

## **Galerie Rompone**

**Chantal van Houten** Paint deeper ! solo show

17. Juni - 19. August 2023/ june 17th - august 19th 2023

**\*When you look at your oeuvre do you have subjects and themes that are constantly to be found in your work?**

Main theme is often people and their behaviours. I try to create recognisable situations but also situations where you have to think deeper to relate to that specific situation.

Reappearing subject is love, love for another human being, love for little things that make you happy, that makes you love life.

A reappearing object is a book in my paintings 'Book of Life' it refers to that people live by rules made up by people. But there is no such thing as a book of life, you just live your life in the best way you can and learn about life as you go along and this cannot be captured in a book. Sometimes I use other object which is meant to be symbolic, like a serpent that is a reappearing object at the moment in my paintings. The serpent stands for creation, rebirth, renewal and wisdom then again it also be a symbol of evil.

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**\*The figures on your paintings mainly have dark covered faces. Do they keep a secret or why do you use this pictorial intervention?**

Actually it has multiple reasons one of them is; it doesn't matter how you look, it's about the person behind it. I just want the viewer to go deeper into their feelings than just a surface. The black works really well because it gives you a feeling that something is going on and you need to figure out what that is and maybe recognize some feelings similar due to the painting. An other reason is that everybody has some kind of mask on to protect themselves for being hurt or something, people often don't show their true colours right away, for example nowadays people ventilate a lot through social media, and you have to make an effort to really get to know each other. Also I love it when people get a little bit thrown into the deep and experience different emotions and thoughts, and these thoughts are for them selves, I'm not to judge about that.

**\*Is the portrait your preferred motive ?**

Yes it is, I have tried different things but I keep coming back to making portraits. It's because my subjects are human and their behaviours.

And I always want to give a message, clear or not clear and the best way for to communicate this (I believe) is by making strong portraits.

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**\*As a dutch painter do you feel close to a historically based painting tradition ? Also because some of your figures wear white collars like the ones you can see on paintings of the 17. Century.**

Historical paintings are a big inspiration for me. The 17th century because of the movement in the paintings and the use of symbolism and light. People were so experimental and exploring in that period of time, we can learn so much about it by looking at these paintings. I really love to refer to that time by using objects like the white collars. But most of all I love the paintings in earlier times like the 15th century and before. I'm a big fan of the static movement in the paintings, faces are not flat but have a flat image so you have to do your best to see what the expression is, love it. And off course also the symbolism and relation to religion. I'm not a religious person but I find believes fascinating, especially what is interesting that people rely on faith no matter what.

I can only have respect for that.

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**\*Which role do words and comic- esque elements play in your paintings?**

Most importantly, it reinforces my message. The words always come up during the making of the artwork. During making it becomes a state of mind and I don't really know at the beginning of the painting what message I want to share, it's also a process and words just come along.

The comic-esque elements I use, reinforces the static movement in my work.

I like to play with time (historical and modern) and comic makes it's more modern so old times melt together with modern times.

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**\*What do the words mean on the paintings?**

The words are actually words that just pop up while painting, so they are related to the subject just not in an obvious way. The intention is to get people in a certain mindset, to think outside of the box, it can bring you beautiful things.

**\*Tell us something about the transition from the more reduced paintings to the ones with brighter colours !**

With the paintings with less color I was mainly looking for contrast, contrasts in light and dark and proportions and postures of the main character. But when I was working on that I started to add more color. I wanted to work more expressively and add more meanings to my work. So you can see a gradient from less color to more and more color and also brighter colors.

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**\*What about the animals like tigers and snakes we see on the paintings?**

I like to use symbolism in my paintings. I think that it makes the message more clear. The tiger for instance is a symbol of power and strength. A tiger avoids physical conflicts with peers and looks for other solutions. Tigers are social animals to its peers and they look out for each other. For instance the meaning of the painting 'Jungle' is to be strong but also to be social to others and look out for each other, because you need your peers in life.

The snake is a recurring animal in my paintings, it's a symbol for life and death. It can bring life, in some cultures it's a symbol of fertility. So it can be a blessing or a threat.

The background of the latest series are very bright with lush plants, that refers to the beautiful perfect world and life, but the pink blobs represents that life isn't flawless. They are pink because flaws in life don't have to be negative and can bring you positivity.

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**\*Chantal van Houten**: born in 1979 in the Netherlands

\*2005 graduate of the Academy of Media and Art, Amsterdam

\*Member of the Sint Lucas Art Society, Amsterdam since 2018

**selected exhibitions:**

2023 „Paint deeper !“, Galerie Rompone, Cologne Germany  
„Cosmopolita" ISORROPIA HOMEGALLERY Milano, Italy, (g)

2022 Galerie Rompone, Cologne, Germany (g)  
"empowerment" North Sea Art festival, Rotterdam (g)  
art society St Lucas Loods 6 Amsterdam (g)

Galerie Rompone, Cologne, Germany (g)

2021 Galerie Rompone- Gelée Royale- Cologne, Germany (g)  
Galerie Rompone- Köln - Phoenix exhibition- Cologne, Germany (g)  
artgroup Sint Lucas Amsterdam- Loods6 Amsterdam (g)

2019 15/07-15/09 Lang Leve Rembrandt- Rijksmuseum Amsterdam  
ST Lucas Art Society Amsterdam (g)

2018: Manifest Destiny Art Gallery (g)  
Barcelona „The masks we wear" (g)  
"Around the world in 7 days" gallery Great (g)  
Banyan Art in Calcutta at The Loft gallery (g)  
Art Singel 100 Gallery, Amsterdam, Netherlands (g)

2017 Den Gallery, Kuwait city, Kuwait  
Kunstmuseum Direktorenhaus Berlijn, Germany  
Kunst 2001 gallerie, Hoofddorp, Netherlands  
Kunsthaar gallerie, Amsterdam, Netherlands

2016 Linus Gallery -California USA Online exhibition  
Great Banyan Art gallery- New Delhi India:  
Tales of Art exhibition (g)

2015 Art Fusion Amsterdam Netherlands  
Amsterdam Art Fair Beurs van Berlage, Amsterdam, Netherlands  
The Carlos Reid Gallery, USA  
The Road Gallery, NEW YORK, USA Guest artist  
PAKS Gallery castle Hubertendorf Austria (g)  
Het Regthuys Nieuwkoop, Netherland (g)  
KNSM 301 Amsterdam Netherlands (g)  
Marzia Frozen Gallery Berlin, Germany (g)

2014 De Doorloop in Alphen aan den Rijn, Netherlands (g)  
Montmartre in Amsterdam Netherlands (g)  
Artfair Almere, Netherlands  
Rembrandt Art fair Amsterdam Netherlands (g)