



Desirée Dolron, *Xteriors VIII*, 2004. Dibond, photo, perspex, wood, 124,5 x 190 x 5 cm, Rabo Art Collection NL. Courtesy Desirée Dolron

## ***Beyond the Body***

**1 September - 9 December 2018**

**Art Center Silkeborg Bad, Silkeborg**

**Opening 1 September 2018, at 11.00 am.**

**Curator Anne Berk, NL**

We are part of the stream of life. We change constantly. How do we deal with our transient body? How do we envisage death, that ultimate transformation? For *Beyond the Body* the Dutch curator Anne Berk invited seventeen artists with works reflecting on transience, death and commemoration in a secularized era.

Given the ancient bog body of the Tollund Man in Silkeborg, and the exhibition site's history as a former health facility dating from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Art Center Silkeborg Bad is the perfect venue for this exhibition.

**Saturday 1 September. 2018 at 11.00 am, the exhibition will be opened by the Dutch ambassador in Denmark, Henk Swarttouw.**

### **Artists**

*Erzsébet Baerveldt, Caspar Berger, Antoine Berghs, Martin uit den Bogaard, Célio Braga, Alexandra Bremers, Esther Bruggink, David Claerbout, Desirée Dolron, Jeroen Eisinga, Jelle Kampen, Ida van der Lee/Studio Ritual Art, Janpeter Muilwijk, Alet Pilon, Jan Thomas, Jan Dietvorst & Roy Villevoe*

## Background

"O sad humanity! Why do you fear alarms of icy death?... Everything must change: but nothing perishes", wrote the Latin poet Ovid two thousand years ago in his 'Metamorphosis'.

Man is the only animal that can foresee his own death. We are mortals and we know it. How to tame our fears? How to reconcile ourselves with the disappearance of our individual personality, that is treated as the key value in the West? How to console the survivors? What does it mean, death? Is there something beyond the body? Is there a soul?

These questions have engaged man since time immemorial. People pondered about it in philosophy, religion and art, without being able to find a definitive answer (those who think they found answers, are called 'believers'). One day we will pass this door of no return and no one can tell us what happened.

People have projected the life they know on death. This explains the Christian perspective of a 'hereafter', a life after death in a paradise that looks like a summer garden. But according to the latest scientific insights the sky is empty and the existence of the soul is a myth. 'God is dead', announced Nietzsche, but it is not easy to live on one's own.

In our secularized era we indulge in the display of perfect beauty and eternal youth in advertisements and the media. Death is a black hole that we try to ignore. But we will die anyway, no matter what medical technology or cosmic surgery. In this vacuum, this 'religious deficit' as it is called by the University of Nijmegen NL, our vulnerable body and infallible death trigger the imagination of artists.

## Transience in art

Central in Célio Braga's work is the transience of the body. He incises photos of the skin that envelopes our body, to remind us of our vulnerability. Alet Pilon channels our fears, to adjure death. When she got cancer, Pilon created a pile of bodies with telling title *Not Me*. In his gruesomely filmed performance with bees, *Springtime*, Jeroen Eisinga puts his body to the test, exploring the border between life and death. *X-teriors VIII* of Desiree Dolron shows a fragile body in the color of alabaster. Is he asleep or dead, delivered from his suffering?

If death is The End, we prefer to ignore him, challenging Roy Villevoeye in *The Clearing* to visualize his own death and that of his Papuan friend as a tangible reality. Martin uit den Bogaard attaches electrodes to a (donated) human finger, suggesting that dead matter emits energy. He finds consolation in the fact that on the level of atoms, we fully reincarnate.

It is one thing to die, it's something else to cope with the loss of your beloved. With *Pietá*, Erszébet Baerveldt made a heartbreaking film about mourning and the irreversibility of death.

While walking through the exhibition of these 17 artist's works the visitor will experience a symbolic last passage through different stages: Before Death - Death - After Death - Survivors/ Commemoration.

**The exhibition will be on show September 1 – December 9, 2018.**

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Side program to the exhibition:

## All Souls Ritual

Saturday 3 November, 14.00 – 17.00, Silkeborg Vestre Graveyard

Ida van der Lee/Studio Ritual Art, supported by the European Ritual Network and local sponsors in Denmark, creates *All Souls Everywhere*, a collective mourning ritual at the local graveyard. The public is invited to participate and commemorate their beloved. In the Netherlands, Ida van der Lee did ground-breaking work by inventing secular commemoration rituals, which are now introduced in Denmark for the first time.

## Lectures on Contemporary All Souls Rituals (and small ritual)

Thursday 1 November 16.00 – 19.00, Art Center Silkeborg Bad

Curator Anne Berk, introduction

Ida van der Lee/Studio Ritual Art

Jeltje Gordon-Lennox, researcher and editor of *Emerging Ritual in Secular Societies*.

## *A Transdisciplinary Conversation, 2017*

### **Education**

In cooperation with the organization KK44, Art Center Silkeborg Bad offers educational programs for high school students to reflect on transience, death and commemoration. Professionals in theology as well as art critics will provide multi-faceted interpretations of the exhibited art works.

### **Tours**

During the exhibition, curator Anne Berk will give several interactive guided tours in English. Our own guides will provide tours in Danish. For dates check our website [www.silkeborgbad.dk](http://www.silkeborgbad.dk)

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### **About curator Anne Berk**

Anne Berk is a respected Dutch curator, art critic, educator and lecturer. She is actively involved in the European sculpture network. Her book and exhibition *Bodytalk* in Museum Beelden aan Zee (2004) deal with the shift from abstract to figurative art in Dutch sculpture, in the context of changes in society. She explored this subject internationally with *In Search of Meaning, the Human Figure in Global Perspective*, at Museum De Fundatie NL (2015). Currently, she curated *Object Love* about our emotional relation with things, at Museum de Domijnen Hedendaagse Kunst, NL. In 2013 she was curator of sculpture network's international symposium *Sculpture lives on—from Modernism to Globalisation* at Kröller-Müller Museum, NL followed by *Sculpting Nature. Land art, Eco art and Bio art* at Verbeke Foundation, Antwerp, BE in 2016.

The exhibition is supported by the Dutch embassy and the Danish Council for Visual Art.



Kingdom of the Netherlands

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### **For more information:**

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Jeroen Eisinga, *Springtime*, 2012, Still from video performance, 35 mm-film transferred to HD, 19 min.