

Mattia Denisse Theodore's Dream

Exhibition: 23.02.2020 — 24.05.2020, Opening: 22.02.2020, 19:00 hrs

Location: West Den Haag in the former American Embassy, Lange Voorhout 102, The Hague

More info: www.westdenhaag.nl

In twenty-two rooms, Mattia Denisse brings different stories together. By linking drawings and graphic images to separate words and short texts, the artist creates a world of his own. Colourful and absurd. Each time different connections are made between science, philosophy, personal perception and fantasy. In a series of book covers by an imaginary publisher, site-specific wall drawings, hundreds, sometimes very humorous, drawings and a sound work, Denisse shows the elasticity of his and our imagination.

Mattia Denisse playfully combines language, signs and images, travelling back in time and sometimes far ahead. At the same time, Denisse's work is very personal. In many drawings, the main character is recognizable as Mattia himself. We see the 'double' sitting in a chair in front of a display of masks, as a satisfied smoker, in an erotic pose or as a pataphysician surrounded by geometric figures, a monkey and a skeleton. They are telling images, skilfully made, sometimes with some basic colours and often multi-coloured. The images seem to be instructions, but often not at all.

For the series K contra K, the fictional book covers, he works with the computer, tight lines give the image a graphic appearance. The accompanying flap texts provide grip and make the work complete. In the non-existent book Theodore's Dream the text '...We would have to write a universal history of doors. Doors are as numerous as the possible corridors they open onto. But it isn't enough to find the door – you have to open it....' In the accompanying fictional commentary of the Gazette of the Society of Exotic Pathology: 'This isn't a book to get us to Heaven, or even Hell, for that matter. If you should ask where to then, I'd say a hole, a cave, a pantry, anywhere you can hide.' By creating a world of its own and then commenting on it, for Denisse the snake bites its tail. It may be a quest for the useless, but at the same time it touches the essence of art. The imagination is put to work and anything is possible.

'Theodore's Dream' describes a search for parallel worlds and a key that fits. 'Polymath' Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646 - 1716) was a versatile scientist, physicist, philosopher, diplomat and one of the founders of logical thinking. For him, the most fundamental philosophical question was why is there something and not nothing? Nothing happens without reason. Logic, mathematics and metaphysics can be traced back to Leibnitz's binary system, the system of two elements or the numbers 0 and 1. In his work, Denisse adds a third, fundamental element to this binarity. The idea of 'maybe'. 'Maybe yes', 'maybe no' or just 'maybe'. 'It is this 'maybe' that is an inconsistency, an imperfection, an incoherence of reality and causes a rupture in our ideas, a fracture in our convictions that gives a science like 'Pataphysics a possibility to slip in.'

Mattia Denisse was born in 1967 in France in Blois, the city of Jean Eugène Robert-Houdin¹, Denis Papin² and René Guénon³. He has been living in Lisbon since 1999. Selection of some of the exhibitions: Coimbra Biennial of Contemporary Art, Portugal, 2019; GAK Bremen, Germany 2019; Casa da Cerca, Galeria Municipal do Porto, Portugal, 2018; Galeria ZDB Lisbon, Portugal 2017; Culturgest/CCCCB, Castelo Branco, Portugal 2017; Casa das Histórias Paula Rego Cascais, Portugal, 2016; CIAJG, Guimarães, Portugal 2015 and Temporary Gallery, Cologne, Germany 2014. Denisse has published books entitled Logo Depois da Vírgula (2011), Duplo vê - o Tautólogo (2017) and Archiconto (2019).

1. Circus performer Jean E. Robert-Houdin (1805-1871) who developed the famous 'Ethereal Suspension' trick, the predecessor of 'Suspended Girl'.

2. Physicist, mathematician and inventor Denis Papin (1647-1712), who worked with vacuum, steam and water. He invented the steam cooker.

3. René Guénon (1886-1951), author of writings about metaphysics and esoterism.

If you have any questions, please contact MJ Sondeijker: marie-jose@westdenhaag.nl or (0)70.3925359

The former American embassy 'Onze Ambassade' is managed by ANNA Vastgoed & Cultuur and Art Institute West Den Haag. The program of West is supported by the municipality of The Hague and the Ministry of Education, Cultural Affairs and Science.