

Vintage

Ruud van Empel

Solo exhibition: *Vintage_1995 - 2003*

January, 9 – February, 10, 2010

Opening Saturday January 9, 4. - 6 p.m.

Flatland Gallery

Work that has never been shown to anyone before, prints that were never produced and photosketches that were merely try outs, but also a lot more, such as work from *The Office* series. In total the exhibition *Vintage* comprises around 40 works by Ruud van Empel. Some very small in size.

VINTAGE

From January 9 till February 10 we can witness at Flatland Gallery the surrealistic ground out of which Ruud van Empel's famous series *World* and many others were born. Such as his original work from the series *The Office* (1995-1998). Here we see man and women behind their desks, in front of their mechanized machines or behind executive desks, showing off; an ego-driven world, common in the industrial time of the second half of the 20th century. The exhibition *VINTAGE* shall include also many of his photosketches he made, such as one work dating from 1983, which is an original handprinted work and the very first photo artwork he ever made.

All these images are full of signs of Van Empel's need of quietness and his knowledge of digital techniques; here too none of the details really are; yet what they reflect is very real. As *le Monde* wrote earlier, 'Sa démarche, proche des photomontages d'un Stieglitz ou d'un Man Ray, peut se lire comme le recyclage poétique de fragments de la vie quotidienne et de stéréotypes de la société industrielle'.

Dutch visual artist Ruud van Empel (1958) is one of the first protagonists of photo-art, combining the use of the medium of photography with computer technology in an almost unprecedented way. By referring to immemorial notions of virtue and innocence, his works evoke a lively dialogue between history, art history, prejudice and thus self-awareness. At the same time his incredible skills with contemporary techniques challenge an on-going dialogue with our present society. Ruud van Empel opens hitherto unknown possibilities and new directions in art.

His work has been selected by many curators for museumshows in the Netherlands (Groninger Museum, Gemeentemuseum Den Haag) as abroad, such as in 2007 in the MoPA-Museum of Photographic Arts, San Diego and in 2008 in Museum Kunst palest in Dusseldorf 'Diana and Actaeon, the forbidden glimpse of the naked body', in which Van Empel's work was exhibited together with masterpieces from Rembrandt, Mapplethorpe and Picasso. Today his work is shown in most European countries as well as in Korea, Russia, Japan and the United States. Amongst the many collections his work is in the collection of the Groninger Museum, The C-Photo Collection in London, the Sir Elton John Collection, which includes work from artists like Sally Mann, Damien Hirst and Nan Goldin and since very recently in the J. Paul Getty Museum Collection, Los Angeles, USA.

