RUUD VAN EMPEL
SUNDAY CHAPTER
SOLO SHOW
FLATLAND AMSTERDAM
06 October – 10 November 2012

Location: FLATLAND AMSTERDAM (314, Lijnbaansgracht, Amsterdam)

In the photographic works of artist Ruud van Empel (Breda, 1958) the subjects seem to have time to stand and stare: time to evaluate, to be part of nature, to watch their dreams.

Utilizing his fixed artistic canon of a relative absence of perspective, his use of a certain ‘flatness’ of image, combined with his chief concern with light, space and (non) movement, Van Empel brings about images which are both beautiful and strong. There is an inherent beauty, tranquility, nature and pureness. Yet the softness of his tone, though, in no way diminishes the sharpness of his work.

There is a sort of attendant pressure as well: an invisible complication; something that looms over these idyllic scenes. The real-life-like children of Ruud van Empel often appear in the same way that their paradisiacal emerald surroundings seem disturbed and interrupted; the closer you look, the more, the dominant, harsher side of reality intrudes on the idyll.

This is something which has a great impact on what at first glance appears to be just a pretty picture. It is not. If you get it, you notice Ruud van Empel’s underlying concept of genuine concern on how unsettling reality can be.

From 06 October – 10 November 2012 to see in the gallery.

In 2012 Van Empel added a new chapter to his oeuvre: ‘Sunday’. In a way he composed these “French gardens” with their characteristic symmetrical lines as an accurate background for his subjects, boys and girls, to wander in. With ‘Sunday # 9’ Van Empel uses a horizontal line now separating the earth and the sky, establishing a different perspective with the emphasis on the face, as if he decided to change his angle.

Biography
The high regard in which Van Empel is held as an exceptional artist began when he graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts Sint Joost in Breda, the Netherlands in 1981. Van Empel, always keen to bring his concepts to fruition, successfully spanned the artistic fields of interior, graphic and theatre design as well as in film and television media. Since the 1990’s he launched himself with international acclaim onto the unrestricted stage of photography. As early as 1981 he was awarded the St. Joost prize which was followed by the prestigious Charlotte Köhlerprize in 1993 and the H.N. Werkmanprize in 2001.
His earliest work dates back to 1995 when he started his surrealistic series entitled ‘The Office’. Among the major series that Van Empel created thereafter are his famous series ‘World’ (2005 until 2008/2011), the extraordinary hallucinatory world in which often wide-eyed black children pose amid lush settings of greenery, and ‘Moon’ (2005), the nocturnal counterpart of this.

Exhibited internationally with great success in the past few years, his first retrospective with over 80 works opened in 2011 in the Groninger Museum in the Netherlands. The exhibition was accompanied by a catalogue and is travelling abroad to the MoPA-Museum of Photographic Arts, San Diego in 2012 and to the photography museum Fotografiska, Stockholm, Sweden and the Fotomuseum Antwerpen (FoMu), in Belgium in 2013.


Collections: His work is also featured in public and private collections, including, but not limited to: The Alturas Foundation, San Antonio, Texas, USA; the Sir Elton John Collection, Atlanta, USA; the Arad Collection, London, UK; the C-Photo collection, London, UK; the Caldic Collection, Rotterdam, the Netherlands; The FNAC Collection, Paris, France; Flatland Foundation, Amsterdam; The J. Paul Getty Museum Collection, Los Angeles, USA; George Eastman House, Rochester NY, USA; the Groninger Museum, Groningen, the Netherlands; Christian Louboutin, Paris, New York; Colección Juan Redón, Barcelona, Spain; MoPA Museum of Photographic Arts, San Diego, USA; Fundación N.M.A.C., Cadiz, Spain; Generali Foundation, Vienna, Austria; the David Roberts Collection, London, UK; Des Moines Art Center, Des Moines, Iowa, USA; The Franks-Suss Collection London, UK; Tel Aviv Museum of Art Collection, Tel Aviv, Israel; Vente – Privee Collection, Paris, France.