

Press release Mathieu Meijers at Michèle Schoonjans Gallery

The Michèle Schoonjans Gallery is honoured to present the work of artist Mathieu Meijers in a solo show.

LUX NIGRA

Close your eyes and you can see light on the inside. This is the black light or lux nigra. The black light doesn't stand for fear or absence, but is absorbent and welcoming. It envelops the viewer and is pure potential: here everything is still possible and anything could develop. This makes it the opposite of white, which is reflective, dismissive. White locks life and humanity out.

Modern painting's history was long dominated by white. A trend existed towards lighter as a means of striving for the higher, the immaterial, the beyond human. It was a form of anesthetising that encouraged aloofness and shunted art onto a lonely siding.

Mathieu Meijers grew up in this modernism, yet at a certain point turned his back on it. He left white's dead end, embraced the black light thereby once again providing space for materiality.

For the longest time, he did nothing but draw figurative scenes based on themes from his own life. Endlessly repeating shapes allows him to record his actions. Working out a composition is like an apple for his concentration which provides content and meaning to the work it originally did not have. Only once the work removes itself from history and becomes something else, something independent, is it finished. This often takes years.

When Meijers took up his brushes again, his work became more abstract, its subject matter: the principles of painting. However, there was always a personal layer present: ships he saw in the harbour as a child, pears from his father's garden or lightbulbs which, for a long time, were manufactured in his home town, Eindhoven. He connects these motifs to art history from the Trecento, the 14th-century period in Italy between Gothic and the Renaissance, to contemporary digital image culture. He encapsulates this in schematics for colour mixes and precious metals. Gold, platinum and palladium play an important role. Amid the colours, gold works like black, yet can also be reflective. Platinum and palladium do not have an art historical track record like gold does, yet can also be interpreted as merciless white or covering black.

This exhibition displays works from three series: Girls' Playground, Shadows and In front, over, under and behind the light. The fence from Meijers' primary school is the point of departure for Girls' Playground's exploration of light and colour as matter. In Shadows, a projector screen and an unlit incandescent bulb depict the moment before the light changed into image, the 'light before the light'. Finally, In front, over, under and behind the light is Meijers' personal analysis of the development of thinking about colour in painting over the centuries.

Mathieu Meijers (1951, Stein, The Netherlands) draws, paints and creates books. His work has been collected by the Van Abbemuseum (NL) and the Dutch ING and ABN Amro banks. He spent an extended period teaching painting at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie in Amsterdam and the art schools of Breda and 's Hertogenbosch. At the Design Academy Eindhoven he taught colour research. It was in that guise that he curated the 2016 exhibition Broken White at the Van Abbemuseum, which was informed by his ideas on light and colour.

USEFUL INFORMATION

Mathieu Meijers "Lux Nigra

EXHIBITION DATES : 04.09 au 22.10.2022

Vernissage Sunday 04.09.2022 from 2-7pm

Brussels Gallery Weekend Thursday 08.09.2022 from 11am-7pm
Friday 09.09 to Sunday 11.09.2022 from 11am-7pm

Rivoli Open Sunday Sunday 04.10.2022 from 2-6pm

Horaire d'ouverture Open Thursday to Saturday from 11am-6pm and/or by appointment

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