



PHILIPPE VAN SNICK / PERMUTATIE 1972- 2015

We are honoured to present the 4th exhibition at the gallery by Belgian artist Philippe Van Snick. Since his retrospective at Museum M Leuven in 2010, Van Snick has rightfully been receiving growing international acclaim. In 2015 Van Snick was invited for a project with Daniel Steegmann Mangrané at MAM, Rio De Janeiro & Casa Modernista, São Paulo, curated by Marta Mestre (newly appointed curator at Inhotim). Currently De Hallen Haarlem & Grazer Kunstverein are co-presenting two parallel exhibitions that create a broader picture of his rich artistic oeuvre. Van Snick's work is also part of 'The Gap', an exhibition on Belgian abstract art curated by Luc Tuymans, on show at Muhka, Antwerp after traveling from the Parasol Unit Foundation, London.

The exhibition at Tatjana Pieters complements this exposure by presenting Van Snick's latest incarnation of his ten-colour practice. 'Eviter le pire' (2013-2015) is a monumental series that consists of eleven grids of nine canvases, with one grid in each of his ten colours and an eleventh grid featuring all ten colours in a particular combination. On the coloured backgrounds, Van Snick paints what he calls 'characters' in sky blue, a colour that reminds us of his attention to the cosmos and the relationship between abstraction and the real world, and which is often used as a symbol for day in a duality with black signifying night.

Van Snick arrived at these characters through an interest in Aztec culture, in particular undeciphered codices. His abstract shapes look somewhat like incomprehensible symbols that conjure up the notion of an alphabet but avoid any direct connection to a known language. Van Snick is conscious of the hazards of working with such graphic compositions, including the risk that they may be confused with familiar symbols such as religious or radical signs. His concern to avoid such a fate led him to the title of the series, 'to avoid the worst'. For Van Snick, the characters are 'a sort of pre-language, unfixed, unsettled. It's like the language of paradise, in which words are not necessary.'

'Eviter le pire' is presented alongside a group of works from different periods, marking the consistent but varied use of the same parameters throughout his oeuvre since the '70's. Right after he graduated from the academy, Van Snick temporarily left the medium of painting as it did not fulfill his need for experiment. Fascinated by the conceptual art of that time, Van Snick started to examine patterns in cosmic logic and in daily life which led him to develop formulas and cipher codes that would later result in the use of his decimal colour system and the concept of duality in various forms. The title of the exhibition is based on this mathematical concept of permutation or the 'rearrangement of elements', apparent in works like 'Kruispunt' (1972), 'Bogen' (1979), 'Symmetrische en Asymmetrische Dag- en Nachtreeks' (1990), 'XX' (1993) and 'Eclips' (2015).

Despite of the simple but consistent use of colour, shape, material and concept, the work by Philippe Van Snick can be considered a unique witness of its time. It seems to drive on a visionary force explaining its continued relevance in today's society.

Philippe Van Snick (1946, BE) lives & works in Brussels (BE). His work is amongst others in the museum collections of MoMA, New York (US), Mu.ZEE, Ostend (BE), M HKA, Antwerp (BE), S.M.A.K., Ghent (BE), and various private collections in Europe, USA and Latin-America. Solo exhibitions include Museum M Leuven (BE), S.M.A.K., Ghent (BE), BOZAR, Brussels (BE), Art Gallery of York University, Toronto (CA) Nuno Centeno, Porto (PT), Arcade, London (UK). Group exhibitions include Middelheim, Antwerp (BE), Espace d'Art Contemporain, Lausanne (CH), La Virreina, Barcelona (ES), Philippe Van Snick & June Crespo, PI, New York (USA).

* excerpt from 'Eviter le Pire, Philippe Van Snick' by Ellen Mara De Wachter.

OPENING:
April 24 / 3 - 6 PM
Introduction by
Luc Tuymans

EXHIBITION:
April 24 - May 29

FREQUENT LONG WALKS HAN-
NAH BARRY (UK)
until April 23

PHILIPPE VAN SNICK
DE HALLEN HAARLEM (NL) until
May 16

PHILIPPE VAN SNICK
GRAZER KUNSTVEREIN (AT) until
May 22

THE GAP / M HKA (BE)
until May 29