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ART

Simulacrum | Galerie Noorderlicht

Maayke Meijering



Art curator **Maayke** says:

"The exhibition examines the aforementioned hyper-reality, but then in photography and the film and game industry. The general theme: can we still distinguish images that imitate reality from the images depicting reality?"

When I visit an exhibition, my head always associates strongly with it. Sometimes as an extension of my art history studies, but often I also put all sorts of - possibly random - links with other things that I have seen, heard, read or experienced. It seems to be very good for your brain, that associate, so you do not hear me complaining.

Last week I visited the successful student evening around Rodin in the Groninger Museum. Sunny Bergman was a guest and talked about sexuality and the human body, how it is viewed in today's society and how Rodin dealt with it. In that context she cited the concept of 'simulacrum', which comes from the French philosopher Baudrillard (1929-2007). We live, according to the philosopher, in a hyperreality. The images we are exposed to on a daily basis, via television, newspapers, magazines, internet and social media, do not reflect reality, but rather an idea of reality. A seeming copy, without an original in the real world. Bergman cited the concept of explaining how we view the (especially female) body more and more from the illusion that the simulated reality (the simulacrum) is the real reality. The selfie mode of my phone is automatically set to 'beauty level 5'. My skin may look a lot more sparkling on the picture, but the reality, unfortunately it is not.

In Galerie Noorderlicht they are not concerned with beauty ideals or the human body, but with the concept **simulacrum** and how visual images imitate reality. The exhibition with the same title explores the aforementioned hyper-reality, but then in photography and the film and game industry. The general theme: can we still distinguish images that imitate reality from the images depicting reality? With new developments in CGI (Computer Generated Imagery), VR (Virtual Reality), AR (Augmented Reality) and AI (Artificial Intelligence) this development will probably only continue. The gallery features work by nine national and international artists who occupy themselves with that theme in their work.

The landscape is a recurring theme in the exhibition: *unheimisch* by absolute perfection (Eelco Brand), seemingly realistic (Justin Berry, Rob Wetzler), unfinished (Mathieu Bernard-Reymond) or faltering and repeating, like a *glitch* in the Matrix (Robert Overweg, COLL.EO / Colleen Flaherty and Matteo Bittanti). This last duo, COLL.EO, shows a series of videos in which, instead of the main characters of a game (in this case drivers), they focus on the extras. We see them uncomfortably standing side by side, eating something on a terrace, strolling along the boulevard, calling someone. How is it, are the makers wondering, to be a character without a role, in the hallucination of the game? I am reminded of yet another nineties film, *The Truman Show*, in which an entire city full of people figures in the life of protagonist Truman. Would they move just as aimlessly, waiting to take action at the right time? In whose reality are the characters themselves, those of themselves or those of the protagonist?

"What is real, what is unreal? The boundary between the two starts to fade," says Noorderlicht. Is this blurring only an innocent adult version of escape from reality, as children lose themselves in fairy tales? Or does it have a greater impact on our lives than we think? Do we have to escape from the simulated world or not? Do you take the red or the blue pill?

SIMULACRUM
until Sunday 25 June
free
Galerie Noorderlicht

MAAYKE MEIJERING



(photo: Ellen de Haan)

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