

The Curtain Rises | Mirjam Vreeswijk

We are proud to present Mirjam Vreeswijk's first solo exhibition within the gallery: The Curtain Rises. In recent months, Vreeswijk successfully exhibited in galleries in Los Angeles and New York and at art fair Art Busan in South Korea. Now she returns to our capital with an extensive series of new works.

The paintings in this exhibition show the field of tension characteristic of Mirjam Vreeswijk (Gorinchem, NL, 1997). Her work is beautiful and repulsive, dark and cheerful, grand and decorative at the same time. Intangible structures of natural phenomena such as waterfalls, lakes, lava flows and explosions are made tangible and decorative by being shaped like roses or held together by a bow. Vreeswijk creates an atmosphere that is at once melancholic, uncanny, eerie, wondrous and lovely.

Ice palace

The work carries different realities and encourages one's own interpretation. **Best Served Cold**, for example shows a frozen fountain, reminiscent in form of Louise Bourgeois' creepy spiders. At the same time, it looks like a kind of museum piece, or ornament in an ice palace. A contrasting shape is visible in the theatre curtain in the background.

Vreeswijk plays with what is real or an illusion, what has depth or is actually flat. Just like in a film or theatre play, anything is possible. The reference to film and theatre is literally reflected in her paintings through the use of curtains like you see in theatres and movie houses. The exhibition design also shows this element from her work. Her paintings are presented against the backdrop of a giant theatre curtain.

The aesthetic of films is also reflected in this series. The atmosphere of her paintings is often compared to the films of American director David Lynch. In her latest work, she also plays with science fiction and how on the silver screen the unknown is depicted. We see this in the painting **Revival**, which depicts a kind of apocalypse, the birth of the world, or the gates of heaven. This kind of magical imagery, which you also find in the aesthetics of occult movements like Scientology, fascinates Vreeswijk.



Best Served Cold, 2023, 120 x 90 cm, oil on canvas

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Revival, 2023, 130 x 100 cm, oil on canvas

The paintings arise from collages of objects and images that appeal to her. Scattered across the floor of her studio are shiny ribbons, fabrics and lots of clippings, pages from books and photos. From this archive of materials, she intuitively builds compositions, first in maquettes, then on canvas. Step by step, Mirjam considers what the image needs to eventually arrive at the perfect composition and perfect paint structures.

Ultimately, Vreeswijk wants to capture a moment of beauty forever. We see this in the largest work in the exhibition, *Vibrant Eruption*. She has fixed the intangibility of a lava flow, a beauty that passes, forever in the form of a bow.

Text: Wouter van Herwaarden & Mirjam Vreeswijk

Religions

While religions seek to explain the incomprehensible in their own way, for Vreeswijk it is rather making images incomprehensible that is interesting. Creating a new reality. We see this in *Dracula's Affair*. A romantic scene, reminiscent of old ghost films in black and white, such as *Nosferatu*. Two bows become intertwined while floating. In the background there are candles slowly blending into a landscape. In terms of style, they are reminiscent of Gerhard Richter's *kerze* paintings, in which he experiments with how the light source of the candle is stretched in a photograph.



Dracula's Affair, 2023, 110 x 85 cm, oil on canvas

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