



**Provocative and poetic:
on the connecting power of art as ritual**

Tessa Weijers

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Tessa Weijers (1998, NL) makes intriguing works that are somewhere between painting and sculpture. In one of the works, *Anamnesis: John (5:2)*, 2024, we see a figure in a large rectangular bathtub. The figure stands upright with the help of a lifting device. Next to the bathtub, a man in a white doctor's coat crouches. The scene takes place in a tiled room. The green color tones that dominate the image make the bathtub with the green water look more like open-air water than a clinically sterile bathtub in a medical environment. The whole image is painted in a realistic style, but loose and with a lot of suggestion. The image of the man in the bathtub is painted on wood and is clamped in a construction that looks like a small open cabinet. On one of the sides is a drawing of someone hanging upside down from a ladder. Further down are some small drawings of a man walking with a stick and a figure lying on a bed with a nurse at the foot of the bed. And on the back is a text in Greek, part of the Hippocratic Oath, taken from the image of a medieval manuscript.

The title of the work refers to the Gospel of John (5:2), which describes how a long-term sick, paralyzed man who lies in despair with other sick people at the edge of the pool at one of the gates of Jerusalem, is healed. However, Weijers' work does not so much refer to the healing of the man and the eternal life that the believer is given by God, but to our (positivistic) belief in science - including all kinds of pseudoscience, a belief that evokes the idea of 'feasibility': if we only 'believe' enough and do our best.

Tessa Weijers is interested in the connections between science and art. "I am looking for space to think and how it can arise and be expanded, widened and changed. Flexible thinking and making connections in image, language and ideas. I want there to be space within my work to investigate the world in an open and curious way. Sometimes scientifically, but without the restrictions of traditional science. I am always looking for ways to investigate and question the world inside and outside of me. In doing so, I am interested in the aesthetics of science, strange, outdated photos and second-hand, medical encyclopedias."

In her work, in which found materials play a major role, Weijers explores scientific mythologies. She questions what we know and how we acquire that knowledge. These questions are essentially about who we are, how we experience our reality, what role we play and about the images that influence this. Weijers: "We form the perspective on our own bodies through medical images. In this way, scientific aesthetics forms its own language and mythology. What is the significance of this for people's self-image? How would an archaeologist in the future see us based on our images and how does that differ from other cultures? Are my organs part of my self-image? If I do not consider parts of my body as my 'self', which abstract concepts, ideas or principles do I consider as belonging to 'my' identity." Tessa Weijers' work is about the boundaries between the self and the outside world.