

Rik Rosseels Gallery

'Unforgettable' Interview between Murielle Scherre and Simon Verheylesonne

MS:

We talked about being neurodivergent. Our communication is reporting live from one adhd rabbit hole hyperfixation to the next. Do you think neurodivergent people are embodying their coping mechanisms and can either turn them to the madhouse or the museum with the language of art. Is art therapy that landed on fertile grounds.

SV:

It's not because you have to do something to stay sane that it instantly becomes a therapeutic occupation. Also therapy serves a different purpose from the innate instincts that drives one to create.

MS:

Your work shows no humans, yet it assembles artifacts of our lives and its collage creates a new dimension of possibility. How do you relate to your work and how do you want it to, be used x perceived by others? (If you even consider the spectator at all)

SV:

I am as much dissociated from what we call reality as I am extremely aware of it. Therefore I don't really relate to my work(ing) as it rather just embodies my state of being through the physical. It touches all layers of sensitivity I am susceptible to but I do relate to artists and artisans from past times and hope to be standing in their shadow one day, humbly. Look, I see myself as a maker of images, not a storyteller. So I don't really focus on how the work is perceived. But I do try to steer the viewer's perception in a way so that it touches certain aspects of intentions that run parallel with my own. After all, it's in this artificial structure of juxtaposed elements that the reality of the subject can be caught. Also I despise the idea of trying to understand a work of art through logic, it should rather be understood through its working upon our sensations. So if we don't feel anything for a work of art, it cannot be understood anyway.

MS:

You divigently collect x dissect. These ingredients are available to the lot of us. Talk to me bout the way you use these DNA fragments to recreate the world to your liking. Is this a frantic process of is it rather soothing.

SV:

Since 2018, I have been working on a series of collages called 'Specimen', which find their origin in the natural world. Shape, color, and texture take the viewer into the rich world of rocks, fauna, and flora. Though never concrete, the viewer is left with an abundance of associative elements that is based upon suggestive impression. The collages are never permanently assembled or glued. Once the supply of clippings has drastically dwindled and making new collages has become impossible, they are reproduced (photographed and scanned), digitally catalogued, and then disassembled again. The digital file thus becomes the benchmark from which new works emerge. This process of reusing clippings follows a Darwinian principle. The clippings not only function as visual DNA strands, but a 'hierarchy of usability' also emerges, where some clippings are consistently reused while others lose their 'usability'. From this hierarchy this Darwinian principle of evolution arises, where 'stronger' clippings repeatedly return and the collage continually optimizes itself. The process is frantic in a way that these "DNA strands" consist of hundreds and hundreds of clippings, leaving me with a myriad of possibilities in the process of creating so i'm rather trying to distort the image far beyond the appearance, but in this distortion bring it back to a recording of the appearance. And it's actually soothing to see that these non-representational forms relating to nature are very much alike to what we experience in real nature itself.

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MS:

Rituals produce artifacts or art but they can easily be forgotten or brushed off as none-sense or hocus pocus. How does your work use rituals a tool? Are rituals an attempt to look into our future x past? Can your art make you immortal?

SV:

Something within our human core is drawn to higher beliefs. We are all confronted in certain points of our lives with (extreme) situations in which we doubt our perception of reality. And when that happens, we tend to turn to the immaterial. I like the idea of turning the immaterial into a physical manifestation. Ritualism is bound to a certain amount of structured actions and often involves objects to empower those proceedings. So without knowledge of the ritualistic all those objects are somewhat veiled in mystery, giving them their ambiguous appearance. The potency of an image is created partly by the possibility of its endurance. So when images, objects, writings, etc live on, they create the potency of immortality through their existing.

MS:

We turn to the 'para-normal' or mystical to shine a light on our mortal struggles. Your work is heavily (heavenly maybe) under the influence of rituals x symbolism x philosophy x all things mythical x clerical. With all this escapism from the here x now, how do you manage to return and get the job done.

SV:

Honestly, through all this escapism, I don't really feel the need to return to what is called the "here and now". After all, why would I. If one has a small chance of becoming immortal, here and now is such an irrelevant concept.

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