

Stedelijk Museum Schiedam

herman de vries. all

20 September 2014 – 18 January 2015

From 20 September 2014 to 18 January 2015, the Stedelijk Museum Schiedam will present the exhibition entitled **herman de vries. all**. The exhibition elucidates the artistic development, the versatility and the coherence in the oeuvre of herman de vries* (Alkmaar, 1931). herman de vries is a multi-talent who has managed to combine science, art, life and nature in his production. His work on the relation between culture and nature is actually becoming more relevant by the day. In the exhibition, the development of his oeuvre is thematically arranged on the basis of a representative selection of works.

Engaged and innovative oeuvre

Coping with (occurrences in) reality forms a leitmotiv in the entire oeuvre of de vries. He approaches life and the world in general through his collages, paintings, reliefs, sculptures, spatial installations, photography, films, texts, poems and artists' publications. At the same time, he ceaselessly investigates the definitions of art, science, culture and nature. This applies to his earliest achievements in the form of *collages trouvés* and continues right on to his most recent installations featuring spices, crops and objects taken from nature. The Stedelijk Museum Schiedam now presents an extensive overview of his work in six exhibition rooms.

The exhibition is built up around important themes and artistic starting points that typify herman de vries's artistic calling, such as: *zero, random objectivation, chance and change, my poetry is the world* and *natural relations*. de vries has remained faithful to a number of basic principles that consistently recur and become clearly visible in various periods. For instance, in addition to the innovative aspects of his work, constant points of departure are visible in the development of the oeuvre. His work largely covers the relationship between humanity and reality. According to de vries, the primary reality is formed by nature. Culture is human reality and, in his opinion, this can ineluctably be traced back to nature. That is also the case with the art of herman de vries. He provides experiences by exhibiting natural objects or processes as facts that could have existential significance in our lives. He confronts people with processes of change and transience by presenting half-degenerated artefacts, treetrunks, stumps and skulls. But he also points out the threat of losing knowledge about the healing, beneficial and mind-expanding effects of natural crops and nutrients.

Relationship between culture and nature, relevant and current

de vries aims to realize a visual language that is as objective as possible: a means of expression in which the subjective 'creative hand' of the artist is absent. Many of his early (white) works can be regarded as autonomous expressions of art in the sense that they refer primarily to themselves. The more recent works also have an engaged character, partly due to their direct relation with nature. They can be experienced as subtle statements about the relationship between humanity and nature, as well as about the alienation of humanity from nature. Such interpretations are mainly underpinned by the knowledge that human action is threatening nature worldwide. Above all, de vries shows us the beauty and detailed wealth of nature. herman de vries enables us to take a fresh look at things. He registers,

* herman de vries spells his name without capitals to avoid ideas of hierarchy

collects and arranges. He confronts us with the processes and phenomena of nature: the original biotope of humanity from which we have now become estranged due to technological, industrial and cultural developments.

Collaboration in Schiedam

no thing – New work by herman de vries in De Ketelfactory, Schiedam – Stones in De Plantage

herman de vries is also exhibiting new drawings in De Ketelfactory. Especially for the exhibition he has made an installation with sloe berries and a mural. Many elements of his drawings can be recognized in his coloured-crayon drawings: grass, reed, leaves, twigs, doodles, straight lines, ringlets. In their motion and wealth of colour, the drawings are almost graphic translations of nature. The charcoal drawings have been made with pieces of burnt wood from the Steigerwald in Germany. herman de vries has now made his largest charcoal drawing ever on a wall in De Ketelfactory. On entering De Ketelfactory, the aroma of sloe berries is clearly discernible. The dark-purple berries lie on a broad surface like a living drawing on the floor. The link with distilled Nolet (patron of the De Ketelfactory) is immediately established.

Three stones bearing different texts have been placed in De Plantage park, the connecting axis between the Stedelijk Museum Schiedam and De Ketelfactory, which is also the oldest city park in the Netherlands.

Shop

The Stedelijk Museum Schiedam and De Ketelfactory have jointly issued an extraordinary publication (books + DVD) about the exhibition at both locations.

In addition, the book: *herman de vries – overal stroomt mijn oog* by author Cees de Boer (and published by Waanders & De Kunst, Zwolle) will be officially presented at the opening of the exhibition.

Netherlands Pavilion at the Venice Biennial 2015

The presentation entitled *to be all ways to be* by herman de vries and curators Colin Huizing and Cees de Boer has been chosen to represent the Netherlands submission to the 56th Biennial of Venice, which will be held in 2015. Colin Huizing is also the curator of the exhibition herman de vries. all.

Note for the editor

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Hours of opening

Tuesday to Sunday, 10.00 – 17.00. Closed on Mondays, Christmas Day and New Year's Day

Admission

€9.00 Adults

€4.50 Cultural Youth Pass, Historical Association, groups of 50 people and upward

Free children up to 12 years old, Friends of the Museum, Museum Annual Pass, Rotterdam Pass, Rembrandt Association and ICOM-pass

[fotobijchriften]

herman de vries, photo: Robin de Puy

herman de vries, journal of essaouira, 2013, mixed technique, 25 x 35 cm (45 items), collection of herman & susanne de vries, Eschenau