

After the guests have left...
Lieve Hakkers
Sander Breure & Witte van Hulzen
April 15 - May 20, 2023



Everything about *The Heart* (2019) exudes suggestion: the colors, the forms, the direction of the lively and transparent brushstrokes. Nothing is distinct in terms of form, color or line. Lieve Hakkers opens a door with her paintings and drawings: the eye sets the imagination in motion. On the right is a dark stone head, highlighting in pink something in the ochre background that resembles a fountain spewing white spatters of water; in the foreground are the dark blue contours of a reclining figure, and in the lower part of this seemingly idyllic scene we see two small sculpted angels: Amor, the god of love. Next to this is the sinister-looking Saturn. They seem to pop up in an area where nothing is certain, where the garden is presented as a mental space.

Doorman (2022), a recent work by Sander Breure & Witte van Hulzen, is an upright form, a stele, with dimensions that seem 'human'. In the vertical form is a keyhole. The left side of the bronze plate is curved and suggests a particular volume, roughly that of a door. Hung over the top of the sculpture are two earplugs. And at its foot lie a pair of slippers and socks, as though someone has taken them off before passing through the door. Or has the figure itself become a door? With the notion of a keyhole, Breure & Van Hulzen were seeking a balance between seriousness and a playful touch, the moment at which these become the same. In this theatrical work, too, suggestion plays a dominant role.

For years Lieve Hakkers painted no figures, but once she began making her own (tempera) paint, they gradually found their way back into her work. She produces paintings and drawings that deal with the language of the image, the power of the painterly image that slowly unfolds before our eyes. Hakkers: "I've always painted and drawn the people around me, but just in passing. Many paintings, drawings and a few poems are about lovers and friends. There are mainly objects and an occasional figure, a face or a kiss. The earliest painting, *Hannah's Summer Gloves*, dates from 2018, yet it works well alongside the painting *The Swans*, which I made recently, in 2022, at De Ateliers. In this exhibition I'm showing work on paper and a number of paintings, including new ones, of a not-quite or near kiss."

Breure & Van Hulzen produce sculptures – assemblages in the form of human figures that have a more or less abstract appearance and are based on the 'roles' that people essentially always play. Breure & Van Hulzen: "Stony: the sculptures are actors, liars, patients, doctors, dancers, flukes, prayers, friends or obstacles. We create them as directly, as effortlessly and as quickly as possible. A sculpture is a performance in slow motion, an event that develops very gradually. The body remains standing in the museum. The head has been taken away by a tourist who was stoned. From the window in our studio, you see a chimney where a seagull is always perched, like an actor on a stage. Is it the same one each time, or do they take turns sitting there?"

After the guests have left... is the title of this exhibition that comprises drawings and paintings by Lieve Hakkers (1996) and sculptures by Sander Breure & Witte van Hulzen (1985, 1984). What happens when the last guests have gone? Doors, heads, socks, shoes, a fountain, a kiss, gloves, a surgical drape, something resembling a sarcophagus: when put in a space together like this, their suggestions give rise, at a moment of magic, to a story and the drawings, paintings and sculptures come alive. That's when they transform, by way of the imagination, into images.