

TIM VAN LAERE GALLERY

RINUS VAN DE VELDE

The Villagers

5 september - 12 oktober 2019

Rinus Van de Velde (°1983, Leuven, lives and works in Antwerp) presents his first large-scale film project after two years of preparation. The 40-minute movie, entitled *The Villagers*, premieres during Van de Velde's fifth solo exhibition at Tim Van Laere Gallery. Alongside the movie, a number of new charcoal drawings are on display, along with color drawings and three sets from the movie. As a whole, it is a comprehensive installation allowing the viewer to enter the universe of the artist.

In recent years, Van de Velde has increasingly evolved into a "total artist". He constantly creates a tension between fiction and reality through the use of different media such as drawings, sculptures, installations and now film as well.

One could say that the move to the medium of film is an almost logical evolution in the works of Van de Velde, characterized by their highly narrative nature. In his drawings, the artist often depicts landscapes or scenes that are reminiscent of movies. They appear to be temporary snapshots, like individual images taken from a longer cinematic story. This narrative aspect is further reinforced by the addition of text, as a kind of subtitle: literary accounts add an aspect to the depicted events.

In that sense, it is only a small step towards movies. Yet *The Villagers* is not a classic linear story. Van de Velde's choice to work without a fixed script results in a series of separate fragments that are only connected by the order and editing of the scenes. The movie shows the lives of a number of characters living in a small village in an undefined landscape. The realistic high-quality production contrasts with the constructed, abstracted environment and the fictional characters played by Rinus Van de Velde himself, his assistants, friends and the gallerist, none of whom are professionally trained actors. This emphasizes the tension between fiction and reality and ensures that we as spectators have little to hold on to. It all feels very familiar, but at the same time so clearly rooted in fake, copy and imitation, because none of the elements has the pretense of being "real".

The sets

An important role is reserved for the life-size sets in which everything takes place. Every detail, from a phone on a desk to a piece of cake at a diner, is made of cardboard and this way exposes the fictional, staged and unreal nature of the medium of film. The monumental "sets", as Van de Velde calls them, have long been part of his method.

By creating a fictitious, construed world that stems from Van de Velde's own unbridled imagination, the sets offer the artist numerous possibilities for new stories and images.

At first, the sets were built as a preliminary study for the drawings and were only a setting for his stories, that he and people from his immediate surroundings acted out in his studio.

During the past few years, however, the sets gradually gained importance, as autonomous works. They became more detailed and complex, and were presented in new ways.

In 2016, a selection of large-scale props left Van de Velde's studio for the first time, as part of *Donogoo Tonka*, his solo exhibition at the S.M.A.K. museum. In his solo exhibition at Tim Van Laere Gallery in 2017, he took this idea even further, with a total installation of drawings, ceramics and decor elements. As a continuation of his search of a way to present the detailed craftsmanship of the sets, Van de Velde moved towards the medium of film. Inspired by a documentary he saw at the artist studio of André Breton, he began to scan the sets using a camera. During the making of the sets, they started to present themselves with new stories that sprang from the artist's imagination. The result is *The Villagers*, a movie shot entirely in the studio of Van de Velde, for which seventeen life size sets have been made over the past two years.