

Island

Island has the pleasure of announcing OCULUS NON VIDIT, NEC AURIS AUDIVIT, an exhibition of new works by Tim Onderbeke.

Tim Onderbeke's work is based on negative space, the space between different objects. His photos, videos, sculptures and paintings are produced in a mechanical way. He lets materials speak for themselves. After this physical creation and through associative connotations, a mystical perception imposes itself on the viewer. The unification of these two processes represents the core of his oeuvre.

His paintings are influenced by an old painting technique, the aerial perspective, mostly used in the 15th and 16th century by Leonardo Da Vinci, amongst other painters.

The Siennese trecento and early renaissance have marked the young artist, especially the two brother artists Pietro and Ambrosia Lorenzetti for their study of antiquity and their experiments in perspective and physiognomy.

Another big influence on his work is "The Lamb of God" by the Van Eyck brothers, as he likes to see this oeuvre as the beginning of modernism. All these influences have drawn him to make his own materials, for example, he crushes his own pigments to create the exact colour that he chooses. He uses linen for his canvas to be as close to his masters as possible.

His first solo show at Island named, OCCULUS NON VIDIT, NEC AURIS AUDIVIT, means "The eye had not seen, nor the ear heard" is related to transcendence, mysticism and the omnipresence of something above us. This title comes from Otto van Veen aka Otto Venius (Leiden 1557 - Brussels 1629) a classical educated humanist and artist who used this sentence in an engraving in the book *Amoris divini emblemata*, published in 1615, while relating the story of the archduchess Isabella suggesting her earlier love emblems might be reworked in a "spiritual and divine sense". After all, "the effects of divine and human love are, as to the loved object, nearly equal."

The exhibition is divided in two parts, on the first floor there are three paintings surrounding a mirror that reflects them. The young artist from Ghent applies his oil paint after the mixing of the pigments and the oil, together on linen. Once the colour is on the canvas he stretches it down on the floor and sprays thin layers of turpentine on the painted surface. With that technique the different colours of paint, here black and red start mixing into each other. Tim Onderbeke does not try to reach a previous visualised image but an experience. It creates a subconscious language in which the painter will paint until an equilibrium is made. It is important for him that he doesn't recognize an image that he has seen before.

Mirrors have always intrigued and have been used multiple times in art history. The structure of this one is made by the artist. He considers materials as a support for ideas. He chooses his materials based on specific research in subjects such as trade, language, architecture, urbanism and painting. For this mirror, it is within his own history that he finds the right material to use. His father, and some generations before, used to run a company that makes and trades paint. On his mother side, his grandfather used to work in a metal factory. He sees these materials as a result of man and machine working together and creating objects in the same way nature does. The mirror is standing in the middle of the room and is reflecting the paintings. The object plays with the space and makes the viewer more conscious of the negative space. The mirror evokes narcissism, vanity, wealth and destruction. Furthermore, it is a reference to the mirror noir often called from Claude le Lorrain as he and many landscape painters used mirrors to reflect and isolate the part of nature that they wanted to paint. In this exhibition the viewer sees the abstract paintings in the mirror as a final artwork.

On the second floor, a couple of diptychs are hung on the wall. These photographs are archives of research made by the artist as he documents his environment and the interiors he manipulates. This is an important part of his work, as he likes to live with his works and immerse himself within them. From time to time he will hang or rehang some of his works and document them each time he changes the display. Some of these are installations of his works at his place, some others are elements isolated from their surroundings. His artworks are constructed by the physics of light, "we are not able to see things (colour, objects,...) without light". Tim Onderbeke uses analogue cameras and creates images in a dark room. He not only uses silver bromide in his photography but also in his paintings. He considers photographs as paintings. All of his black and white pictures have something poetic and mysterious about them. Hung in an old fashion way they give an atmosphere of lightness to the room.