

Windhager von Kaenel

Aemtlerstrasse 74, 8003 Zürich

Linda Voorwinde | Crack in the Dam
4 March – 8 May 2022

Poetry Must Lead Somewhere...

Like the never-ending ring of a struck tuning fork that hones the mind into a zone of weightless stillness, the suspension that comes from a gentler gravity would match the effect of the work of Linda Voorwinde. 'Crack in the Dam' is Voorwinde's debut exhibition at Windhager von Kaenel, Zurich and features five pieces from her most recent body of work. These floating compositions present intimate visions generated by the mind's eye of the artist as she participates in continuing the presence of surrealist and transcendental thought that has existed in various facets of modern societies around the world for over a century. It is a realm of thought that closely considers realms. It is a way of seeing, interpreting and reacting that recognizes the palpability of the subconscious and the unconscious, taking them seriously enough to enter into, play within, learn and heal from. It is interesting to acknowledge the mind as a true territory to actively inhabit, accessed through tapping into a meditative state that is sourced from the unconscious combined with a heightened state of consciousness. Being in this state allows for a release of energies that can break more and more boundaries the deeper into that space you go, slowly summoning the secrets that the subconscious mind holds. As artists, writers, thinkers access this fertile space over and over again, they breach boundaries of "the real" every time. They question whether it is possible to exist in both the subconscious and the conscious mind simultaneously. They wonder if it is necessary to abandon one for the other. They investigate the moments when both can be accessed and then they learn what that feels like.

Spending time with the works in a space of silence and sterility, you know...the kind that only a white cube could possess, provokes the attunement necessary to become engulfed by the works. The size of them helps too. And the delicate weaving of elements that never met before but are now so harmoniously linked that we can only be convinced they were meant for each other. A viewer who is an artist themselves may attempt to imagine how the compositions were constructed, while also acknowledging and appreciating the deep understanding of art history that is intuitively evident here. Of course, the use of collage, a technique that takes center stage in the history of Surrealism, demonstrates Voorwinde's keen awareness as she visually announces hybrid-making to be essential to capturing the stream that runs through her consciousness. She uses ambiguity as a tool for the creation of new meaning and this re-contextualization of elements through unusual marriages continues to challenge the rigid structures of logic, just as the poets set out to do a hundred years ago.

The relevance of transcendental and surrealist practices in these contemporary times is underlined by the frequency that this creative language is found in artists' studios, galleries and museums around the world. There is an expansive web that connects artists practicing now to early artists like the surrealists of Paris, France, to the Transcendental Painting Group of Santa Fe, New Mexico, to individual practices of people like Swiss artist Emma Kunz, who described the creative process as a journey to answer philosophical questions and explore spiritual layers. These movements developed out of the World Wars as symptoms of the disgust for the destructively rational nature of human society. As the state of things continues to be undeniably dysfunctional, artists, writers, architects, dancers, musicians, story-tellers and filmmakers continue to write texts, conduct interviews and of course, make work that denounces hierarchies of aesthetics, placing appearances of the physical world second to the spiritual benefits inherent in creating.

While the qualities that underscore this way of working expand past the visual field, Voorwinde's reverence for world-making through investigations of form, blends of color and uncanny subject matter are surely associating properties. She skillfully employs elements from vintage magazines as well as techniques of watercolor painting to generate the visual components of the exhibition that function in tandem with her poem 'Crack in the Dam'. The poem reiterates the ongoing tendency to make a place, however, also reinforces obscurity as an underlying and essential theme. It can be natural to want to use the words to read the images and to want to use the images to illustrate the words, but here, again, the artist places faith in the kind of deconstruction that fosters subjective solutions. Through the questioning of the sure, Voorwinde critiques the speculative and calculating habits that are so often seen when discussing meaning in art. She willingly trades certainty for wonder. She asserts the creative process to be a journey of deep listening and the artwork as simply evidence left over from that journey. Despite the distinct prioritization that is placed on the maker's experience over that of the viewer, experience over that of the viewer, it could be worth recognizing the benefits that the viewer does have when taking in these works. Unpacking them has the potential to become a journey of its own, reminding the viewer of their own mind's creative and healing spaces. Like observing a place for the very first time, the room available for interpretation is an opportunity to re-inhabit a more innocent headspace through free and playful association. The greatest benefit, for both parties, lies in the benign and brave surrendering of the need to know, making way for the wondering and wandering of the mind. – Ashley Cook

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*Ashley Cook is an artist and writer based in Detroit, Michigan in the USA. She is the founder and editor of Detroit-based grassroots publication Runner Magazine (<https://runnerdetroit.run>) which she established in 2020 in the midst of the pandemic lockdown. Ashley studied fine art at College for Creative Studies in Detroit and in 2017, received her MFA in contemporary artistic practices from the Work.Master program at HEAD-Geneve in Switzerland.