery is closed from 24 December 2012 – 3 January 2013)

Job Koelewijn

Collage / Storyboard

Stock cubes wrapped in poetry ('Passage', 1996); a tombstone from baby powder in honor of Dutch poet Hendrik Marsman ('Marsman..., goodbye', 1995); a tape measure with the last poem by Samuel Beckett ('Poetry Lock', 2000); a book case in the shape of the eternity sign ('Untitled', 2006); Spinoza's 'Ethica' covered in hypnotizing mandala's ('Nursery Piece', 2009). In the past decades, poetry and literature have been a thriving force for Job Koelewijn's artistic practice. A practice that although diverse in its media, materials and references, finds coherence through the artist's gift to bring them together in a new synthesis, wherein art becomes an act of regeneration and purification, wherein art offers the possibility to intensify reality.

For his solo exhibition 'Collage / Storyboard' at Galerie Fons Welters, Koelewijn presents two bodies of work. Since 1 February 2006, the artist each day records himself while reading out loud from a diverse range of books – from Peter Sloterdijk's 'Critique of Cynical Reason', to the 'Songbook of David Bowie' to 'The I Ching – Book of Changes'. Each book is read from front to back, for precisely 45 minutes a day – one side of a cassette tape. With its title 'Relief 1' and 'Relief 2' the artist offers a subtle word play, referencing the manner in which these books and cassette tapes are presented on a wooden panel, where the height of the tapes indicates the volume of the book underneath. Each tape in a way is drained with Koelewijn's voice, just like the stock cubes were once wrapped in poetry. For the artist, this daily repetitive gesture is much like a pragmatic ritual, through which language becomes a mental workout, nurturing, activating, alerting the brain and in Koelewijn's case, creating relief. Yet, it is not just a ritual, as the artist tells: 'It's about setting yourself an objective. A mechanic act does not necessarily have to lead to numbing'.

This quality of the mechanic repetitiveness returns in Koelewijn's new series 'Collage / Storyboard' that in a different manner brings together the broad frame of references that have intrigued Koelewijn over time. Philosophy, poetry, religious spirituality, vernacular culture found in Spakenburg's traditional clothing, historic cleansing methods, even Dickie Dik make up the different layers of a monumental circle. Each layer is cut through in growing circles – much like a tree's year rings – working through the image so to speak, to make room for yet again a new layer. The circle can be seen as a metaphor for perfect harmony and equilibrium, yet with the passing of time they will slowly change color and reveal their physicality in a different manner. Each separate layer, each cut circle, comes together in a stop motion animation, melting high and low culture; fiction and reality. As such it offers a counterweight to the tactility and physicality of the circle itself. A new mechanism of illusion comes into being, words and images are slowly revealed, as if the circles are slowly breathing with a power beyond itself. Here as well, we might find relief in the comfort words sometimes offer.

[Laurie Cluitmans]

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