

A Form of Caring

A conversation with Marijn van Kreij

By Nickel van Duijvenboden

The door of the former ammunitions depot on the edge of the Amsterdamse Bos is ajar. Nonetheless, I always go around the corner, to the shadow side of the building. Muffled guitar music issues through the gap between the heavy wooden side doors. High windows reveal a glimpse of the ceiling – practically the only remaining surface free of bits of paper covered in scribbles. Standing on tip-toe, I can only see one. In typically tall capitals it says: ‘Learn to do something properly. (Not everything is instantaneous.)’

‘That’s for passersby,’ says Marijn van Kreij, smiling. He tries to see what it stirs up in me, an inquisitive gaze that he maintains throughout our conversation.

It could almost be a mantra.

I constantly ask myself whether the phrase applies to me. ‘Learn to do something properly.’ It could be a philosophical maxim. Your first response is: right, good point, that’s what you should do. Now and then I give myself a talking to: learn to do something properly, concentrate so you can do it better. But I feel that my work is actually driven by the impulse of not wanting to be able to do something too well.

I see that you surround yourself with phrases of this kind. You can memorise them, but it’s not the same as reading them over and over again. Is this what you do when you arrive, while you’re working?

Absolutely. Lyrics of a John Frusciante song, *Ah Yom*, printed off from the Internet, hang in the corner. I go over to the print-out now and then to read the lyrics from the beginning. ‘I’ve got a million to choose from / A million ways things could be / In dull moments I feel like / There’s a million options I see.’ And it comes back to life again, not just the lyrics, but also the other wording on the print-out: internet advertising, menus, links. It could almost be a messy drawing.

And this image: ‘What does possession mean to you?’ It seems an apt question with regard to your work.

That is a work by Victor Burgin from 1976, that he used as a poster that was pasted up in the streets. I came across it in a book by Scott Myles, who used the poster in an installation. I think it’s a good work, and it’s relevant again today.

The work you make now, your older work, other people’s source material – setting foot in here, you feel it all come together. Is the studio a kind of filter for you?

It is. Sometimes I put something up on the wall and take it down shortly after. Later I’ll find it buried beneath a sheaf of papers. That is how it gradually becomes work. Much of what you see on the walls now is related to what I want to show in the exhibition in De Hallen. I haven’t decided on the majority of it yet. Usually, I leave it open as long as possible, but I really need to make up my mind now.

Black Square

[Marijn stands up and takes a couple of sketches off the wall.] At the moment, I’m working with copies of pages that show the abstract black square, both Ad Reinhardt’s and Kazimir Malevich’s. I reproduce the pages, including shadows and the surrounding border, as halftone images in black acrylic. A new work, for instance, is a page from the textbook *Het Onzichtbare Zichtbaar Gemaakt* (lit. ‘The Invisible Made Visible’). In the margin around Malevich’s black square is a description of the context within which the work was created. I am making a number of large pieces to size, specifically for the exhibition space at De Hallen. The title work will be a painted enlargement of one of Ad Reinhardt’s so-called art comics: *How to Look Out*. In the 1940s, Reinhardt produced a number of these comics about how to look at modern art for an American journal. In some way, his ideas are still topical, or have become so again.

Do you recognise the need to make art understandable or approachable?

That certainly is important in this exhibition. The explanation is more or less contained in what I will be showing – as if the viewer is indirectly being given a kind of history lesson or tutorial. Reinhardt does the same, openly and with a touch of humour. You can’t precisely pin it down, the image doesn’t allow itself to be entirely explained. It’s still hard for me to grasp how Reinhardt was able to express things in words. It was his writings that aroused my fascination for the black square. What he wrote is utterly simple and radical. He believed that every artist ought to paint his own black square, over and over again. In his view, that was unavoidable.

Do you think he was right?

I can understand it. It’s partly to do with time. You couldn’t say something like that now, but at the time there was far more discussion about what was and wasn’t permissible in painting. Ad Reinhardt was not an unimportant figure but I suspect that he felt undervalued to some extent. I am fascinated by the dogmatism of his statements. His canvases are absolutely sacred. That would be impossible for me. It’s not in my nature to be dogmatic or dominant. It’s been that way since I was young; in my family it was always other people who voiced their opinions. I never really felt the need. If anything, it’s left me with a tendency to put things into perspective, which might very well surface in my work. When I first undertook Reinhardt’s assignment, all I could do was paint black acrylic onto a sheet of A4, very simply, very directly, with clearly visible brushstrokes. Sometimes I gave the square a head, arms and legs (*Black Square Man*, 2007). Now I work with the halftone images.

In a sense, your variations are still mediated versions of the black square while the black square is itself a kind of repudiation of the mediated. You seem to be intent on a kind of indirectness, as if what interests you is the way we look at the square.

Exactly. I allow the black square to be seen as an image, as part of a greater whole. The new image is constructed out of halftone dots yet still refers, of course, to the black square as well. You pick up on this reference, you feel it. To a degree, it is also the thing itself.

Does the black square represent a zero point for you, a kind of nadir?

[Lapses into silence.] In a way. Although on the other hand, it is of course also a starting point. Which is why Reinhardt's comic appealed to me. The black square features there as part of a checkerboard pattern. The step towards a halftone image is a small one. 'In simple, clear, scientific, concrete, semantically-checked language of vision, this is NOT an abstract painting,' writes Reinhardt. In the 1960s, he turned exclusively to painting black canvases divided into large squares, with very slight tonal nuances. That work was not to be doubted in any way. It was what he called 'art as art': it bore no relation to anything, it was absolutely separate from the world. But in the meantime, Reinhardt was involved in other areas as well; he illustrated, wrote and was politically active. I find it interesting that he observed such a strict division, while in his life the roles ran parallel. They were complementary.

It seems as though you don't make a distinction.

I can't make a distinction, or I won't, and I don't have the idea that it's necessary.

In that sense, is the fact that you produce it a comment?

I have the feeling – and this is why I believe it's important to execute it in this way – that I want it to be what it is. It is simply that thing, not really a comment I'm making. It might become a comment because I place it in another context. You might wonder what Ad Reinhardt would make of that. But I think it's good that we're looking at it again now: what is that art now, what is that image now? What can it still mean?

Automatic Drawings

I notice that you don't elaborate on the many small works that are invariably a part of your exhibitions. Is that because they are such an obvious element for you?

I usually work on the basis of a number of central, large-scale pieces that set the tone of the exhibition, if you like. My next step is to make a selection from a number of separate drawings. I always add something at the very last minute.

Your drawings seem to happen almost automatically. Or do you really need to put yourself to work?

No, it is something that goes on all the time. I always have a pile of paper on my desk that I doodle and make notes on without any real purpose. I sometimes use these scribbles in new drawings. It often looks more random and spontaneous than it is. Some drawings are actually quite constructed. That said, the best things aren't really thought up. It is a very strange process, even to me. I often come across a drawing among the piles and think: it's fine just the way it is. Then I take it out of the stack or put it up on the wall so I can look at it longer.

Is randomness a criterion?

In principle, that's how it works. But oddly enough, at other times I fake that same randomness. [Grins.]

When do you... fake it?

At times when I can add something, something I like in another drawing. That process cuts across pure spontaneity. Look, I never know what to draw. I've always been very aware that once you put a pencil to the paper you have to say something. I have an irresistible urge to draw, but which image? It's as though no single image will do. In a sense, the double drawings relate to this. By duplicating something that occurs more or less spontaneously I in fact emphasise the constructed aspect. I am stuck, if you like, in the act of drawing. I'm not as concerned with what I'm drawing, but purely with repeating the act itself to the best of my ability.

Do you experience a scarcity of images?

Not really a scarcity.

Are you in pursuit, then?

[A laugh of recognition.] Yes, in a way. You start drawing and think: what does this mean? It always feels as though something's not right. This is how the scribbles and crossings-out happen. On the other hand, I like to use images and am fascinated when I come across shapes that refer to something concrete. [Picks up a drawing from his desk.] There's a tiny Picasso painting hidden in this one. In this case, I've let it stay, but just as often it doesn't work. But I rarely throw anything away. Many of these sheets of paper will end up being used. I might paint over them in a solid colour. I made a lot of monochromes like that at one point. It's a way of moving forward, an urge to keep on painting. And a way for me to live with the sheets of paper.

On a smaller scale, there's a lot that seems to be painted out or scratched out. Have those bits been censored?

Maybe, I don't know. It interests me that someone else doesn't always see the difference. It might be covering up something I've drawn that I thought: it's not pure, it's not genuine. To you, it might look like an image. I believe you can feel if it works or not. That's why I always find it quite difficult to know when this kind of drawing has worked out. Sometimes I go too far and mess it up.

I wonder whether I can tell the difference between a successful and an unsuccessful drawing. Somehow I don't believe so. Is it cynical to say that if that's your way of working, any scribble will do?

You know, it's an unfathomable process for me too. Sometimes I do wonder whether I'm not making too much of a problem out of it. For a painter like Josh Smith, everything he produces is work, or so it seems. He keeps on going and apparently makes no kind of selection. With work like that, there's no point in asking about the why.

Could you do that?

At this point, certainly not. I wish I was more able to do so.

Isn't it simply a decision?

I suppose it is a decision, yes. [Silence.] But I don't think I trust myself enough.



Openness

You say you don't want to do anything too well, that you don't want to know too much about what you're doing. You want to work on impulse.

With enormous freedom and openness, I meant by that. Moving towards a kind of licence, as it were. I can only work from doing, putting things down on paper, being physically occupied. When I had just graduated I had no idea I wanted to become an artist. I always had the option of being a graphic designer, a discipline I'd studied previously. But it was when I was in the studio, when I was alone, not in a college environment and with other students, that I began making all kinds of things. It was then that I made the first A4 drawings – very graphic, integrating wording from advertisements, as well as scribbles, collage-like drawings. It was all very natural – it just happened. I still try to make room for that impulse, but it's incredibly hard. You can't force it. All you can do is keep trying to give yourself the freedom. But how? In *Shakey*, a biography by Jimmy McDonough, Neil Young also talks about openness. You can remember it clearly, what it was like to be a child, for instance. But remembering isn't the same as being. [1]

Is there a connection with your video Hey Hey, My My (Into the Black)?

That work is based on the 1979 song of the same name by Neil Young. In the lyrics, he ponders his relevance as a rock musician. By that time, the highpoint of Young's career seemed a thing of the past and young bands like the Sex Pistols were taking the music scene by storm. Did he still have what it takes, was he open enough? I began that work in 2008. I filmed the video off the monitor, played the recording and filmed that, like a cassette tape you dub over and over until all you've got is noise. I make a new take for each exhibition. I've done nineteen so far. All that's left are snatches of image and the wail of feedback. You can hardly make out who it is; the lyrics are gibberish. On the other hand, the image will never disappear completely. The idea is to keep showing the piece.

And there are other processes you've continued to follow. The basis of your work seems to consist of elements that repeat, vary and expand.

There was a time when I wanted to put my work on pause, as it were. When I left the Rijksakademie I immediately took part in a large number of exhibitions and had the feeling I was perpetually 'inventing' something new. Some works I had made already began to fade a little after a few months. Now and then I thought: if only I could literally stand still. By continuing to work in a certain mode, it becomes more valuable. It is a process of refinement; you make something your own. Now I have the feeling that things are accreting little by little. The halftone image and the black square, for instance, are beginning to take shape now. Perhaps other elements will fade more into the background.

[1] "Three generations are coming to my concerts – you look at that and think, well, what could I write now? What can I possibly write that is gonna get to somebody who is young and has all this openness..." He stared through the bus window at the black night, those hungry hawk eyes scanning every inch of onrushing highway. "Openness. I can remember openness, what it's like to be a little kid and everything, but let's face it – remembering is not the same as being."

I also have the impression that there is a meticulous, almost monkish, aspect to your work, possibly in the very literal sense of monks who once produced hand-written copies. Take the envelope patterns, for instance. Could you talk about what goes through your mind – or perhaps what doesn't – when you are involved in this meticulous kind of work?

At those times I can think of everything but the work itself. It creates enormous capacity for musing. I imagine that some artists may need to be in a calm state of mind before they can do anything. For me, it's the opposite. I can begin without much concentration; as I work, I become more focused. Drawing is a way to quiet down. I've been collecting envelope patterns for a long time. I'm fascinated by their lack of meaning, that it's really nothing. Although you can connect certain shapes to an image or to abstract art.

I can also imagine that the envelopes are quite tedious work. Not to mention the red and white pattern covering the entire wall of the Stedelijk Museum Bureau (Frietzak Compositie 1, 2008).

I'm quite fond of that kind of work. It gives something to hold on to. It all comes down to the execution. As long as you have a starting point, you can begin. I start an envelope drawing very impulsively; format and colour are decided in an instant. You're automatically confronted by things needing attention, that you have to straighten out.

Isn't there something compulsive about it?

Once I've got going, yes. It takes a degree of tenacity. While drawing, you go through all kinds of phases. That's also what it's about for me – time becoming tangible. Often, when deciding on how large or detailed a work should be, I deliberately make it just a little bit too large and detailed so that I come to dread it. *Untitled (European Central Bank)*, the envelope drawing I'm working on at the moment, is riddled with mistakes and irregularities. When in a critical mood I sometimes think: why don't you make it really perfect, so it's awe-inspiring?

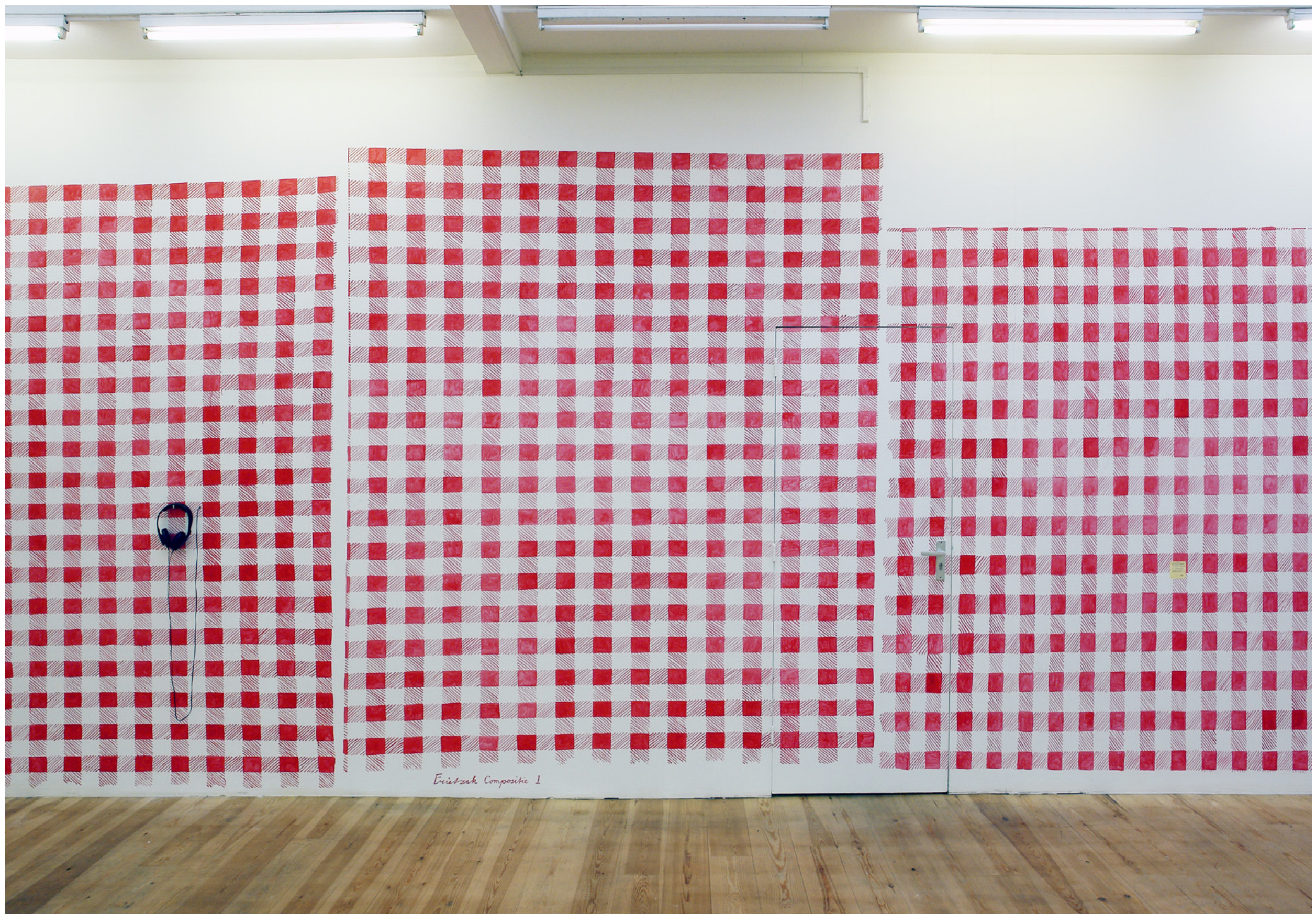
Well?

Yes, why don't I? Perhaps precisely because I like it to be so human, that it isn't something that people will comment on, saying: amazing, so perfectly executed, and all by hand. I'd rather they said: I could have done that. If you talk about things that aren't good, to me you're really talking about expressions that don't really emanate from you; you want too much to be different, a different kind of artist. Learn to do something properly. In the end, I can't be any other way, I have to keep telling myself: this is how I work.

Inner Conflict

How did you end up drawing the live photo of Nirvana again and again?

[Laughs.] Yes, why Nirvana? I wasn't even a real fan. I first made the drawing in 2006 at the Rijksakademie. I'd seen the TV documentary *Bevangen in Vrijheid* (lit. 'Possessed by Freedom') with philosopher Ad Verbrugge, in which he describes young people's sense of paralysis and boredom in a society that is increasingly dominated by commerce. [2] He relates this to various television and music fragments. Using Nirvana's *Smells Like Teen Spirit* Verbrugge explores the conflicted position of Kurt Cobain: someone who wants to be heard, is extremely driven to excel, but simultaneously reviles the industry of which he's a part.



Erntezak Composite 1

Do you recognise that inner conflict?

I do understand it, the duality of wanting to be heard, and being confronted by everything that revolves around it – the nature of the world, of pop culture as a whole, the thirst for entertainment, the importance of money. The dilemma that Kurt Cobain embodied is still unresolved. In fact, it's truer now than ever. Everybody is affected. You and I could just as easily be in the same schizophrenic position. On the one hand, we have ideals and dreams, we want to grow. At the same time, we are caught in a system that defines our everyday reality to a large extent. This is what was at the back of my mind when I began drawing that image.

Your drawings make me feel that Cobain's leap into the drum kit is endlessly rewound and replayed. How many versions have you produced up to now?

Between 40 and 45. When I started, I didn't think about that at all. I made one drawing. Only later did it dawn on me that it's about the act of drawing and repetition for me. I noticed that while it was perfectly normal for me to draw images over and over, it wasn't for others. I didn't do it thinking: this is a comment on authenticity. I just did it. I didn't make any deliberate use of it until later.

Could you compare the repetition of a drawing with the way we listen to music? If you like a certain song, you'll easily play it hundreds of times in your life. But you only see a painting once in a museum.

Yes, the experience is always linked to a moment: you listen and then it's gone. Certainly when I began it felt right to use an image that is chaotic, in flux. You know there's a lot of sound. It's a moment when a lot's going on all at once, that is frozen first by the photographer and then more explicitly by me. Looking back, you can talk about how he's lying there in the drum kit, that it's a classic photo many people think they know. I have a book that contains the original, and photos of what happened just before and after. Maybe that's a bit of a shame.

Why might it be a shame?

The idea that it could just as well have been a different image. I know it the way it is. Finding out that there are others and, for instance, that the version I use is actually a crop – it makes you ask: just how important is it? My versions of this image aren't identical either. For a while, I played around with several details, like the angle of the drumstick. I altered the legs a little. Minor changes, like a sequence of frames in a film. This one is an exception. I've let Kurt's head fall slightly. I can't say why, I don't think about it too much. I just do it and then it's happened.

[2] 'When I no longer really put much effort into things which, you might say, I'm devoted to, apply myself to and really care for [...] When I reach the point when that no longer happens, things become less and less worthwhile. What you're actually doing is chipping away at the gravity of things. *The unbearable lightness of being*. And not just of things, of yourself as well. That's what's so peculiar about it.'

Ad Verbrugge in 'Bevangen in Vrijheid', *Tegenlicht*, VPRO (Dutch television), 2004.

Do you consider 'the original' an overrated concept and are you more concerned with the act of making, the focus on something, the processing?

[Deliberate.] When you make a work, you are continually making decisions. And yes, it is very important to me that you feel that it isn't contrived, that it just came to be, you know? There's a tendency to constantly confine it, but once you do that, you also lose the tension that something unexpected can happen, something outside yourself, something you'd never have come up with. With consciousness, I would never be able to do what I can do with chance.

Has the way you look at the image of Nirvana changed?

Yes, it has altered. I feel as though I can tack anything onto it. That's not to say that the other is gone. I arrived at the decision to draw multiple versions gradually. First, I drew it a second time, perhaps because I didn't consider the first one very successful. That became a separate work with a few words alongside. Then I drew it again because I had two concurrent exhibitions in which I was showing more or less the same works. I thought: I can't make two entirely different exhibitions now. It wasn't a conceptual decision; it felt perfectly natural to me. I immediately noticed that others thought differently. If you see a drawing like that, you assume there's just the one. That's when I realised it's an image I should probably keep on drawing.

Making Contact

In the book O Let It Be, that you made after leaving the Rijksakademie in 2007, you added a notable phrase to your biography: 'The year he lost his artistic innocence.'

[Reticent.] That's got something to do with it, yes. 2007 was the year of the double exhibition. Some people were slightly shocked that I copied my own work. I had to explain myself, make it clear that I hadn't done it out of laziness or because I wanted to sell. That's perhaps the hardest part about being an artist, having to safeguard the context, the positioning and the reception of your work the whole time. It's something that constantly recurs.

Do you feel that as a pressure?

Well, it's a responsibility you have, and I want to take it. It's not just a question of professionalism, but of standing behind your work. There are people who ask me why I never come up with anything myself? Look, when I use copies, that's clear. It only becomes problematic because it becomes a commodity in a gallery. If it wasn't, I wouldn't take the criticism on board as much.

In O Let It Be you refer to the originals. Your website also has a section of sources and references. Has the importance you attach to stating sources changed?

The question of whether I should indicate references at all, and how, has always preoccupied me. I don't think there's a hard and fast rule, even now. It changes with the time and with each work. For a while I placed notes with links right beside drawings on my site. You clicked on a number without knowing where you'd end up. You could be looking at a drawing while music played in the background. Often it was too direct. I don't want every connection to reveal itself so easily. Giving a 'key' cuts short what a work can mean and the complex way in which it was created. On the other hand, it isn't a secret; I like to share it.



Would you like to make a statement about appropriation?

I have very little interest in it. My main objective is to make engaging exhibitions that say something about the now. In *The Passenger*, the exhibition I held at Galerie Paul Andriessé early this year, I combined my own work with a group exhibition that I curated in the rear space of the gallery. There was an understated yet visible transition from my work to that of the other artists. In the next exhibition, I want to include three separate works and combine them more integrally with my own work. There's a poster by Sean Edwards, a print by JCJ Vanderheyden and the video *May I Help You* (1991) by Andrea Fraser from the collection of De Hallen. Each in their own way, these three works will add something to the exhibition. If it works as well as I hope, each work will totally change the reading of the exhibition. That is what I'm aiming at.

When you use the original work and hang it up with the credits next to it, don't you use it less than when you appropriate something and reproduce it in paint?

The Billy Bragg LP cover I painted for *The Passenger*, or the Ad Reinhardt comic I am working on right now, are certainly more kinds of appropriation. I want to use the image within the exhibition in a particular way. It's not a random decision. By the time I use something, I've often contemplated it at great length. At a certain point it falls into place, you stumble upon something or realise that it also contains other references. This is what happened with the Billy Bragg album cover. I discovered that the title, *Talking with the Taxman about Poetry*, referred to a poem by Mayakovsky from 1926. Including the record sleeve in the exhibition then made perfect sense. It intrigues me how things keep rebounding, that a poem written in 1926 can be relevant again today. To me there's a kind of logic to it.

In some cases, including work by other artists requires that you to get in touch with them. How does that work?

It's exciting. Just as you involve yourself in another artist's practice, you allow him or her to become involved in yours. It is a way of processing. By using someone's work, your understanding of it often becomes much deeper and you suddenly see other layers. Sean Edward's poster was hanging in my studio for a while. What I loved about it was the way the boy becomes the personification of his game and the corresponding pattern. But now that I've learned more about the work from Sean himself, the associations have only become richer. He wrote to me saying: 'It is a found image taken from a magazine article about British chess prodigies. [...] The boy's name is Gavin Extence, and the article it refers to a move that he plays called the *Evans Gambit*. This is a gambit whose "first four moves on each side can lead to 70,000 different positions, and the number of possible ways of playing the first ten moves on either side is so great that if every man, woman and child on earth played chess, without rest, it would take 217,000 million years to go through all the moves." [...] For me it also became about these different understandings of play, choices and how we can work with them – playing out things into the future etc.' These ideas are a more or less unanticipated part of the exhibition.'

Is one aspect of appropriation that you hope that it inspires an open dialogue?

Definitely. I search for connections with what already exists. For me, dealing with another artist's work is a way of trying to make contact. This determines how I approach the question of authorship. When I am working, I don't want to have to stop all the time to wonder whether or not I am dealing with the material 'responsibly'. I don't see that as dishonest, more of a phase in which I can use things without being distracted. Content is not a thing you can hold. This openness and generosity is one of the most amazing qualities of art. I want to share that experience.

Is that idealistic? For you, does that ambition bear any relation to doing 'the right thing'?

[After a pause for thought.] I don't make art on my own, and certainly not only for myself. The same holds true for the conversation we're having now. I need contact with other people to keep growing. To me, 'bad' work is work that shares nothing, that shuts itself off, isolates. That's navel-gazing. I can relate to something Daan van Golden once said, that making an artwork is a form of 'caring'. [3] Which I interpret in both an individual and a collective sense. I don't only want to be occupied with myself and my own work all the time, I want to enter into conversation with other artists, think about what's already been made, and treat it carefully.

The World is Ours

Did this idea play a part in the decision to include Sol LeWitt's Horizontal Not Straight Lines in The Passenger?

Yes. Although the fact that it ended up being a piece for several drawers is mere coincidence. Originally, I'd chosen a simpler work: a single line on the wall. The daughter of Sol LeWitt proposed *Horizontal Not Straight Lines* simply because it is not already represented in a collection. In retrospect, it was a far better and more appropriate choice. I was thrilled when Roy Villevoeye, Bas van den Hurk, Jan van de Pavert, you and all the others all came to draw a line. You have a brief moment when you all work together, a very simple action. It belongs to everyone.

The artist has integrated its appropriation into the work.

That is what's so amazing about those pieces! It is extremely generous, but it's still his work.

[3] 'It's tough being a painter these days', says Van Golden. 'How can you match, let alone surpass, the greatest works by 20th century masters like De Kooning, Pollock, Matisse, Picasso, Duchamp, or Cézanne? I don't want to produce huge things that take up space. There are enough of those already. Being an artist isn't just about producing artwork – it's about everything you do, making love, not making a mess, being a good person. It's not just about the end result but the process that goes into making an artwork. It is thinking, meditating, caring.'

Ella Reitsma, 'Daan van Golden', *Vrij Nederland*, 5 August 1989.



Maybe something similar applies to Ad Reinhardt's black square. By saying that everyone should make a black square, he actually relinquishes his status as author. In an interview given in 1966, he was asked: Do you mean that if somebody actually painted the exact painting you just painted, it would still be his painting and not yours, but that it would be the best kind of painting?' [4]

And the answer is yes? [Laughs.] It's about looking at the idea, that you allow the viewer to feel the idea. That's the beauty of Sol LeWitt: you feel the idea, you read the text, the instructions, and in addition you have the image. You feel that the possibilities are endless, that this is how it is now. Some of his other wall drawings are more predetermined, but it's still fascinating that you first have language, and then all of a sudden, there's image. What's in between... The transition, that's what it's all about.

What was it like for you to draw that line?

Quite remarkable... All the more so because so many other people turned up to draw one, and everybody had thought about how they were going to do it. While he was on his way by train Piet Dirkx, for instance, had done all sorts of try-outs in his notebook. He didn't want to be too compliant and draw a wobbly line. Or Roy Villevoe and Fransje Killaars, who knew Sol LeWitt very well. It was great to hear them say: 'This is how Sol would have done it.' In all likelihood, he himself would have said: 'It's up to you.'

An attitude that appeals to you.

It makes me think of a new video work I'm going to present in the exhibition. It's a short loop from the film *La Haine*. You see a billboard with the words *Le Monde est à vous*, 'the world is yours'. Armed with a can of spray paint, a boy walks up to the billboard and changes it to *Le Monde est à nous*, 'the world is ours'. Such a simple – though for me essential – action. The notion that we must continually relate to the world anew, to that which binds us.

[4] Bruce Glaser: *Do you mean that if somebody actually painted the exact painting that you just painted it would still be his painting, and not yours, but it would be the best kind of painting?*

Ad Reinhardt: Yes. It would be as impersonal, or personal, a statement as anyone would want to make it.

Glaser: *Why, do you think, other people don't paint paintings like yours?*

Reinhardt: Well, that's a great mystery.

Glaser: *Why don't you have someone paint them for you?*

Reinhardt: Someone else can't do them for me. They have to do their own for themselves. [...]

Glaser: *Your painting, then, seems to be more about ideas than it is about materials?*

Reinhardt: Well, it has nothing to do with materials any more than it has to do with ideas. Whatever I do has come from doing and only relates to what's done.

'An interview with Ad Reinhardt, Art International (Lugano), 1966-1967' In: Barbara Rose (ed.), *Art as Art, The Selected Writings of Ad Reinhardt*. University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1991, p. 13.