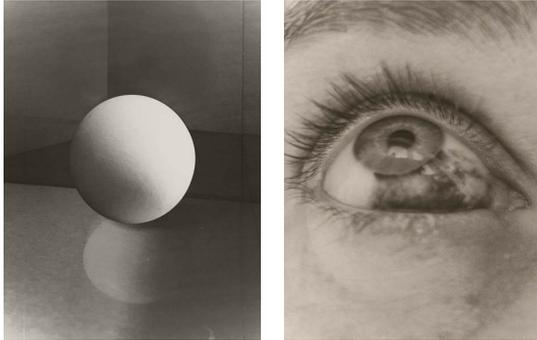


Paul Kooiker

Eggs and Rarities

November 14, 2018 - January 19, 2019



The first thing you see is a high wall, painted grey, with the title of the exhibition 'Eggs and Rarities' in bright metallic blue letters. Those entering the gallery space end up in what Paul Kooiker himself describes as a 'cheerful nightmare'. Eighty-eight images vie for your attention. You've stepped inside the artist's head, and into a jumble of everyday impressions: trees in a snowy landscape, a portrait of the singer Nina Simone, a nude with a book on her lap, a girl in the bath, festive dishes of fruit and bread rolls on a table, splashing fountains, smoking chimneys, an elderly woman

climbing a staircase with a child, a portrait of a woman with two children.

The photos appear to be black and white but, with a nod to amateur photography, are printed in light sepia tones. The images are the same size, in the same aluminium frame and are tightly arranged in two rows, one above the other, at evenly spaced intervals of several centimetres throughout the gallery space. The works from the series 'Eggs and Rarities' (2018) are drawn from the artist's personal archive of the last ten years. The most recent ones feature an egg that, in the cacophony of prosaic reality, take on the semblance of abstract, almost empty images. That reality also extends to the artist's personal life. The public and private realms intermingle with natural ease.

While an art student, Kooiker made a photographic 'encyclopaedia of life'. Thirty years later he returned this ambitious and equally utopian project. The exhibition reads like a sample of photographic genres: landscape, nude, still life, portrait. And Kooiker does not shy away from photographic clichés. Faced with the abundance of images in the exhibition, the eye automatically seeks a point of rest. Which it finds in the individual images. In fact, the exhibition is an invitation to come closer, and look at the images one by one, as if browsing the pages of a book. The viewer creates their own story. The eggs appear to act as punctuation marks and, as it were, stake out a mental space where memories and associations can run free. Images of mundane scenes are transformed into archetypes of life. And so Paul Kooiker's encyclopaedia of life comes to be.

Paul Kooiker (1964, Rotterdam, NL) studied at the Royal Academy of Arts in The Hague and the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten in Amsterdam (1990-1992). Kooiker was awarded the Prix-de-Rome Photography in 1996 and the A. Roland Holst Award for his oeuvre in 2009. Kooiker's work has been featured in numerous solo and group shows in the Netherlands and abroad, with solos at venues including FOMU Fotomuseum, Antwerp, BE (2018), The Hague Museum of Photography, NL (2014), Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, NL (2009), Foam Fotografiemuseum, Amsterdam (2006). Work by Paul Kooiker is held in public and private collections internationally.

'Eggs and Rarities', the new book by Kooiker – published by Art Paper Editions – will be presented on Saturday 24 November during the Amsterdam Art Weekend. At the book launch, Paul Kooiker will be in conversation with Joachim Naudts, curator of the FoMu in Antwerp.

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bloemgracht 57, 1016ke amsterdam +31 [20] 320 67 68
info@tegenboschvanvreden.com | www.tegenboschvanvreden.com