

At Het HEM we focus on encouraging visitors to interpret art themselves. The programmes we develop are intended to evoke wonder and curiosity, to sometimes be provocative, or conversely, reassuring. What we aim for more than anything else, is to enable our visitors to discover for themselves the stories that are told through art.

This requires the ability to introspect. You have to rely on yourself, on your own sensory perceptions. What moves someone doesn't require any reference, or intellectual effort. Subjugating yourself to your own intuition provides a completely new experience: seeing what we present as art for what it really is, according to your own understanding.

Nowadays we are bombarded with information, whether we like it or not. So it's especially important to value our own perception, this kind of 'direct knowing', as a healthy counter-balance. In our current zeitgeist, rationality is in the ascendance, but experiencing culture, making and viewing art, appeals to our intuition. Don't try and understand it, it doesn't mean anything, unless it means something to you. Intuition is knowing from the heart. It circumvents fear but also rational considerations. We can only see things as they really are by setting our internal gaze to infinity.

In Chapter 3HREE we offer a glimpse into renowned stylist and art director Maarten Spruyt's brain. As a trendsetter, a master collector and a maximalist, Maarten has a keen sense for evocative images, colours and materials. Whereas most art and museum exhibitions are based on narratives about a particular subject matter, here at Het HEM we are curious to discover what happens when you put intuition front and centre instead and negotiate a multi-layered experience on a radically sensory level. Without the guidance of any prescribed concept or an obligatory collection, Maarten takes on the challenge of Het HEM's underground spaces, where he creates an immersive exhibition about the power of humanity and its mind.

Maarten aims to demonstrate that hopelessness is an illusion, that people can always find purpose when this is desirable or even essential. In Chapter 3HREE he takes us into his world of intuitive experience while offering us enough material to activate our own subconscious. Hopelessness is then gradually transformed into an inner panorama.

Kim Tuin, managing director

About Chapter 3HREE Maarten Spruyt

In 1964 Susan Sontag wrote an influential essay entitled *Against Interpretation* in which she criticised the tendency for art to be primarily judged on the basis of intellectual interpretation. In her view, the way people experience art is determined too much by their search for content and meaning, which detracts from any direct experience the work evokes in the viewer. Our current culture is based to such an extent on excess, material overproduction and sheer crowdedness, that instead of sharpening our sensory experience, it bores and numbs us. This was the case fifty years ago and it's still the case now. 'What is important now,' says Sontag, 'is to recover our senses. We must learn to see more, to hear more, to feel more.'

A work of art generates its own mode of understanding, which encompasses more than statements based on analysis and content. In fact, searching for symbolic meaning and metaphors can actually trivialise the intrinsic quality, the character of the art. More than that, it can even obstruct a profound engagement with art.

According to Sontag, you could compare the experience of art with dreaming. Because dreams are so expressively unintelligible and penetrating, they often help us understand ourselves better. This doesn't mean they are detached from reality, on the contrary, they might just be our only *genuine* reality. The same applies to art. While a work of art can deal with subjects that colour or disrupt our lives in all sorts of ways, it is its untranslatable, sensory immediacy that gives it its value.

Chapter 3HREE avoids the haze that analytical interpretation spreads, by specifically appealing to the human capacity to create inner worlds free from any outside influence. The exhibition with works by 27 artists, mediates a multi-layered world of experience on a radically sensory level. It takes Het HEM's impressive architecture as the starting point for an immersive exhibition, in which the artworks serve as windows giving access to a reality that reaches beyond the physical environment.

A large section of the exhibition is hosted in the basement of Het HEM, which features a 200 meter tunnel. The tunnel originally served as a shooting range for testing the bullets developed in the factory above ground. Visitors enter this space one by one, at intervals of several minutes. In the basement, the virtual absence of 'outside' offers a powerful context in which to create an internalised experience. This literal 'tunnel vision' invites the visitor to make contact with themselves without any interference from external stimuli.

The selection of artworks hints at a centuries-old artistic theme: the human desire to be closer to nature by harnessing or even destroying it. Now that the perceived separation of culture and nature produced by western thinking seems to gradually fade, we are searching for new ways to understand our relationship with the world. How do we orient ourselves on a rapidly changing planet, which is changing irreversibly as a result of our own activity? How can we feel connected to our environment once again? Can we find solace in letting go of an analytical, observational attitude in favour of immersing ourselves in experience?

Rieke Vos, curator

“What is important now is to recover our senses”

It's a jungle out there

An observation by Maartje Wortel

I've walked past Maarten Spruyt's studio (which is also his home) hundreds of times. Even if the building on the Amstel river doesn't catch your eye, then the tourists will. There's always someone taking pictures of the house. Behind the huge windows you can see a jungle of plants, and suspended above the plants is a fishing net full of globes. It's as if the plants and the globes want to get together and tell the spectator a story. (Indeed, they do.) It's as if they automatically attract you to them, which is peculiar considering that the plants simply serve as a curtain. You can't see through them and yet all that green feels like an invitation.

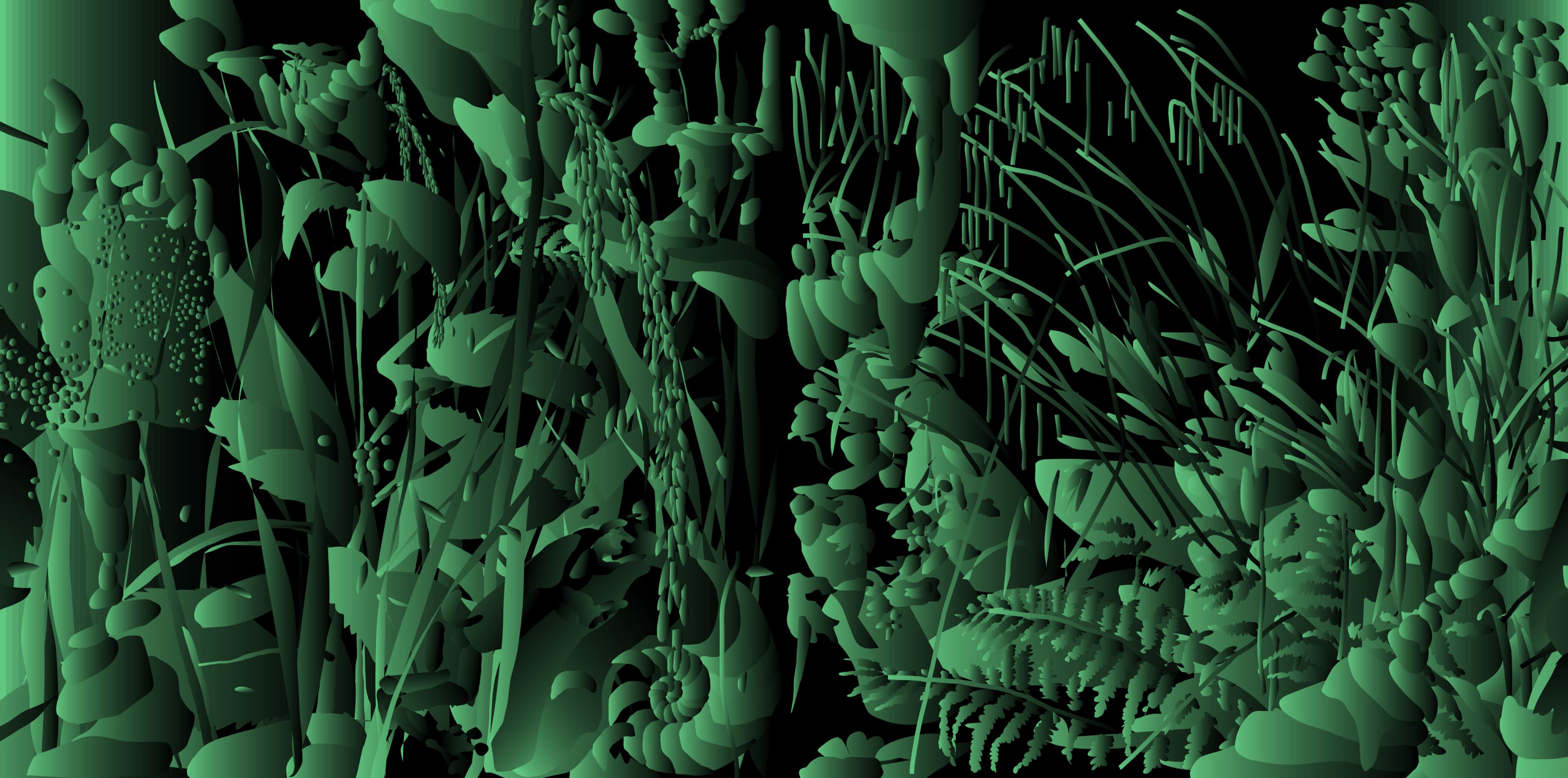
Clearly, we're talking about two different worlds here. On the one hand a world of which you are part and from where you can observe, and on the other hand a world you can almost touch, which evokes curiosity, from where you can reflect, but which is not readily accessible. (Something in you is awoken.) There is the outside world and the inside world. The public space versus the private. The city versus nature. Hardness versus softness. That window behind which Maarten lives and works is the boundary where one possibility (the large spatial one) merges into another possibility (the small, internal one). The wonderful thing is that the boundary (the window) doesn't feel like a boundary, but rather more like a natural transition in which you, the person who happens to be passing by, spontaneously participate. You want (in this case: WANT) to participate in it. Participating in something requires you to act. And ideally, you should (begin to) feel at home in it. Maarten Spruyt has the ability to place objects together and enable them to connect to the space they are in, in such a way that you automatically feel at home. The distance that 'non-human objects' usually evoke disappears organically and everything (people, animals, things, the artificial and the natural) merges into one. Perhaps this is because the artist takes objects seriously, as they do in Japan for example, and regards them as entities. In this sense, the divine resides in literally everything that exists, nothing exists on its own. And you can feel this. Whatever the case, even just the sight of his window causes you to slow your pace, expand your gaze and reconsider your point of view. Quite often people simply enter Maarten's studio unannounced, stand in the midst of his collection of objects and ask, as if they've been invited to a secret party: What's going on here?

What's going on? They have arrived in Maarten Spruyt's universe. (A universe within the universe.) In order to avoid being disturbed too often by people who for whatever reason feel attracted to his personal space, Maarten has installed a gate in front of the door, to which a cowbell is attached. That way Maarten won't be taken by surprise when the next passer-by happens to wander into his workspace.

He has work to do. Constantly. So that he doesn't just reach passers-by with what he makes and conceives, but is also able to tell a more deliberate and larger story to a wide audience. Which is what he's doing now at Het HEM. In exactly the same way as his lives, thinks, acts and moves, his main aim is to evoke numerous different emotions. (Maarten is an impressively handsome, extraordinarily tall figure whom you immediately fall in love with because he opens himself up, seems to tolerate chaos and yet retains control. Or, as an artist friend of mine put it in an email: he's the ideal partner.) Maarten tells me he visited the shooting range in the winter and that the chill there contributed to his warm sense of being nurtured by the tunnel. "The tunnel felt really comfortable, because you're completely immersed in your own world. When I came to view it, there was no light, I had to use my phone to illuminate it and that was incredible. Straight away, the atmosphere was right and I felt really good in my own world. A world in which it's wonderful to be able to portray lots of different emotions with various other artists. My aim is to portray feelings. The work should really get under your skin, that's the power of art, it can touch raw nerves. That's the case for the artists I've selected and whose work will be exhibited. It's not my intention to create some kind of horror show, but I do want to call things by their name. Times have changed and we now have to reposition ourselves with regard to each other, to nature, to politics and art. The great thing about the tunnel is that there's nowhere else for you to go. You simply have to go through the tunnel. Before you enter it, we make it a bit difficult for you. I want people to enter the tunnel on their own. We need to get our of our comfort zones. This current era really demands that of us. We have to push through and that's what the tunnel also represents for

me. The exhibition is structured like a one-way street. It always bothers me a bit at exhibitions when towards the end I see people turning around and walking back. That makes me realise I'm almost at the end of the exhibition and then I can't let go of that thought, so I can no longer look at the works properly. If you don't see anyone returning, it gives more of a sense of infinity. And if you stop and consider something for longer, you see much more. My intention is to show unity in abundance. And for you to come out the other end disoriented."

At his kitchen table, Maarten Spruyt shows me work by the artists he's selected. It's all about zooming in and zooming out. "That's how time works, too. In order to understand where we live and how we ought to live, you have to keep paying attention to details within the larger whole and vice versa." He uses fashion to illustrate the way times have changed. He says that once trousers hang as low as your knees, they reach a point where they can't hang any lower. And now it's the fashion for trousers to reach above your navel. It's a very simple story about how time moves. There always comes a point where things no longer function, and that's when you are forced to review your position. Every story has to evolve with time. Art is ahead of its time, which means that when we reach the end of the tunnel, disoriented, in the cold and the rain, we think: damn, we have to go back. And when we realise that's not possible, we have to think of something new.



1
Ossip
Selection of artworks, 1998–2019
Various materials
Various dimensions

Intuition is an important part of the artistic practice of Ossip (1952, the Netherlands). His work is based on portrait photographs that he collects from books, newspapers and magazines. They are casual images of human figures, whose postures and poses are reminiscent of the images from old technical and medical manuals. The yellowed photographs exude a retro feeling, from the end of the nineteenth to the beginning of the twentieth century – a time that we still call modern because it was characterised by enormous technological progress, which in addition to optimism, caused confusion, alienation and unrest.

In a way, this alienation can also be recognised in the collages of Ossip. By adding textile, (steel) wire, tulle or cardboard, he gives the figures in the photographs tentacles and deformities. They want to step out of their frames and make a connection with the world around them. As if they were plants that want to take root, devices whose plugs have been pulled out of the socket, or parasites looking for a host.

In the White Cube of Het HEM, Ossip's works of art float like tranquil angels above a soft bed of sand. Detached from their source and caught in a cosmic void. They express the human desire to be disconnected from social and psychological conditions and conventions; a feeling of freedom that can be both ecstatic and terrifying. Is it a *horror vacui* that represents the fear and impossibility of emptiness or a *mare tranquillitatis*, the sea of peace that offers a safe haven?

2
Ivana Bašić
A thousand years ago 10 seconds
of breath were 40 grams of dust
#1 and #2, 2017
Stainless steel, force, pink alabaster,
time, silk, cushioning, dust, electro-
magnetic linear actuators, micro
controller
320 x 51 x 18 cm; 320 x 48 x 18 cm

I will lull and rock my ailing light in
my marble arms #1 and #2, 2017
Wax, glass, breath, weight, pressure,
stainless steel, oil paint, silk,
cushioning, marble dust
320 x 325 x 36 cm; 320 x 315 x 38 cm

In her work Ivana Bašić (1986, Serbia) addresses the vulnerability and transformation of the body and human matter. By using different materials in the work (such as wax, glass, steel, alabaster, oil paint) and combining these with technique and immaterial matters (such as breath, pressure and rigidity), the sculptures acquire a post-human quality. The colours she chooses refer strongly to the human body. Pink, white and natural combinations are reminiscent of blood, bone and flesh.

The sculptures of the two installations at Het HEM embrace a bio-mechanical science-fiction-like form language. They are post-human alien-like figures who could have emerged from H.R. Giger's fantasy. In the large raw halls of Het HEM, they seem to be waiting like embryos to be born, or rather to slowly dissolve into dust.

3
Sander Breure and Witte van Hulzen
Five Characters from The Thief
(Grapperhaus, Sean, Marianne, Josse,
Sylvana)*, 2019
Ceramics, wood and textile
Various dimensions

Sander Breure (1985, Netherlands) and Witte van Hulzen (1984, Netherlands) initiated their collaboration ten years ago with dance performances. They increasingly entered the field of the visual arts with performances, videos and sculptures. Their work is based on dramaturgical analyses of everyday life and their accurate observations of human behaviour.

For *The Thief* Sander Breure and Witte van Hulzen rely on a newspaper article about a case that stems from released CCTV footage with which the thief is pilloried online and eventually commits suicide. The work consists of human sculptures in which portraits of friends and famous people function as actors in the story. The images are often robust in their appearance and use of materials and have a strong human presence. With their contemporary, ordinary body language, the sculptures mirror the visitor's behaviour.

*Courtesy of Tegenboschvanreden

4
John Gerrard
Flag (Amazon), 2015; Flag (Nile)*, 2015
Simulation on LED panel in steel
artist's frame
50 x 50 x 18 cm

The large-scale real-time computer simulations by John Gerrard (1974, Ireland) are reminiscent of special effects and video games. The works depict virtual, graphic worlds that exist outside of physical time. Gerrard thus produces alternative realities. In these works he examines the power structures and energy networks that have made the expansion of human efforts over the past century possible.

In *Flag (Amazon)* and *Flag (Nile)* Gerrard simulates an oil slick in the centre where the light is accurately broken to create a vibrant prismatic field. The perspective turns, while the video changes from day to night and endlessly changes form. The soft rippling of the water refers to the rippling of time. With his work Gerrard manages to evoke a physical alienation: nature is alienated, but also looking at it becomes alienating. The work is both compelling and discouraging.

*Courtesy the artist, Thomas Dane Gallery

5
David Claerbout
Dancing Couples (after: Couples
at square dance, McIntosh County,
Oklahoma, 1939 or 1940), 2008
Single channel video projection,
colour, silent, 40' loop

Artist David Claerbout (1969, Belgium) questions the way we perceive our environment and how we deal with the passing of time. Existing photographic or videographic material, such as old black and white photographs, is often the starting point for his work. This is no different with *Dancing Couples*.

The installation shows a magnified image. Here we see boys, with sweaty foreheads, dancing with girls whose faces are not visible. The photo alludes to difficult times. The meaning of this work revolves around the presence of "reflected light". The raw flashlight, which made the photo possible more than 60 years ago, and the projector lamp that makes this photo look like today, show a remarkable resemblance. Using contemporary techniques, Claerbout adds minimal movement to the originally still image. The slow 3D movement seems to meet our desire to reveal the ladies' faces at first, but in the end only subtly shifts the men's gaze.

6
Anthony Hernandez
Everything #1, #2, #42, #54, #71,
2002/2003
Pictures for Rome #12, #13, #17, 1999
Prints on canvas
76,2 x 76,2 cm

The varied oeuvre of Anthony Hernandez (1947, United States) consists of black and white portraits, street photography and abstract colour photographs of his surroundings. His style of photographing is distinguished by a slow form of looking and in-depth research into his subjects, creating attention for elements that would otherwise go unnoticed in the busy urban conditions.

Chapter 3HREE combines images from two different series. The works in the series *Everything* (2002–2003) stem from Hernandez's exploration of the Los Angeles river and the 'storm drain' tunnels that lead to it, an underground infrastructure that not only regulates the city's water management, but also serves as a home for many homeless people. The photographs from the series *Pictures for Rome* (1998–1999) explore in a similar way the often unknown architectural infrastructure that can be found under and behind the facades of various large cities. These enclosed vistas of Hernandez are reminiscent of the underground tunnels of Het HEM itself.

7
Bianca Bondi
The private lives of non-human
entities, 2019
Mixed media (salt, salt water,
copper, neon)
Various dimensions

Bianca Bondi (1986) is an artist-chemist. Her typical materials of choice are salt, copper, herbs and flowers, silver, precious rocks, gentian violet and other chemical solutions, latex, silk; a frame that provides an imaginative combination of animal and vegetal minerals, biochemical substances and tactile surfaces. She builds spatial installations which she then processes as a kind of test laboratory. The materials create their own unique bonds with each other. Bondi does not attempt to control the mutual reactions, but guides them to take their own course. In this process the most improbable creations develop: a play of colour, form and space.

Responding to the penetrating cellar architecture of Het HEM, Bondi invites us into an intimate installation setting that breathes the dynamics of being together without necessarily being physically present – is this from the past, from the future, or are we inside a memory. An abandoned dining table as a reminder of companionship; a feeling that is still present in the air or dissolved and fused with its surroundings.

8
Tamar Harpaz
Shoot'em Shoot'em at the Bride, 2019
Various materials
Various dimensions

Tamar Harpaz (1979, Israel) creates spatial installations based on analogue techniques that are activated by the public. They function as decors that unexpectedly label the viewer as a central protagonist. On the basis of association, they offer the visitor a cinematic and narrative experience.

In the tunnel of Het HEM, Harpaz presents a new comic strip, which plays with the feeling of connection with the environment. Walking along a series of projections, visitors are made aware of their connection with the (natural) environment and their influence on its development.

9
Geert Mul
Natureally, 2017
Lightbox installation
251 x 251 cm

As a video artist, Geert Mul (1965, the Netherlands) works with sculptures, projections, generative and interactive audiovisual installations for numerous public spaces, including museums, schools, festivals and concert halls. He pioneered as one of the first VJ's in the Netherlands, creating installations of video and computer animations for large-scale music festivals. With his work he wants to bring visual poetry to the often commercial language of media.

Natureally is a fusion of photographs of a 500-year-old oak tree during two seasons, summer and winter. The vortex of light and colour gradually makes the tree move back and forth between different seasons.

10
Tanja Smeets
Liquid Garden/Beneath the Surface,
2019
Lasercut felt, knitted structures,
cable ties, leaf catchers
Various dimensions

The works of Tanja Smeets (1963, the Netherlands) give an impression of organic growth processes in which she uses different materials and techniques to create lush sculptures. The installations often seem to be frozen in time, in a phase between flowing and dripping, growing and budding. Like parasites, they lay a poetic layer of organic forms over the hard surface.

For Het HEM, Smeets developed a site-specific installation in which felt, knitted structures and leaf catchers seem to grow like an own entity against the walls.

11
Maartje Korstanje
Untitled (transformer), 2015
Cardboard, glue, PU foam, PU coating,
embroidery on burlap, wood.
360 x 125 x 170 cm

Untitled (2018014), 2018
Cardboard, glue, embroidery, bronze,
wood
150 x 80 x 75 cm

Maartje Korstanje (1982, the Netherlands) makes sculptures that are based on the beauty of nature and the influence of humans on it. They are not literal or figurative works, but rather organic figures. With their capricious protrusions and branches, Korstanje's large sculptures often take up an entire space, attracting the viewer, and putting their imagination to work. You can discover carcasses, tree stumps or sea creatures coming from a forest or ocean; deceptively familiar and yet not exactly definable. They move in the twilight zone where beauty is given a gruesome edge and doubts are raised: has it just died or is it coming to life?

12
Desiree Dolron
Uncertain (TX), 2016
Video with sound, 3'57" loop

Artist Desiree Dolron (1963, the Netherlands) gained international fame with remarkable travel photographs and staged photography with a striking picturesque aura that seems to go back to the pictorialism of the previous century. Her work explores the passage of time, the relationship between transience and the transcendental as the basis of the human condition.

At Het HEM, Dolron shows the recent video work *Uncertain (TX)* in which she seems to employ a similar dreamy atmosphere and colour composition. The viewer's eye slowly moves over a swamp of secular cypresses dressed in Spanish moss. At the surface of the water a weed floats, spread by humans it multiplies at a rapid rate and slowly causes the local ecosystem to decrease due to a lack of oxygen. The sequence of images and the suffocating sound of the film accentuate the gradual decline of the forest. With her fluid camera work, *Uncertain (TX)* depicts on the one hand a romantic desire to merge into the wilderness, and at the same time the fatal outcome of human interference in a natural equilibrium.

13
Elsbeth Diederix
Costa Carolina, 2019
Three prints on textile
200 x 125 cm

As a photographer, Elsbeth Diederix (1971, Kenya) devotes her practice to the infinite beauty of phenomena from nature and seemingly everyday objects. Her photographic representations invite the viewer to renounce a conditioned way of perceiving, and show how sublime, poetic, and surprising the world can be.

For her magical, realistic photographs, she travels all over the world in search of the unique essence of phenomena from, for example, a flower garden or an underwater landscape. She tries to reflect this in often classical image compositions, which reveal the value of natural phenomena. In Chapter 3HREE Diederix shows a new triptych with shots of a dry landscape in Sicily.

14

Carla van Riet
Deformation in hues of yellow, 1980
Construction in leather, 1970–1976
Construction in leather, 1981
Deformed trousers, 1975–1979
Wall objects of leather
Various dimensions

After her education at the Academy for Industrial Design in Eindhoven, sculptor Carla van Riet (1940, the Netherlands) specialised in the production of two- and three-dimensional objects made of textile and leather. Chapter 3HREE presents four sculptural tapestries from the early eighties, in which old leather jackets, saddlebags and curtains can be recognised. The monumental works with balanced colour nuances look both abstract and animalistic and have an unmistakably erotic ambience.

15

Juul Kraijer
Untitled*, 2018
charcoal on paper
140,3 x 95 cm

Untitled*, 2018
charcoal on paper
140,3 x 94 cm

Juul Kraijer (1970, the Netherlands) creates naturalistic and surrealistic images in which the human body seems to merge with other beings and natural phenomena. She works mainly with drawings and photography and exclusively with the female model as an archetype, intertwined with greater forces of nature. Kraijer's extremely fine drawings capture the interwovenness of the human body with its surroundings. Her human figures seem iconic, stripped of background, perspective, or clothing, captured in introspective, tranquil poses.

An important motive in Chapter 3HREE is the way in which architecture influences our state of mind and the ability of nature (both 'human nature' and what we call 'Mother Nature') to break through this. In Kraijer's drawings we see the connections between the human body and nature, our interconnectedness with the world around us.

*Realised with Stipendium for Established Artists of the Mondriaan Fund

16

John Gerrard
X Laevis (Spacelab)*, 2017
Simulation on LED panel in steel
artist's frame

The large-scale real-time computer simulations by John Gerrard (1974, Ireland) are reminiscent of special effects and video games. The works depict virtual, graphic worlds that exist outside physical time. Gerrard thus produces alternative realities. In these works he examines the power structures and energy networks that have made the expansion of human efforts over the past century possible.

X Laevis (Spacelab) responds to the 18th century experiments of Luigi Galvani in which he studied the effects of electricity on the amputated legs of dead frogs. In an intriguing way, the work raises important questions about modern lifestyles and our (ir)rational attitude towards nature and the time in which we live.

*Courtesy the artist, Thomas Dane Gallery

17

Maria Roosen
Prick Vase, 2017
Glass
Various dimensions

Maria Roosen (1957, the Netherlands) explores forms in glass and water-colours; both congealed movement and carrier of a flowing form. Roosen sees her sculptures as "Tools for Feelings". They are utensils, intended to represent feelings. In turn, these feelings create a stream of thoughts of subjects such as growth, bloom, fertility, love and death. The creative process and craftsmanship are just as important to Roosen as the final result.

18

Noa Giniger
For the Time Being, 2011
Programmable LED message fan
9 x 9,5 x 18 cm

Noa Giniger (1977, Israel) creates subtle scenarios — often with a limited lifespan — that visualise the unspoken aspects of the human individual. Her installations include collections of objects such as white horses on a long narrow pedestal, sequences of dictionaries linking one language to another or solar lamps on display in illuminated showcases. Everyday objects take on a new meaning through their alternative location. Other works by Giniger try to emphasise the tension between existence and the essence, often with an ambiguous beginning and end.

Chapter 3HREE shows a device that cyclically displays the words FOR THE TIME BEING and at the same time creates an airflow. Whereas in many ways the exhibition questions the connection with the environment and its transience, *For the Time Being* precisely creates clarity in this theme. The rattling mechanism of the cheaply produced 'gadget' unmistakably conveys a form of melancholy: the potential of the here and now is challenged by the precariousness of existence.

19

Tessel Braam
Lost thoughts, 2018
Collage on aluminium with newspapers, oil paint, India ink
37 x 46 cm

The portrait paintings by Tessel Braam (1982, Netherlands) can be seen as a personification of the human brain. Reason that believes in order and progress is always broken up by a natural cycle. This movement brings with it elements that at first sight seem misplaced — the clear lines and the overview seem disturbed — but in their own way are also of value for the survival of the whole.

20

Anotherview
ANOTHERVIEW No. 6 Les Chevaux du Pont de Gau, Luxury Edition, 2017
Coated white enameled iron, aluminium, glass, electronic components,
24-hour video, loop
156 x 90 x 18 cm

Anotherview is an artistic collective that chooses the middle way between interior design and conceptual art. They are constantly looking all over the world for new perspectives, each telling a unique story about our society and the time we live in, in their own way. They capture these on camera as a 24-hour image. Embedding in the framework means that we, as a sort of observing outsider, become part of the face of the world.

The horses in the work *Les Chevaux du Pont de Gau* graze in the Camargue, a nature reserve in the southeast of France. Images of this rare, old horse breed, recognisable by its white coat and mane, grazing in the swampy landscape have become a clichéd image of the region. In addition, the deterioration of their natural habitat and the appearance of various viruses have been a serious threat to the survival of this animal for years.

21

Daniel Mullen
Introspective*, 2017
Acryl on linen
145 x 140 cm

Daniel Mullen (1985, Scotland) is fascinated by the concept of emptiness. In Western cultural philosophy, emptiness is often seen as insignificance. It is based on the absence of something. The Eastern perspective, on the other hand, often sees emptiness as an antechamber, a barrel that is still being filled, a fruit from which something can be born. The raw linen on which Mullen starts making his paintings is such a vessel of potential. Something is already present here and the painter fills it in further.

The optical illusion that the painting *Introspective* offers us is made up of a repetition of rectangles, each with a minor adjustment. The razor-sharp, geometric painting routine seduces our imagination almost immediately to the search for visual perspective and the sensation of space.

*Courtesy of Marian Cramer projects

22

John Smith
The Kiss, 1999
SD video from 16 mm, 5' loop, colour,
sound

John Smith (1952, Great Britain) is an avant-garde filmmaker who often uses humour to explore the conditioned assumptions of the film medium. In the 1970s Smith became involved in the activities of the London Filmmakers Co-op. Strongly influenced by conceptual art and the materialistic ideas that dominated the filmmaking of British artists at the time, but also fascinated by the compelling power of the story and the spoken word, Smith developed an oeuvre that transforms reality and exposes the language of cinema.

In Chapter 3HREE Smith's work *The Kiss* (1999) is shown. Where we are initially invited by an image of mysterious beauty — the budding of a flower — the video gradually becomes more and more oppressive. This is the image of a suffocating environment in which we constantly try to find solid ground.

23

Maaïke Schoorel
Stone and Flowers
(Cimitero Verano), 2016
Oil on canvas
70 x 50 cm

In a world full of visual stimuli, Maaïke Schoorel (1973, the Netherlands) ensures peace with her minimal, almost white paintings. With the help of photographs she places very light sketches of everyday objects and landscapes on the canvas. Her subtle work refers to classical painting, but through the use of family albums and snapshots, it also becomes a very personal reflection on the world around her.

Schoorel's paintings introduce a classical philosophical question: to what extent do humans, when they mimic their environment, become the creator and/or ruler of nature? Schoorel's works are abstractions of images of natural landscapes. She paints photographs but abstracts the image in such a way that it becomes an almost colourless image. The longer you look at the image, the more dynamic it becomes.

24

Tony Matelli
Weed #479, 2019
Painted bronze
68,6 x 30,5 x 20,3 cm

The sculptures by Tony Matelli (1971, United States) are hyper-realistic and therefore alienating. The illusion of authenticity generates a surrealist feeling of confusion and misplacement. With its minuscule proportions, the bronze sculpture *Weed #479* is both inconspicuous and attention arousing. The humble plant seems to cling to life in the most unlikely places. As undesirable as it is inextinguishable, the weeds in narrow cracks find just enough room for perseverance and a modest existence.

25

Jung Lee
It's Over, 2020 (originally 2016)
Neon, transformers, high voltage
cables
268 x 287 cm

Jung Lee (1972, Korea) investigates the images that language can evoke and the language that images can evoke. Neon light is a recurring material that she uses to display internal and intimate worlds of experience and the related words in the public sphere. The lighting installation *It's Over* is struck by visual speechlessness. At the end of the tunnel, concrete concepts fall into abstractions and words fizzle out in murmur.

26

Christie van der Haak
Zonder titel II, 1980
Zonder titel III, 1980
Zonder titel VI, 1980
Chalk on paper
100 x 75 cm

Christie van der Haak (1950, the Netherlands) is best known as the designer of a collection of fabrics with colourful ornaments and richly detailed patterns. Her works have been used as wall coverings and upholstery as well as autonomous works of art. Since working with computer-controlled weaving machines, she was able to skip painting from that moment on. The drawings in the exhibition are early work. They are all chalk drawings with a repetitive pattern of lines or strips, descending from light to dark.

27

Bram Ellens
KR 150-2 PA, The Mad King in chains
(Robot in Captivity series), 2019/2020
Robot arm, chains
Various dimensions

In his sculptural installations, artist Bram Ellens (1978, the Netherlands) does not shun grand gestures. With their performative character and sense of drama, they emphatically draw attention to the human stories that lie at their origin. This also applies to the substantial work *KR 150-2 PA*.

A robot is chained up in a room. His ferocious movements with almost animal intensity play on our emotions. We feel compassion for this 'beast' in his involuntary detention. An animal that so clearly longs for its 'natural' habitat. In an automated society, this is a contemporary image full of fertile contradictions about the relationship between man and robot.

28

Cyprien Gaillard
Nightlife, 2015
3D motion picture, DCI DCP,
14'28" loop

Cyprien Gaillard (1980, France) is known for creating work that connects history and nature, as well as humanity's connection to both. In particular, he explores the beauty of failure and the natural degradation that can be recognised in recurring motifs of ruins.

At Het HEM, we are showing his immersive video work *Nightlife*. The film consists of four scenes that, like an assemblage, connect separate stories. They were shot in Cleveland, Los Angeles and Berlin. It starts with an image of Rodin's sculpture *The Thinker*, which stands in front of the Cleveland Museum of Art. This is followed by recordings of an ecstatic dance of juniper trees swaying against the rigid fences as if in a state of trance. The third tableau shows a triumphant firework display, *the Pyrofinale*, above the Olympic stadium in Berlin. In the same Olympic Stadium, African-American athlete Jesse Owens put an end to the fascist myth of Aryan hegemony by winning four gold medals at the 1936 Olympics. For each medal won, the athlete received an oak tree from the Nazi organizers of which one is still growing in front of his high school in Cleveland. The hypnotic images are accompanied by a soundtrack to a rocksteady classic by Alton Ellis, in which the lyrics "I was born a loser" gradually turn into "I was born a winner". Music and film, past and present, analogue and digital, come together in this compelling video artwork.

9 dates with Still Life

Date #3: Tormenting reconciliation

We all see different things in a work of art but the same person can experience different meanings from the same work of art. For each of the nine chapters, Ko van 't Hek will go on a date with the artwork *Still Life* (2019) by RAAAF, and each time will write a column about his experience.

Sometimes you just don't know. I'm standing in between *Still Life*, third date, but for a moment I just don't know. Not what to feel, not what to think. What are we doing? What in God's name are we doing?

I just don't know. And that's fine. I just don't know and that's fine. Fine to feel lost for a moment, fine to be lost for a moment. Reconcile. Don't immediately reach for your phone, don't immediately have your phone in reach. Distraction is just a distraction. Let the tiny torment rather be: the not knowing, the stillness of life, the lost. For a moment lost. To then have it remorselessly roaring, beating, streaming, bursting, clashing, crashing, shaking and roaring again. Let it happen (it's gonna feel so good).

Four vast brass plates, a beautiful mankind metaphor. The plates move endlessly back and forth and I see mankind. Mankind who gets up every morning to make the best of it. Back and forth. That's what we're doing. Back and forth and I see Sisyphus, who was punished by the Greek gods to roll a rock up a mountain, after which the rock would roll back down and he would have to roll the rock back up again. Back and forth. And so forth. Every day back, every day back forth.

According to writer Albert Camus we should imagine Sisyphus as a fortunate man. Fortunately. Because when he sees the rock rolling down again, when he sees his own torment, he sees the absurdity of his fate. And so the absurdity of life. Absurd. And here's the thing: by accepting the absurdity, the darkness of the world dissolves. By accepting the absurdity of life we can manage to remain courageous in this unjust world. That's what makes Sisyphus heroic. See the absurdity of life, don't hope for something different, accept it, reconcile with it, appreciate it, let it roar.

I don't know. I don't know if he's right. I don't know if that's the answer. We don't know. We don't know and that in itself is a fantastic given. I see *Still Life* and for a brief moment, briefly, I manage to reconcile with the absurd.

Do-Something-Sundays

09.02.2020 / 08.03.2020 / 12.04.2020

Every second Sunday of the month, Het HEM organises a matinee together with Restaurant Europa, Dynamic Range Music Bar and Café Het HEM. With Do-Something-Sundays lazy days are over. Join us for a full day of events all over the building.

During Chapter 3HREE Do-Something-Sundays will be supplemented with a free (on presentation of your entrance ticket) public programme curated by Rieke Vos. Follow hethem.nl for updates on talks, guests, times and the exact details of the programme.

Swap Talk

19.04.2020

At a time when algorithms determine much of our view on the world, we think it's important to remain curious and open towards each other. Swap Talk is a social story project in which we build a collection of 'human books' — people with a wish to share their personal story with visitors in a one-to-one conversation. We facilitate meetings between people who want to exchange ideas about various social topics with someone outside their own circle. Contributors to the living book collection participate as a volunteer. Het HEM offers the opportunity for them to share their story, in turn inspiring others to further reflect and develop.

Opening Hours

The Chapter programme and Living Room with Café Restaurant are accessible from
Thursday – Sunday, 12 pm – 12 am
Different times may apply for events

Dynamic Range Music Bar
Thursday – Sunday, 6 pm – 12 am

Restaurant Europa
Thursday – Saturday, 6 – 11 pm
Sunday, 3 – 6 pm

CHAPTER 3HREE MAARTEN SPRUYT
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