

KÖNIG GALERIE

RINUS VAN DE VELDE | THE COLONY

MARCH 18–APRIL 23, 2017
ST. AGNES | NAVE

OPENING: MARCH 17, 6–9 PM

Rinus Van de Velde (b. 1983, lives and works in Antwerp) is a leading figure on the Belgian contemporary art scene. His work revolves around the tension between fiction and reality. For his first solo exhibition at König Galerie, he will create a completely new site-specific installation composed of several large drawings on paper set against painterly backdrops referencing major twentieth-century painters.

Using a loose but virtuoso drawing style, he tells the second part of the story of Isaac Weiss (the first part was shown earlier this year at the Gemeentemuseum in The Hague), a fictive alter ego who runs an artists' colony. The members of the colony are big-name artists of the twentieth century including Cy Twombly, Joan Mitchell, and Pablo Picasso. In this series, we watch as the formerly utopian project of the colony turns into a full-fledged dictatorship and gradually falls apart.

Over the past several years, Van de Velde has developed a practice that principally results in monumental narrative charcoal drawings. Behind it, however, lies a much broader production of cardboard paintings referencing art history or works produced by alter egos of the artist, among other formats. Van de Velde combines found and staged photography, performances without spectators, theatrical sets, cinematic narrative techniques, installations, paintings, sculptures, and other media. All these elements portray a thoroughly unreal world, while also documenting a very real working process that takes place mainly in the studio.

In his drawings and the accompanying narrative writings, text and image function as points of departure for a fictional biography in which Van de Velde does not coincide with himself, instead testing the different possibilities of modern and contemporary art. The result is a productive doubling of his artistic persona: the "real" artist who works with well-defined artistic and material parameters in his studio contrasts with an alter ego who travels across all sorts of (artistic) positions without ever fully identifying with them. Like mirror images without an original, both artists produce each other. A similar tension obtains between the artist's workspace and the world of the drawings: on the one hand, the studio is the actual laboratory where the possibilities the artist pursues are put to the test; on the other hand, the fictional scenes in the drawings emphasize their roots in studio experimentation.

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OPENING HOURS
TUE–SUN 11–18 H
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