

PRESS RELEASE

Dick Verdult

The Great Hanging Icon Flagellation

October 19 – November 16, 2019.

Opening October 18, 5 - 7 pm

Annet Gelink Gallery proudly presents 'The Great Hanging Icon Flagellation', Dick Verdult's (Eindhoven, 1954) third solo exhibition at the gallery. Multifarious in his approach, from film to drawings to music and sculpture, Verdult's work explores the relations between form, image and culture through the anarchic and absurd. In 'The Great Hanging Icon Flagellation' he prompts us to flip between a rolodex of perspectives, playing with scale, material and imagery, giving equal importance to each.

Recalling the pompous and ritualistic, as though an annual fair or circus is sweeping into town, large scale works are distended from the ceiling like flags: an array of imposing works that hang throughout the clinical white space of the gallery. The works abstract and take on the everyday and communicative quality of flags, leaving Verdult to flirt with the surreal.

Dia de la Emergencia, 2014

Using that which is to hand in his adopted homestead of Calanda in rural Aragon (Spain), Verdult foraged his local supermarket to find packing carton for the shipment of bottles as the base for the flags. In using a material with clearly visible traces of wear and tear, rather than a blank canvas, the works appear as utilitarian items with a history of being packed away and reassembled. The use of furniture paint, with which Verdult lacquers the surfaces of the cardboard, further highlights the origin of the material whilst similarly obscuring it.

The use of furniture paint, which does not allow for refined, nuanced details, also produces a peculiar flatness to the images. In contrast to their storyboard like, pedagogical aesthetic, Verdult's hand is visible in the balance and subtlety of the compositions. With esoteric hints to Verdult's own work, cultural markers and rituals, the distorted symbols of the images reference and create their own idiosyncratic folk-like iconography.

Encroaching on the gallery space with their bold images and large scale, the flags seem disorientingly out of context, their in your face communication rendered to limply hanging works that aim to tell us something. What that something may be, remains shrouded in the obtuse and baffling. With highly associative images that are both recognizable and unintelligible, we are left to our own devices whilst ambling through Verdult's scenery.

Taken together, the works form an alternative retelling of common tropes, touching upon fear, shame and guilt as well as the comforting, grotesque and hilarious, to which all answers and interpretations are equally valid. Reflecting back onto the viewer, the works offer no salvation or absolution, rather all truths and realities are possible. In 'The Great Hanging Icon Flagellation' Verdult leads us on as a veritable pied piper, showing us an unknowable, yet enticing reality.

His latest film *Viva Matanzas* will premiere during IDFA/Amsterdam Art Weekend on Sunday, November 24.

Dick Verdult (Eindhoven, 1954) studied from 1973-77 at Université Paris VIII Vincennes, departments Film and, Plastic Arts in Paris. Verdult's works includes a.o. graphic work, radio, tv, films, music and scripts, masks, texts, internet sites. Many works were realised in collaboration with friends and artists in sometimes ad-hoc, sometimes more durable groups. Currently his work is on view at the Quetzal Art Center (PT) in the exhibition *Cave Myths*. He has had solo exhibitions at the Van Abbemuseum (2011-2012) and Museo El Chopo in Mexico (2014) and represented the Netherlands in Gwangju Biennale 2012. In 2014 he had a residency at the European Ceramic Work Centre in Oisterwijk, NL. He has performed all over the world as Dick El Demasiado, playing his infectious cumbia experimentales. He has an extensive oeuvre of films, produced both by the VPRO and independently.