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**INTERVIEW**  
**MARJOLIJN DE WIT**

PULSE PRIZE WINNER 2013

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**LOOKING BACK TO 2013, HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE BODY OF WORK THAT WON YOU THE PULSE PRIZE?**

For PULSE in 2013 I showed paintings, ceramic collages and a floor installation existing of photo-based imagery in combination with raw, glazed, or photo-printed ceramic pieces to explore ideas of future archeology, the interpretation of history, and our relationship with nature and the built environment. I had just finished my residency at Sundaymorning@ekwc (European Ceramic Workcentre). During this residency the content of my work moved slowly from artificial reefs to the misinterpretation of future artifacts. What people leave behind, and their influence on nature has always been very important in my work. In older paintings and collage, surrealistic situations as a result of global warming were shown, and later artificial reefs represented that idea.



The work shown at PULSE was kind of in between my ideas about artificial reefs and what I am working on now, the (mis)interpretation of history. There are many different kinds of artificial reefs. Sometimes an airplane or autobus is dropped to the bottom of the sea. Are we able to read the difference in the future between a crash and a plane dropped there on purpose? If a museum of

contemporary art collapsed, would we be able to see the difference between pieces of architecture or contemporary sculpture in a future excavation? What do we find and how do we interpret these things out of their original context?

Archeology is like a puzzle that can be put together in different ways. We fill in the blanks based on assumptions. History teaches us that we might sometimes conclude the wrong thing, and new discoveries result in new conclusions. This (mis)interpretation is interesting for me to work with. The ceramic collage functions like an archaeology illustration, and my fabricated remains refer to possible future archeological discoveries and the (mis)interpretation of them. It is a complex story about location and time, and most of the ideas are generated from a hypothetical situation. My ceramic components remind me of something man made, and refer to contemporary architecture as well evoking the ancient and historical compendium of our modern world.



I use *trompe l'oeil* like effect to strengthen that feeling. Mixing up and playing with soft and hard materials, 2D and 3D, illusion and reality I shift between historical purveyor and visual trickster, leaving the viewer to imagine not only my conjured histories, but also how others will eventually imagine ours.

#### **HOW DID IT FEEL TO WIN THE PRIZE? WHAT WERE YOU ABLE TO DO OR MAKE WITH THE CASH GRANT?**

First of all, I'm very grateful that Gallery OttoZoo gave me the opportunity to exhibit at PULSE. It was the first time for me to show my work in the US, and it was very interesting to get such good responses, talking to the visitors and getting appreciation from the jury. Also, Asya Geisberg was very enthusiastic about the work, and she gave me the opportunity for a solo show at her gallery in 2015. Since then she shows my work successfully in the US, at the gallery and art fairs. Without the PULSE Prize that probably wouldn't have happened. I started including ceramics in my work at the Rijksakademie (2008/2009), as an extension of the paintings. After the Rijksakademie I got the opportunity to focus on ceramics only, for 3 months at the amazing European Ceramic Work Centre, Sundaymorning@ekwc. My EKWC residency was a great experience, I learned and experimented a lot. The PULSE cash grant gave me the opportunity to go back to the EKWC for a second residency.

Having more knowledge about ceramics and not being overwhelmed by the technical possibilities, I was able to concentrate even more on the content of the work.

**YOU FIND MATERIALITY, SPECIFICALLY THE “FEELING OF PAPER”, QUITE IMPORTANT TO YOUR WORK. COULD YOU EXPAND ON YOUR ARTISTIC PRACTICE AND HOW YOU HAVE EVOLVED AS AN ARTIST OVER THE YEARS?**

The feeling of paper has always been very important in my work. Not only the feeling but also how it falls, how it curls. I use a lot of National Geographic and second hand books for my collages. This paper is very vulnerable and discolors over time. Just scanning and printing doesn't give the same quality, structure, falling etc.

At my second residency at EKWC I decided to make sheets of paper out of porcelain, and used special transfers (prints in glaze) to add the image to it. Although it is a very different material this approached the feeling of the original paper really well. The materiality in ceramic is also important. I like to confuse the viewer by using contradictions, and in this way make you question what you are looking at. A stone looks heavy but is very light, a soft texture turns out to be a very hard material. Inspired by the ceramic pieces and collages, the large paintings cause the viewer to question what is real, what is photo printed on ceramic, or a painting of a photo, and what is ceramic, or a painting of ceramic.

**SO HOW HAS THE RISE OF VARIOUS SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS AND THE DIGITALIZATION OF ART VIEWING AFFECTED THE WAY ONE EXPERIENCES A WORK ON PAPER?**

It doesn't only have an effect on how we experience works on paper, but also on the paintings and ceramics. For the ceramic collage it depends on size and the way of photographing. By using the right light and aperture it is possible to get a good idea of the original work. Of course, to see the real work is always the best experience. It is more complicated for the ceramic installations and the large-scale painting. It becomes such a small image compared to the original that you lose the sense of brushstroke and texture.

I'm represented by a French, Italian and American gallery. I often can't be physically present, so social media is a great way to be connected. I can share thoughts and ideas and give an inside look into my studio.

**WHAT IS THE BEST PIECE OF ADVICE YOU'VE EVER RECEIVED?**

There have been many, but there are two remarks that I often still think of. As an art student I intended to use different media at the same time. My professor told me that I could be very good at one thing, or a little bit good at a lot of things. It made me concentrate on only painting for a couple of years. The 3D collages have always been a part of the process, first as a sketch for the paintings, and later as independent ceramic collages. Over time I replaced the different materials in the 3D collages for exclusively ceramics. And I realized I treat even the collage and ceramics the same as paint, as a painter.

The second is a drawing an advisor at the Rijksakademie made for me when we were discussing the artistic process. This schematic idea of the artistic process is frustrating and comforting for me at the same time. I pass it on to my own students now.

**WHAT'S COMING UP NEXT FOR YOU?**

50 year anniversary EKWC, Arti et Amicitia, Amsterdam, August 2019

The Pyramid publications, a book about contemporary ceramic, to be released October 2019, France

Ineligible, Santo Tirso International Museum of Contemporary Sculpture, Portugal, March 2020

Solo exhibition, Gerhard Hofland Gallery, Amsterdam, Spring 2020