

All about Eve by Annie Kevans

Opening: Jan 12th 2014 from 2 until 6 pm in the presence of the artist

Show: Jan 16th until Mar 1st 2014. Extended until Apr 5th 2014!

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FIFTY ONE TOO will focus on the dialogue between all the different art media, induced by photography. As the main gallery FIFTY ONE already incorporated this dialogue since 2011, these exhibitions are conducted to emphasise the artistic gaze and will be in particular broaden up in the second gallery.

Nevertheless FIFTY ONE TOO will be officially opened with a solo show 'All about Eve' of the British painter Annie Kevans (b.1972). In general Kevans' work consists of psychological portraits, which explore the boundaries of certain taboo's and secret topics that are been ignored or kept hidden in world's history. It is about revealing the 'real' truth: the duplicity between power and vulnerability, innocence and accomplishment, sincerity and reality. Her latest series 'All about Eve' deals with gaining power through sexual relationships as mistresses of head of states or leaders and disclosing the impressive authority of these women in the context of their descendants.

Kevans' portraits are imaginative renders of individuals: the accuracy of their resemblance is irrelative. Her work is narrative and conceptual. A personal reflection by the spectator of what is in front of him, is fundamental.

The historical association one has about portraiture: the real existence of the depicted person and its resemblance, benefits her work to enhance the truism about her portraits. Her subjects are personages, mostly from the past and are frequently historical celebrities, who evoke a fictitious familiarity by the spectator at first sight. The most important feature in her portraits is the eyes: it is like the haunting gaze persists the spectator to read its secret. Kevans often represents her subjects as children. The 'innocence of a child' is a double standard she likes to explore in her work.

Her illusive work is magnified by her technique: oil painting on paper. The light strokes of oil paint create translucent images. Her paintings are impressions of her subjects rather than complete accurate portraits. They feel like watercolors or drawings. The transparency of her work gives her the opportunity to capture the tangles her portraits are embedded with.

During her studies at the Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design in London, she experimented with different artistic media, but finally turned to paper (with a canvas structure). Although paper as an artistic medium has a less solid character than canvas, yet it is less formal: it is commonly used and most of us are familiar with it. The immediacy to create on paper has a substantial 'rawness': every mark of a brush or pencil distinguishes the 'hand' of the artist. It captures the artistic identity at a specific moment in time.

In this way Kevans' technique is essential to reveal the significance of her portraits.

Ever since Charles Saatchi, the famous art collector, bought in 2004 Kevans' entire BA degree show 'Boys', which consists of 30 sepia toned child portraits of historical tyrants like Adolf Hiltler, Pol Pot and Franco, her work has been noticed everywhere. Just this past summer, in 2013 and nine years after her graduation, the complete series 'Boys' was included in the group show 'Paper' at Saatchi Gallery in London; a show conducted to emphasise the importance of paper as an artistic medium.

Nowadays the Boys series are enclosed in the group show 'Politricks' in the Beursschouwburg in Brussels.

Still in Belgium, several portraits of her series Collaborators are inserted in the 'War & Trauma' show at the Museum Dr. Guislain in Ghent. One of them is a portrait of a young Gabriele 'Coco' Chanel: world famous for her distinctive fashion design, but hardly known as a Nazi collaborator during World War II.

Kevans also had shows in Europe and abroad: New York, Vienna, Germany, and Italy to name a few.

Her work can be found in major collections including the Pallant House Gallery, the David Roberts Collection, 21c Museum, the Saatchi Collection and the collections of Lord Rothermere, Stephen Fry, Marc Quinn, Adam Sender, Beth Rudin de Woody and John McEnroe. In 2006 she was the finalist of the Jerwood Drawing Prize and in 2007 of the Women of the Future awards.

Annie Kevans has the ability to question and unravel unsettling themes by her melancholic, dreamlike portraits. Her work is a result of research and (rarely) existing images, but primarily of bold imagination.

'All about Eve' shows portraits of 'important' mistresses of kings and leaders from the past, which reveal the connection of today's notable descendants such as Diana Spencer, Sarah Ferguson and Camilla Parker Bowles.

For this occasion gallery FIFTY ONE TOO is honoured with the attendance of the artist herself at the opening.