

Zeno X Gallery is celebrating its 40th anniversary with a series of exhibitions that shed light on the different decades of the gallery. From 5 February, '40 YEARS Zeno X Gallery: The Eighties' presents the four artists who joined the gallery in the 1980s: John Körmeling (1981), Anne-Mie Van Kerckhoven (1982), Patrick Van Caeckenbergh (1986) and Raoul De Keyser (1988). Early works enter into dialogue with recent works created specially for the exhibition. In the early years, the gallery's main focus was on architecture and installation art.

Patrick Van Caeckenbergh first showed *Teddie* (1989) at his *Wunderbar* exhibition in the gallery in 1989. This early installation problematizes the word 'huidskleur' (skin colour). For Van Caeckenbergh, the label 'vleeskleur 374' (flesh tint 374) on a pot of light-pink paint reveals the one-sided Eurocentric way of looking at skin colour. The teddy bear is like an explorer, showing off his conquests on a typical billboard from the 1980s. The bear looks cuddly but is actually a dangerous animal: Teddie 'loves' the different types of people, but also wants to oppress and dominate them.

Le Secrétaire (collection de peaux) (2018–2022) [The Secrétaire (Skin Collection)] is a desk drawer containing a collection of 'skins'. Van Caeckenbergh collected the skins over the past five years by cutting rectangular shapes out of porn magazines. He always selects rectangles that no longer contain any references to the human body; censorship is a form of therapy that allows him to deal with the 'gruesome' visual reality of pornography. He then presents the 'skins' as stamps or on a staff. The image of the human tendon shows that all bodies, regardless of skin tone, look the same on the inside.

For *Het Muziekbos (Het Weeftapijt)* (2021) [The Musical Forest (The Woven Carpet)], Patrick Van Caeckenbergh cut up a photographic print of an investment forest and interwove it with a colour fan from a paint shop. The colours refer to the different types of birds. To the right of the woven carpet is an overview of the birds and their (phonetic) sounds. The work is a tribute to French composer and ornithologist Olivier Messiaen, who saw colours when he heard certain sounds or musical chords (synaesthesia).

John Körmeling presented *Wortelmodellen* (1983) [Root Models] during his first exhibition at Zeno X Gallery in 1983. The iron tubes represent the measurements 1 to the square root of 7. In this series of *Wortelmodellen*, the ribs and diagonals are always roots times a single unit. To this day, this measuring system is a starting point for Körmeling's architectural projects, which include the bicycle shed *fiets&stal* in Scheveningen and the work *Minimaal Meten* (2021) [Minimal Measuring]. Körmeling's

designs and realizations look for correspondences between art and architecture, but also urban planning and design, and always with a sense of perspective and humour.

In *Fruitstad* (2021) [Fruit City], each piece of fruit is given a number of windows or a door, turning the fruit basket, by definition, into a city. In this exhibition, Körmeling also presents models of realized projects, such as *Paviljoen voor de Vogelaar* [Birdwatching Platform] in Texel and *Veiligheidspaviljoen* [Lifeguard Station] in Knokke (in cooperation with Compagnie-O Architecten). His design for a glass bridge in Venice was not realized. He created the sculpture *Huis buiten de Schaduwgrens* (1989) [House Outside the Shadow Line] for a fund-raiser on behalf of children who require constant sunlight.

Anne-Mie Van Kerckhoven held her first exhibition at Zeno X Gallery in 1982. To celebrate forty years of collaboration, a large solo exhibition, *Placenta Saturnine Bercaïl*, featuring old and new work, is being held at the gallery in Borgerhout. At Zeno X Gallery Antwerp South, she shows the early work *Ectoplasma* (1991), part of a series of four works on doors. Each work in this series depicts a kind of striptease: half hidden behind a door set ajar, duplicated by a mirror, or open like a fan. In the work *Duality – Theorem* (2015–16), Anne-Mie Van Kerckhoven explores the tension between word and image. She places different layers of material on top of each other, just like in her recent images of women on Plexiglas.

Raoul De Keyser was the first painter to join Zeno X Gallery in 1988. Both *Untitled (Le miroir de ...)* (1988) [The Mirror of...] and *Untitled* (1987) date from the early years of the collaboration. Taking the surrounding reality as his starting point, De Keyser investigates the material and technical possibilities of painting. For instance, many of his paintings are inspired by the chalk lines of the football pitch he can see from his studio. This recognizable motif, which also appears in *Untitled (Le miroir de...)*, is further reduced to single, double or crossed lines that relate to the pictorial space in constantly changing constellations. Colour becomes a subject in its own right in his work, as seen in *Untitled* (1987). The visible brushstrokes break through the monochrome and bring tension, tactility and sensitivity to the work.