
Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art

The installation and philosophy of **DOUBLE DUTCH** (September 13, 2009 - July 26, 2010)



Sewing with poles in silk fabric - the installation of Lara Schmitger's "Negligee Duet" (left)
Hanging of Fendry Ekel's "Grosse Halle" (right)



Serge Onnen, the artist, working on his outdoor sculpture "Planetariummonetarium" (right)
Installation of Job Koelwijn's "Sanctuary" (left)

The challenge in the exhibition 'DOUBLE DUTCH'
Opening at the Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art
September 12- 13th
Artist opening reception: Sept. 13, 4-6

Is it really possible to discern "Dutchness" in the work of artists?

It was among a discrete group of installation and video artists that Marc and Livia Straus, founders of HVCCA, found the most interesting artistic developments and who they thought could be identified as "Dutch." They say this cautiously and do so with the caveat that they bring their American background and their own history in art to such a disquisition. They found strong commonality in the group: They were born in The Netherlands and/or spent their formative art training in The Netherlands; the work has a strong relationship to architecture which is important in The Netherlands today; the work often echoes some of the formidable history of Dutch furniture, and the sense of space and openness likely relates in part to the particular Dutch landscape.

If this is pushing the point, still, they could think of no other country where the work might have been made. Folkert de Jong's work could not be American or British or German or Polish. While it is not possible to be certain that it is Dutch, there are no choices as good. That seems as true for Marc Bijl, Erik van Lieshout, Job Koelewijn, Jennifer Tee and even Karen Sargsyan, who is from Armenia but spent all his art training years in The Netherlands and especially at the Rijksakademie where Folkert de Jong, Fendry Ekel and Jennifer Tee also studied.

They saw in this remarkable body of work, enormous variation, personal evocations, and considerable risk-taking; it had a "Dutch Soul". To acknowledge such Dutchness is not to limit the work, but rather simply to recognize the origin of the aesthetic.

Job Koelewijn, in his forties works in a cavernous space where he was building a gas station with three life size gas pumps and a full size overhang. He made the work using his library of 3,100 art books. "Sanctuary" is imposing and beautiful. In this life-size tableau you can almost sense the artist breathing, where everyday moments are transformed into the thing that is inseparable from the being. If it is difficult to discern its absolute Dutchness, it is not difficult to discern its soul. This work became central to the thesis of Double Dutch.

Karen Sargsyan, Alon Levin and Jennifer Tee, all were invited to Peekskill to make new work on residency. Their familiarity with HVCCA and Peekskill figured into the work they made for DOUBLE DUTCH, a blend of their culture and ours - 400 years later. Dylan Graham and Marc Bijl made new site-specific indoor work.

Also included is Erik van Lieshout, whose installations and spatial concerns are often presented in the two-dimensional format of video, and for whom there is a seamless transition from installation to video. For DOUBLE DUTCH he also came to HVCCA to build the sets in which his videos are installed.

The title DOUBLE DUTCH is seen as a play on the fact that there will be work both at HVCCA and at the Peekskill waterfront. The latter is important because the picturesque waterfront has been largely devoid of art and with DOUBLE DUTCH several new works by Daan Padmos, Job Koelewijn and Serge Onnen are being made specifically for the waterfront and will remain long term.

The artworks that will be presented all have a sense of expansiveness and crossing boundaries, causing us to think about how as human beings we occupy space and relate to one another. It speaks to the best that the Dutch brought to us 400 years ago. The openness and freedoms of America, our laws, our unique history as a land where immigrants would be welcomed - this is inextricably related to our Dutch roots.

Marc Straus, MD, founder of HVCCA

Please contact us for the full essay of the catalogue to Double Dutch.

Thursday September 17, 6:00-7:30: Round table discussion with 8 of the artists from Double Dutch, Cocktails and Hors D'oevres served at 5:45 PM.

Dinner and follow up discussion with the artists by reservation.

For more information
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