

un seen

BOOTH 5
17 - 19.09.2021

HARM WEISTRA

Harm Weistra is inspired and produces work based on his experience and research. His work refers to the theory of gender and sexuality and to emancipatory movements, translated into artistic expressions such as video, film, photography and installations.

JOEY RAMONE

Most of Weistra's work emphasises aesthetics while addressing social and political issues. This generates a disruptive tension. Emphasizing aesthetics is a way to seduce the viewer to watch. By simultaneously creating confusion and manipulating the viewer's perception, Weistra breaks through their passivity and questions the seemingly rational and logical, but often culturally determined, beliefs and opinions. His work can also be seen as an echo of an open society with ubiquitous interactions, since the internet has become the dominant platform for (anonymous) human debate.

Storytelling is usually the basis of Weistra's work, though implicitly presented, allowing the viewer to fill in his or her own story. Stories are applied as a means of questioning the dichotomy between ourselves and others. As a result, his work often leaves the viewer with a mix of conflicting feelings and thoughts. The visual seductiveness and the questions and confusion that his work evokes underline its layered character.

Curbed Chaos

Harm Weistra's photographic series Curbed Chaos shows an unusual representation of everyday snapshots. By twisting their properties, the work conjures up a new reality. Although at first glance the images may seem somewhat familiar, on a closer look they are difficult to identify, depicting a reality that sidetracks our perception and mystifies the true nature of the initial image. Curbed Chaos turns failure into an opportunity. A software glitch inspired the artist to develop a procedure that's freeing him from the limitations of traditional photo editing and manipulation, leading to a personal approach that rips off the identity of the original snapshot. Resulting in an image that balances between reality and abstraction, inviting the viewers to charge it with a new meaning.

Carceri dei Danni Collaterali

By merging multiple images of bombed and destroyed buildings in the Middle East, particularly Syria, the artist creates Carceri dei Danni Collaterali (Prisons of Collateral Damage). A title inspired by and referring to Giovanni Battista Piranesi's 16 famous prison etchings *Carceri d'Invenzione* (1745/1761).

The Piranesi etchings followed a tradition called *capriccio*, fantasy aggregations of structures that did not exist in real life. With his *Carceri dei Danni Collaterali*, Weistra creates contemporary *aggregations of structures* with footage he found on the internet. The results are compilations and assemblages of bombed buildings, symbolizing the prisons in which Syrian citizens were forced to live in, being unable to leave their cities under attack.

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