

Krystyna Ziach, merged disciplines

Text: Hans Rooseboom, 2014

Hans Rooseboom is the curator of photography at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam

Once a year the Beelden aan Zee museum takes a sidetrack and makes an exhibition about photography – though the connection with sculpture is never far-off. Thus in recent years photographs were shown about sculptors at work (photographed by Vincent Mentzel), moving naive images (spotted on different locations by Eddy Posthuma de Boer), the marble quarries of Carrara (Hans Bol) and nudes by Carla van de Puttelaar. The latter were shown in combination with sculptures she chose from the Beelden aan Zee collection.

The only one in the line-up of exhibitors who was not trained and did not work as a photographer, is Piet Esser, the sculptor who in 1947 and 1954 made such beautiful 'portraits' of Parisian sculptors' studios. Esser was not a professional photographer but a sculptor. He only made photos for his own amusement and for documentation purposes.

Her education in sculpture formed her way of looking at things

This fall the series is continued by Krystyna Ziach, who also had a background as a sculptress, but today mainly works and is known as a photographer. After her education at the Academies of Fine Art in Cracow and Enschede (1973-1982), Krystyna Ziach developed into a photographer.

Ziach has been an equally devoted practitioner of sculpture and photography and in doing so has spanned the gap between these two disciplines. In the exhibition organized this fall by the Beelden aan Zee museum, the emphasis is on a series of works from the early nineties. These so-called photo sculptures are monumental spatial constructions or installations in which photos are incorporated. It is in this very series of works that Krystyna Ziach's 'dual background' becomes visible and the two disciplines, photography and sculpture, merge. Even more so: they play an equal part. Never before in this exhibition series has this been so evident.

As Ziach puts it herself, her education in sculpture formed her way of looking at things. Even after applying herself to photography, she has always continued to look at reality like a sculptress. The photo sculptures have geometrical shapes - squares, triangles and circles - which Ziach combines with materials such as sand, salt and charcoal. In this way she creates captivating conceptual works in which the sculptress/photographer plays with optical illusions and the symbolic.

Krystyna Ziach lives in Amsterdam. Her photographs are included in various important collections of, among others, the Bibliothèque nationale de France in Paris, the ABN AMRO, Museum Kunst Palast in Düsseldorf and the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam.

Translation: Hanny Keulers