

Cris Brodahl

11 April - 10 May 2008

The paintings by Cris Brodahl (° 1963, Ghent) come about in silence and in the unretrievable course of time. This is not directly a conscious choice by the artist but a natural process, personal to herself and the demands of her work.

Over the years, Cris Brodahl perfected and refined her razor-sharp observation skills. She also developed an unusual mastery of paint, and the handling of line and composition. But she didn't limit herself to acquiring technical skills. The visual world she has created is rich, tarnished and deep. Brodahl paints about concepts that are no longer really painted: vast universal themes such as power, love, death, fear, ... From the depths of her extremely personal experience, she interprets them as figurative, double, triple and even multiple images that surpass ordinary perceptions.

To compose these images, Cris Brodahl uses "paranoia-critique", free association and collage, all techniques she has borrowed from Surrealism. In this way, her narrative follows indirect and disconnected scenarios that refer back to Freudian fragmentation and the world of dreams where things have no immediate significance but are nevertheless distinctly portrayed.

The universe of Cris Brodahl is *per se* feminine and elegant: a portrait, body or hand, accessory, space, a glance, a movement, mostly refer to women or indicate a female presence. She does not create these images based on nature or from imagination alone, but uses well-thumbed fashion and women's pages, or old magazines about interiors or classical dance... Her painting style is refined, figurative and slightly nostalgic, using a palette of greyish tones that lend the works the glamour of an old movie.

At the same time, her world is sombre, emotionally charged and introspective. In complex fragmented images that slice and overlap, rise and compress, Brodahl presents a beauty that is fractured and suggestive of a hidden psychological fear, lying just beneath the surface of the paint.

This is the second exhibition of Cris Brodahl at the Xavier Hufkens gallery. In December 2008, the first monograph of her work will be published in collaboration with the publishing house Hatje Cantz.

Xavier Hufkens

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