

MARIJE DE WIT

Love

or

Merely

Imprinting

05.11-17.12.2022

JOEY RAMONE

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Love or Merely Imprinting
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With a background in sculpture, in which she created confusion as to what was art, means of display or entourage, Marije de Wit turned to photography in recent years. She protests against the tendency in which quantifiability, objectivity, and justification have come to dominate in life; art included. Still life-like photos of situations in the studio allow her to bring attention back to the artist and the work, claim space for subjectivity and ambiguity, and make way for things to exist and be valid before they meet their explanation.

The exhibition takes its title from the essay Browser art by Eileen Myles*. At its start, the essay is about the political in Wolfgang Tillmans' work, and specifically about a piece of text in one of his exhibitions: it talks about how there's still cultures that take pride in their modernism and freedom, but have difficulty with homosexuality nonetheless. Seemingly unrelated, Myles then goes on to talk about Imi Knoebel, who once described how during the bombing of Dresden, the flashes of bombs filled a triangular shaped window in the room of the attic he was in, and how the experience contributed to his love of simple shapes. Myles asks whether that is 'love, or merely imprinting'. (Gay-) emancipation and a visual experience of war both unite with art here. It shows that there are no distinctions between art and social change, or between abstraction and daily life.

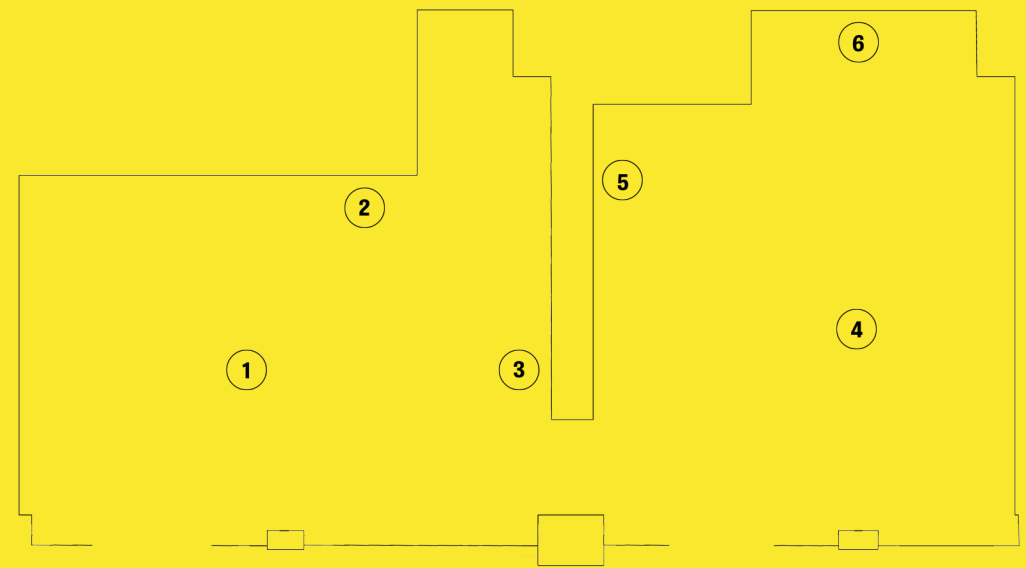
* The Importance of Being Iceland, Eileen Myles, Semiotext(e), 2009

Dissolving distinctions between so-called opposites is precisely what Marije de Wit aims with this exhibition. Her photos show what the artist surrounds herself with in the studio: found and self-made imagery, found and self-written text fragments, and plants. Just like the plants appear as cuttings and as the forms they've grown into in later stages of their evolving existence, the images also recur in the different appearances they've had at different moments. Photos of bodies and body parts, sometimes as portraits, and sometimes in the form of sculptures, appear throughout the exhibition and alert us to our physical existence. Some represent moments in art history: they visualise what is seen and unseen in that history, and throw doubt upon the motives that are usually taught to have shaped it.

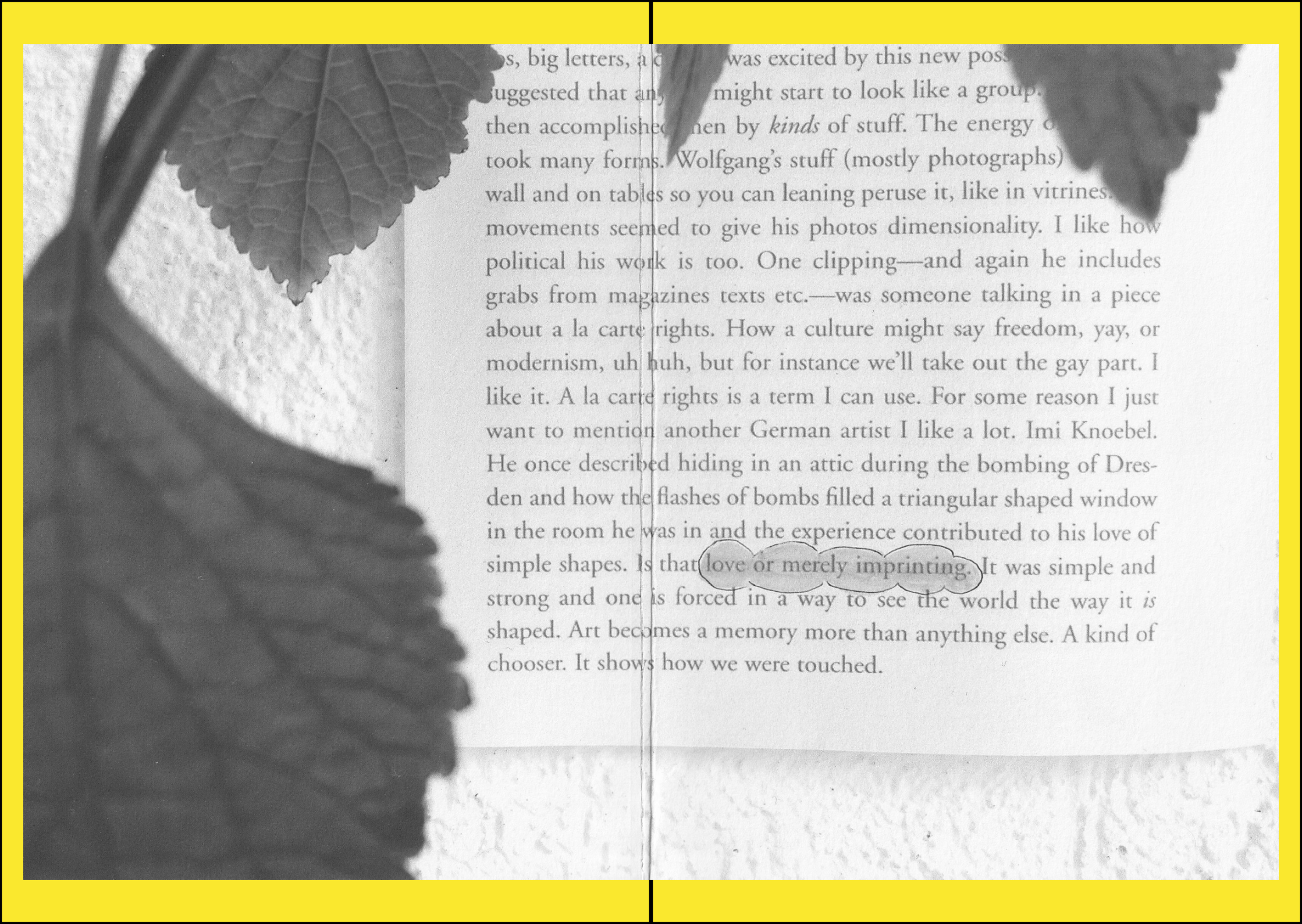
Together with a text fragment about the relation of the body to revolution**, shown on a photo that is made in to a curtain, these photos point out how we exist out of our physical being, and worlds of ideas equally.

Other text fragments represent De Wit's wish to not have to be linearly communicative in art. Where photography dissolves the distinction between making and finding, the total of these photos dissolve those between stating and questioning, subject and object, our physical and spiritual existence, and art politics and social politics.

**Revolution: a Reader, Lisa Robertson, Matthew Stadler, Paraguay press, 2012



- ① *And it was our need to bring the revolution home into our bodies* (2022), print on polyester, metal rings, 195 x 292,5 cm
- ② *Body* (2022)
C-print on aluminium, glassless wooden frame, 45 x 68 cm
- ③ *Motive* (2022)
C-print on aluminium, glassless wooden frame, 45 x 30 cm
- ④ *There will always be people who have trouble understanding each other* (2022), print on polyester, metal rings, 195 x 292,5 cm
- ⑤ *Damage control* (2022)
Duratrans print, lightbox, 75 x 50 cm
- ⑥ *This means that much* (2022)
C-print on aluminium, 80 x 120 cm



s, big letters, a c... was excited by this new poss
suggested that any... might start to look like a group.
then accomplished... by *kinds* of stuff. The energy o
took many forms. Wolfgang's stuff (mostly photographs)
wall and on tables so you can leaning peruse it, like in vitrines.
movements seemed to give his photos dimensionality. I like how
political his work is too. One clipping—and again he includes
grabs from magazines texts etc.—was someone talking in a piece
about a la carte rights. How a culture might say freedom, yay, or
modernism, uh huh, but for instance we'll take out the gay part. I
like it. A la carte rights is a term I can use. For some reason I just
want to mention another German artist I like a lot. Imi Knoebel.
He once described hiding in an attic during the bombing of Dres-
den and how the flashes of bombs filled a triangular shaped window
in the room he was in and the experience contributed to his love of
simple shapes. Is that love or merely imprinting. It was simple and
strong and one is forced in a way to see the world the way it *is*
shaped. Art becomes a memory more than anything else. A kind of
chooser. It shows how we were touched.

References

Love or Merely Imprinting (exhibition title)

I like how political [Wolfgang Tillmans'] work is too. One clipping – and again he includes grabs from magazines texts etc. – was someone talking in a piece about a la carte rights. How a culture might say freedom, yay, or modernism, uh huh, but for instance we'll take out the gay part. I like it. A la carte rights is a term I can use. For some reason I just want to mention another German artist I like a lot. Imi Knoebel. He once described hiding in an attic during the bombing of Dresden and how the flashes of bombs filled a triangular shaped window in the room he was in and the experience contributed to his love of simple shapes. Is that love or merely imprinting. It was simple and strong and one is forced in a way to see the world the way it is shaped. Art becomes a memory more than anything else. A kind of chooser. It shows how we were touched.

The Importance of Being Iceland, Eileen Myles, Semiotext(e), 2009

①

And it was our need to bring revolution home into our bodies, to experience the radical potentials of our limit, our human embodiment, that energised our work. The risk of embodiment is what these texts have in common too. We think that there is no public space that is not an embodied public space. We think that there is not a politics that does not begin in our desiring cells. We think that this corporal surplus, the movement beyond our biographies and our perceived or administrated limits, is the force that makes and changes worlds. One of us uses the word soul to name this surplus, and one of us doesn't.

But what we have learned from our intense performance together is that a common vocabulary is not necessary, and probably not desirable. For us, revolution will be the difference that each of us brings into living, the difference that resists the imperatives of markets and market ideologies, and that resists even the smoothing activities that can be part of community formation. It's only by staying with the often difficult texture of difference that we can begin, that there can be a stance that opens into a movement beyond. We are committed to giving each other the space for such an opening, and we call this gift politics.

Revolution: a Reader, Lisa Robertson & Matthew Stadler, Publication Studio (1st edition); Paraguay press (2nd edition), 2012

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Suzanne Valadon, *The Blue Room*, 1923:

Suzanne Valadon painted female nudes throughout her career and was one of only a few women artists to take up this imagery during the first half of the 20th century. Her portrayals are un-idealized and frank depictions of the human body that do not overly eroticize the subjects or cater to the vanity of the sitter. For *The Blue Room*, she used strong colors and emphasizes decorative backgrounds and patterned materials to create a full portrayal of her female subject relevant to her social era—moving her value away from solely being related to her physical attributes. As a whole, Valadon's artistic decisions create an image of a modern 20th century woman—contrasting the depictions created by her predecessors and leaving a legacy for future female artists.

Sources: nmwa.org; wikipedia

Leonor Fini, *Le leçon de botanique*, 1974:

Despite her friendships within the group of Surrealists, Fini explored the imaginary visions dictated by her fantasies alone: women-sphinxes, ephebes, and chimeras populate scenes where sacred rituals mix with the erotic, in an atmosphere which is incandescent and gloomy by turns, and always enigmatic. Fini granted her viewers fascinating, sensual and bold female subjects extracted from the imagination of a female painter, in contrast to projections of male desire, fantasy and fear shaped by her surrealist contemporaries, such as Dali and Man Ray.

Sources: awarewomenartists.com; womensartblog.wordpress.com

6

Big letters cut from wood, mounted to the wall, and illuminated by light-bulbs spelled out the short sentence: THIS MEANS THAT MUCH (also the work's title, 2021). This could indeed mean little, or a lot. As a pronouncement of general equivalency, it may read as saying that, flatly, "this" has the same status, value, and meaning as "that", so any difference is flattened out, nivellated, rendered null and void. (...) The words might, however, be seen to signify the exact opposite, namely an affirmation of outstanding importance, attributed to one particular thing, in terms intentionally left unclear, as the value and meaning of (what is referred to by) "this" goes beyond words, and estimations of equivalency, so one can but gesture towards it, emphatically, by pointing out it means "that much" (to you), unspeakably much. Flattening or emphasis? Equivalence or exception? What if it's both?

Jan Verwoert in *More than one death in you*, neroeditions.com, on *THIS MEANS THAT MUCH*, Marije de Wit's 2021 light sculpture as a contribution to *The Last Terminal: Reflections on the Coming Apocalypse (Part 3 – The Phantasy)* at Rib, Rotterdam, developed by Maziar Afrassiabi

MARIJE DE WIT

Marije de Wit (1979, Veghel, NL) studied at the Academie voor Beeldende Vorming, Tilburg, NL and the Academie voor Kunst en Vormgeving st. Joost, Breda, NL. In 2016 she was artist in residence at WIELS, Brussels (BE) and in 2017 at Artistes en résidence, Clermont-Ferrand (FR). Solo exhibitions include: *There is so much thinking to be done*, WIELS Project Space, Brussels (2017). Group exhibitions include: *The Last Terminal, Reflections on the Coming Apocalypse*, Rib, Rotterdam (2021-2022). She was co-founder - together with Mariëlle Verdijk – and programmer of the Feminist Poetry Reading Group Rotterdam (2017-2019). She is based in Rotterdam.

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