

Chaim van Luit

Via Lucis II

March 23 - May 5 2018

With a Latin title, *Via Lucis*, which can be translated as 'luminous path', Chaim van Luit addresses fundamental themes such as time, light and space in his second solo exhibition at the gallery.

A tireless surveyor, an inquiring mind, van Luit makes his work grow in his studio as much as in the countryside surrounding it. Chaim van Luit's work relies on the notion of harvesting. Harvesting artefacts, harvesting data, harvesting of all kinds, in order to put together a puzzle which ultimately provides us with the image of a vast landscape. By welcoming the visitor with a mirror onto which is glued an old comb, the artist poses the question of identity and point of view from the outset. Opposite, *Circumscribe*, the large neon circle shows the personal scale of the artist who is defining the limits of his body. How can we avoid seeing a metaphor in this? That fragile line, that protective perimeter, reminds us that Man can hope to touch the sky, but also reminds us that he has his feet on the ground, and can easily bite the dust. Wouldn't that be the story of Icarus? Being tempted to soar through the heavens but being brought back down to end in burial. How far should one go?

Not lacking in humour, we find these two aspects again in *Lost and found pigeon rings*. The rings of carrier pigeons arranged in a rainbow gradation come from the items found by the artist during his many outings with his metal detector. For years, he has been criss-crossing his home region and collecting these numbered coloured rings that enable identification of these trained birds which fly colossal distances as they attempt to reach an extremely precise destination. The presence of buried rings nevertheless demonstrates their abrupt end and the failure of the mission.

Van Luit digs to unearth what is buried, to extract it from oblivion. The work *Chain of thoughts* consists of tens of metal wires exhumed using the same method and tied together to measure the height of the exhibition space. These elements taken individually have no meaning, but putting them one after the other gives a measurement. Likewise with *Stone bridge* consisting of core samples of marble and travertine which, placed on the ground, become a surveyor's or archaeologist's marker.

The title of the video made in collaboration with Joep Vossebeld, *Legato*, represents the way of playing successive notes, linking them together, so that there is no silence between them. The video shows disparate images gleaned on the artist's travels, images taken inside a cave, in a field, on a road, in a forest, whereas the soundtrack is the recording of a voice tuning the organ in a church. The shots are agitated until there is a moment of calm, a stable shot, which corresponds to the moment when the voice finds the right note. Image and sound are then in optimal harmony. This wish to combine two different realms or universes can be found again in *Structure, Construction*; a marble sculpture which is the reproduction of moulted stag antlers found in the forest. Van Luit is fascinated by the organic nature of the antlers, which grow back each year and translate this shape into marble using an advanced technique. Or how to combine nature and machine.

As an artist van Luit has an unusual background - a military career lasting several years - which occasionally resurfaces as can be seen in *Spear*, a wooden stick painted with the colours of the surrounding space. Under its minimalist camouflage, this object disappears, leaving the idea. Erasing the object to highlight the action of painting to exploit the transition between object and wall. As with the canvasses in the series *Comb (horizontal/vertical)* painted in a monochromatic progression which are reminiscent of certain issues highlighted by artists like Ryman and Opalka. Recalling that painting is an association between the material and a medium, the artist shows how important light is to perception. Depending on the viewpoint, the viewer perceives a ghostly shape recorded in the material only due to the alternation of the direction of application of the paint (vertical or horizontal). According to van Luit, monochrome is not an end in itself, but a means of achieving repetition of an action until it reaches *perfection*. The idea is to show the painting in a degree of bareness, and encourage the viewer to look closely, look from far away, look at an angle, and choose multiple viewpoints.

Born in 1985 in Heerlen (The Netherlands), Chaim van Luit currently lives in Maastricht (The Netherlands). Chaim van Luit had solo exhibitions in the Bonnefantenmuseum, Maastricht, in Amsterdam at tegenboschvanvreden and in P/////AKT (The Netherlands), at the Workshop Gallery in Beirut (Lebanon) and at Meessen De Clercq (Belgium). His work was shown in group exhibitions in Belgium in the Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten van Antwerpen (KMSKA) and in the Palais Curtius in Liège, in Germany at Rudolf-Scharpf-Galerie/Wilhelm-Hack-Museum in Ludwigshafen and in The Netherlands in the Centraal Museum Utrecht, in Garage Rotterdam, in the Jan van Eyck Academie, Maastricht and in France at the Nuits de la photographie, les Rencontres d'Arles, and with Martine Aboucaya, Paris.