

Anouk van Zwieten
All the best
September 2 - October 8, 2022



After riding her electric kick scooter to her studio, located in an industrial zone in Utrecht, sometimes she forgets to plug it in for charging. This means that at the end of the workday, she will be stuck there for at least an hour longer than planned. To Anouk van Zwieten this is hardly a punishment: painting is what she likes to do best, and nothing feels as good as finding oneself in an energetic studio flow.

For her first solo presentation in the gallery, Van Zwieten created a series of interrelated works in terms of theme and mood, entitled *All the best*. The exhibition title is also the title of one of the paintings: a human-sized canvas featuring a large, white, rectangular field in the top half. This field is reminiscent of a screen and appears to block a large portion of the image. Just below it, a drawing of dark-colored rounded and – further down the canvas – horizontal color bands seeps through. These bands sometimes blend into one another or, in turn, direct the gaze toward a green and a purple color field. In the left top corner of the painting, a tiny whiff of light blue just about enters the image. The lower portion of the painting features large, white teardrop shapes, seemingly in suspension while slowly falling down.

The origins of *All the best* are personal in nature, and her state of mind left traces in the paint that have become detached from this personal process – something that nearly always happens in her work. While at work she reaches a point where the work takes an unexpected turn, causing new ideas to spring forth from there. Van Zwieten started *All the best* with an idea about color combinations. First she created a background painting in light blue textile dye. Then red was added, and eventually she arrived at the purple and green portions hidden in the depth of the canvas. Those two colors went on to play a structural role in the series. Here, their gravity lends them a nearly symbolic appearance.

This use of more or less random elements that she encounters while painting is typical of Anouk van Zwieten's practice. Her work is often a mixture of realistic elements that she notices in her surroundings, elements that adapt themselves into an image while painting. Van Zwieten herself is often surprised by the outcome. The work *Happy Tears* is a sequel to *All the best*. All works in the exhibition were developed in conjunction, but without a predefined plan. For *Happy Tears* she simply made a quick sketch on canvas, elaborating it into an image of three monumental teardrop shapes on an evenly colored background: a brown teardrop in the middle, flanked by upside-down red and green drops to the left and right. The teardrops have been applied in short, nervous brush strokes. This lively touch is kept under control, as it were, by the teardrops' powerful shapes and colors. The image of this work forms a beautiful contrast to *Phases*, a canvas with rows of grey ellipses in the upper half, stacked on top of one another and painted in a sketch-like manner. The ellipses are partly situated in a field of summery yellow, invoking the suggestion of a landscape. A grid of unsteady red lines guides the viewing direction, as if it were placed between the image and the viewer. This produces an interesting sensation of being both inside and outside. In contrast to *Happy Tears*' short, energetic touches, this work has been painted in wide, almost sparse, transparent brushstrokes. Van Zwieten enjoys seeing such contrasts side by side.

The floor of Van Zwieten's studio is covered in colorful paint spots. Painting is an 'enjoyable' struggle to her: in her own words, "Painting is essentially the creation of problems that you're then forced to resolve." The art of painting is the subject of her work, and she is imbued with the medium's history and the endless possibilities it offers. She likes painters who liberate themselves, who don't hold back, who create works in which anything is allowed and possible. Nothing is fixed, the painting determines its own outcome. Through her associative and experimental method, Anouk van Zwieten creates room to let that freedom take its course.

Anouk van Zwieten was born in Amsterdam (1991, NL) and lives and works in Utrecht (NL). After her graduation from the Hogeschool van de Kunsten in Utrecht in 2017, she was nominated for several awards and stipends, like the Royal Prize for Painting, in 2017, the Buning Brongers Prize and the K.F Hein Stipend in 2020. Her work was exhibited at a.o. W139, Amsterdam (2022, NL); Omstand, space for contemporary art, Arnhem (2022, NL); Prospects and Concepts, Van Nelle fabriek, Rotterdam, (2021, NL); PADA studio's, Barreiro (2021, PT); Centraal Museum, Utrecht (2020, NL); Unfair Temporary Museum, Zuiveringshal, Amsterdam (2020, NL); Whitehouse Gallery, Lovenjoel (2019, BE); de Pastoe Factory, Utrecht (2017, NL); Kunstruimte De Nederlandsche Bank, Amsterdam (2017, NL); Paleis op de Dam, Amsterdam (2017, NL); WATCHAMACALLIT, Utrecht (2017, NL), and several group shows at tegenboschvanvreden. The work of Anouk van Zwieten is part of several private and corporate collections.