

GUY MEES : ESPACE PERDU

AN EXHIBITION IN TWO CHAPTERS

ENG

OPENING: 10.05.2018. 19H
SECOND CHAPTER: 10.05 - 16.06.2018
GALLERY HOURS: TUESDAY TO FRIDAY, FROM 11 TO 19 H.
SATURDAY FROM 11 TO 15 H.

PROJECTESD
T 934 881 360
INFO@PROJECTESD.COM
WWW.PROJECTESD.COM
PASSATGE MERCADER 8, BAIXOS 1
08008 BARCELONA

It is an honor to present the first solo exhibition in Spain of the artist Guy Mees (1935-2003), a leading figure of the Belgian avant-garde whose singular oeuvre escapes conventional aesthetic and discursive classification. The exhibition has been structured in two chapters, each focusing on different works and periods of the artist's development. The intention with this double presentation is, obviously, to offer a richer view of Mees' oeuvre but also, and not less important, to give the proper spatial dimension to the works selected.

The second chapter of the exhibition is entirely devoted to the works that Mees developed since 1983, when he returned to the notion of "lost space", that first appeared in his lace works of the mid 60's and that responded to an early statement that he conceived together with Will Joris Lagrillière and Wim Meuwissen. The text reads as follows:

"The Lost Space is an adjoining space. The Lost Space is complementary to present-day living space. The Lost Space does not have a clear-cut function. The Lost Space is space as utility object, in which bombast becomes more difficult, and tangibility easier. The Lost Space is simply the body defined by shape, colour, taste, smell, and sound."

The "Verloren Ruimte (Lost space)" series that Mees pursued from mid 80's through the early 90's take the form of thin scraps of coloured paper cut in different shapes and pinned directly to the wall. A selection of six works dating from 1985 to 1992 are exhibited at ProjecteSD. Mees creates these cut-outs using a variety of materials: matt, shiny or semi-matt paper, aluminium foil, painter's canvas, sometimes even newspaper. Cut hastily and roughly in differently shaped shreds, with round or angular edges, the different colours and the combination of them, together with the effects of light reflection or absorption on the surface of the waving cut-outs results in an intense visual experience. The wall reliefs integrate line, shape and colour and merge with the real space around. Space becomes part of the composition as the negative shape, the projection wall against which the composition of colours stands out. These works may be seen as residues, fragments broken off from the pictorial space. The loss of the aesthetic space, already announced in the coloured pastel dots on the works on paper of the mid 70's previously shown at ProjecteSD, comes into its own in these paper cut-outs. Lost aesthetic space and yet so full of it.

These "bodies" (as Mees himself called them), imperfect, vulnerable, owe their sophisticated lightness to their, unstable shape, their apparent lack of structure. They seem to be suspended in the void, trying to find the "lost space", the means to adhere to it without nesting irrevocably in it. Haptic and sensual, fleeting but tactile at once, modest, unpretentious, they inhabit the architecture of the room imbuing it with a kind of rhythm, a movement. They delineate a sort of choreography, hesitating and interrupted at times, always temporary.

Mees makes the borders between pictorial, architectural or sculptural space permeable. His work is an attempt to approach the pictorial language beyond the limits of painting, looking for a new balance between form (the aesthetic object) and the habitat (the living and the social space). Mees seeks in space neither a principle of stability nor a vanishing point but a principle of coexistence between scattered elements which holds endless configurations.

This text has been written based on the reading of a few important writings:

Dirk Snauwaert. In Spite of Painting Reconstructions of Pictorial Space in Guy Mees, Ludion-Cera, 2002

Dirk Pültau. The Lost Space Facets of a Concept in Guy Mees, Ludion-Cera, 2002

Lilou Vidal. Guy Mees. The Weather is quiet, cool and soft. Booklet for the exhibition of the same title, Kunstahhle Wien, 2018

We would like to thank Dirk Snauwaert, Lilou Vidal, Koenraad Dedobbeleer, Koen Brams, The Estate of Guy Mees, Nagel-Draxler galerie and most specially Micheline Szwajcer for their precious and valuable help in the making of this exhibition.

Guy Mees was born in 1935 in Mechelen, Belgium and died in 2003 in Antwerp. His work has been the subject of major institutions and gallery solo exhibitions. Among others: Ad Libitum, Antwerp (1960–1966); Galerie Orez, Den Haag, (1968–1977); Galerie X-One, Antwerp (1969–1971); MTL, Brussels (1970–1976); Galerie Micheline Sz wajcer, Antwerp (since 1982); Academie Waasmunster, Waasmunster (1990); Palais de Beaux-Arts, Brussels (1990 and 1993); Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst Antwerpen, Antwerp (2002); and Museum Leuven, Belgium (2012). The artist's work has been featured in numerous international group exhibitions including Zero Avant-garde, Lucio Fontana's Atelier, Milan (1965); Wide White Space, Antwerp (1967); Museum of Modern Art, Oxford, (1974); The Sixties: Art in Belgium, Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst (SMAK), Ghent (1979); Betekende Ruimte II-Plaats van Handeling/Designated Space II-Space as Scene, Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens, Deurle, Belgium (1993); A Story of the Image: Old & New Masters from Antwerp, Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst Antwerpen, Antwerp (traveled to Shanghai Art Museum, followed by National Museum of Singapore, 2007-2009), Museum M, Leuven (2012) among others. In 2012, Mees's work was included in the 9th Shanghai Biennale: 50 Days at Sea. Most recently, the artist's work was featured in The Gap: Selected Abstract Art from Belgium, curated by Luc Tuymans, which was first on view in 2015 at the Parasol unit foundation for contemporary art, London and traveled to the Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst Antwerpen, Antwerp in 2016. Recent solo shows include Bureau des Réalités, Brussels (2016); Galerie Micheline Sz wajcer, Brussels (2016); Galerie David Zwirner, London/New York (2017); gb agency, Paris (2017); Galerie Nagel Draxler, Berlin/Cologne (2017) and Kunsthalle Wien (2018).

WITH THE SUPPORT OF:

FOR ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION AND/OR IMAGES, PLEASE CONTACT:
SILVIA DAUDER, SD@PROJECTESD.COM
ANNA EBNER, AE@PROJECTESD.COM

