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Meessen De Clercq

CHAIM VAN LUIT
Stealth of a Parrot

MEESSEN DE CLERCQ
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For his first individual exhibition at the gallery, Chaim van Luit (b. 1985) proposes a series of new works which explore memory, whether individual or collective, whether it is known or buried, conscious or unconscious. *Stealth of a Parrot* is the title of the exhibition as well as the work in the alcove which welcomes visitors. The work is a formal echo of the space itself, but also appears to be a box where the lid has been removed, allowing the *pollination* of the whole storey. Bright lights, like the colours of a parrot on the one side, and paradoxically black on the other. The works of this exhibition oscillate between this straightforward visibility and that 'black light'. Showing as well as dismantling time. Questioning it by updating forgotten stigmata. Van Luit seeks new temporal viewpoints. He interprets the past with a constantly new gaze, and seeks clues to the hidden around it. The fragment is the material of historians, this is what they use to elaborate a hypothesis and to try to understand the past.

For example, he can delve into the register of art history: in a light-hearted way by referring to the vocabulary of forms of Henri Matisse (*The Parakeet and the Mermaid*, Stedelijk Museum) with wall-climbing holds in the form of vegetables, or more seriously by painting a canvas in the exact dimensions of *Die Priese (Rabbiner)* by Marc Chagall exposée in the sinister exhibition *Entartete Kunst* (Degenerate Art) held by the Nazis in 1937. A video opposite the monochrome shows that van Luit went to collect the white element of his pigment by scraping the walls of a bunker in the German forest. So he can draw on a very distant past, or one that is much closer: the large inscription ORPHAN comes from a cast of remains left by Neolithic men in a large burnishing tool found in a Dutch forest. Having poured polyester into all the deepest recesses of the burnishing tool, the artist removed these shapes, which when assembled in a particular order, create the word 'orphan', an echo of this stoneware which has traversed time. A very recent past if we consider the large white metal disc with its iridescent reflections, interspersed with points that replicate the bodily scars of the artist.

The reign of nature is suggested everywhere: whether in this fire of copper and red neon, in this plant screen concealing Matisse's parrot or in this video which seems to turn into a photograph or even a painting where nothing seems to happen but where attentive visitors will experience an apparition.

It is there, the distortion of time. In this slow-motion view of a body lying flat on the ground as well as the sand which is running at breakneck speed through the hourglass with many notches.

Chaim van Luit was born 1985 in Heerlen (the Netherlands). Having studied at the Jan Van Eyck Academie, van Luit has exhibited his work in many Dutch art centres. He staged a personal exhibition in 2013 at the Bonnefanten Museum in Maastricht where he lives and works.