

PRESS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**Koen Delaere – “FREE”**

Locuslux Gallery in Brussels is proud to announce a solo exhibition of the Belgium / Dutch artist Koen Delaere.

March 12, 2009 – April 19, 2009

Opening Reception Thursday March 12, 2009 18-21 h

Koen Delaere, (B,1970) lives and works in Tilburg (NL). Originally a product of the ‘counterculture’ that found its way across Europe during the late eighties. In the first years of his life, Delaere lived in Bruges, Belgium; at the age of seven the family moved to Johannesburg, South Africa, for a year. On returning they settled in Zeeland, The Netherlands. There Delaere became engrossed in punk’s do-it-yourself mentality. Delaere ended up in art school more or less by accident. When Delaere graduated from the “Academie voor Beeldende Vorming”, Tilburg (NL), during the mid nineties, the art world was dominated by postmodernism and deconstruction. Delaere avidly engaged in this.

PUNCH

“Like getting a good knock on the chin: that was the sensation I had on visiting Koen Delaere’s final art school presentation in Tilburg. Despite the fact that years have gone by since then, I still vividly remember that feeling of being overwhelmed. The characteristic ‘Maaskant’ building, in which the art school was then housed, did not offer particularly ideal circumstances for the exhibition of artworks; yet departing students did manage, year after year, to bring attention to their work there in an acceptable manner. Koen Delaere broke with the concept ‘acceptable’ and went his very own way. For once he had not hung or placed his work as well as possible but, instead, had taken complete charge of the classroom at his disposal. The greyish space had been transformed into an environment, an installation involving the walls, the ceiling and the floor. I remember a chaotic combination of paintings, painted slats of wood, chipboard and cardboard: it looked as if a bomb had gone off in a studio. My eye roamed for awhile, seeking something to go on. Nonetheless I soon felt at home in this unorthodox entity, which could be both sculpture and painting. Clearly, the artist was reacting against certain things, but what exactly were they? A conversation struck up with him provided information but no conclusive answers. It left, you could say, considerable room for interpretation. That aimlessness nevertheless came across in an extraordinarily convincing and lively way, and I’m glad we’ve been able to continue our conversation in the years that followed. Since graduating from art school, Delaere has continued to work spatially with some frequency, but he mainly shows himself to be a painter. That aimlessness can still be found in his paintings.

Both simple and complex, they are done quickly and yet wrought out, seem superficial but are stratified. These paintings fascinate me with their conflicting presence. Though not out to please, they often have singular beauty and attest to a shrewd eye and a great awareness of what painting can still offer. Koen Delaere is, however, not a formalist painter; nor is he, despite the affinity I can see with Bernard Frize, a systematic one. Whereas Frize can form a point of departure that can lead to a series of works, Delaere is a seeker who does work in series, but he has to fight for every painting. And from that fighting in his studio, I get a knock on the chin every so often.”

by Hendrik Driessen, Director & Chief Curator, De Pont Museum, Tilburg,. NL

Koen Delaere about his work

“My way of working is 'all-or-nothing'. Nothing is a decorative little piece to hang above the sofa. Everything means an involved work that tells something about the potential in our world; that deals with the idea of making your own decisions, winning your freedom, being responsible. My work centers on the idea of freedom and the restriction of it. By setting clear rules beforehand, I fight for my own freedom in my work and use thereby a system of constants and variables. A constant; the structure of the canvas, the variable the way in which I smear paint on the canvas and use the structure. By working against all kinds of limitations, I create parallels with grassroots' (1) and 'do-it-yourself' (2) movements; but at the same time investigate my outlook on the world. By increasing the painting's 'readability' - that is to say, its transparency with respect to the approach and technique (or anything on the canvas that contributes to the making of the painting, such as the mixing (of paint?), the viewer may obtain a sense of self-realization, a feeling that the world can be shaped. On one hand I work within a rather systematic and analytical approach of formal and conceptual painting. And on the other, I use the more whimsical anti-design of the underground culture, the over-aesthetic aspects of graffiti and street art, intensely expressionist 'malerei' “.

Notes:

(1) Grassroots is a term for political processes that develop locally. This often means that local citizens give rise to initiatives and take decisions. The Grassroots idea also refers to community activism.

(2) Do-it-yourself, often referred to by the acronym DIY, is a term used by various communities that focus on people creating or repairing things for themselves without the aid of paid professionals. The notion is related in philosophy to the Arts and Crafts movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Many modern DIY subcultures take the traditional Arts and Crafts movement's rebellion against the perceived lack of soul of industrial aesthetics a step further. DIY subculture explicitly critiques modern consumer culture, which emphasizes that the solution to our needs is to purchase things, and instead encourage people to take technologies into their own hands to solve needs.

> The phrase 'do-it-yourself' came into common usage in the 1950s in reference to various jobs that people could do in and around their houses without the help of professionals. A very active community of people continues to use the term DIY to refer to fabricating or repairing things for home needs, on one's own rather than purchasing them or paying for professional repair. In other words, home improvement done by the householder without the aid of paid professionals.

> In recent years, the term DIY has taken on a broader meaning that covers a wide range of skill sets. Today, for example, DIY is associated with the international alternative and hardcore music scenes. Members of these subcultures strive to blur the lines between creator and consumer by constructing a social network that ties users and makers close together. There are various communities of media-makers that consider themselves DIY, for example the indie media network, pirate radio stations, and the zine community.

Prizes:

In 2006, Koen received the Wolvecamp-prize, which is awarded every 2 years. The committee to award this prestigious prize, was chaired by Hendrik Driessen, director of De Pont, Museum for Modern Art, Tilburg (NL).

Additional information

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For images go to www.locuslux.com or contact us.

On request, the press release is available as Word document in English or Dutch.

Members of the press are welcome on the opening on Thursday March 12, 2009 (18-21 and during our opening hours or by appointment.

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Opening hours: wed – fri 14-19h, sat 12-18h, or by appointment