

Althuis Hofland Fine Arts

Jan Knap

Jan Knap. Or the Pictorial Elegy of Daily Life

**Opening and New Year's reception 12 January 2019
exhibition until 23 February 2019**

“Ida Magli wrote that your art is not sacred: however, it is no doubt a disarming transcendental art with a touching innocence. Is there a sacred message in your paintings?”

Jan Knap: If it was nothing, they would be useless; if they were sheer decoration I could throw them away. The vacuity and the image of this sense of vacuum, of nothing, start with a naughty painting; if one represents his ideas, he depicts a reason, a house, a tree and a horse, the painting must convey them in another way. Painting is no representation.”

Within the exhibition “Jan Knap. Or the Pictorial Elegy of Daily Life” the gallery re-stages attention to the consistent practice of Christian iconographic and detailed genre paintings by Czech artist Jan Knap (1949, Chrudim, Czech Republic). An oeuvre which the artists build up against the backdrop of shifting ideologies within the artistic discourse since the mid eighties, and can be considered radical within realm of the latter.

Since the mid nineties Knap has been living a sequestered life in the Czech Republic, deliberately far away from the busy art world, to maintain his focus on technique and genre. This deliberate hide away slowed down his presence in both galleries and museums in the last couple of years. It is especially this consistency of creating worlds of hope within the sphere of political and social pessimism that gives his work renewed relevance in these days, apart from the contemporary usage of historical subject matter and techniques.

Knap is also a member of Group Normal, which is a German Czech group of artists formed in 1979. The group consists of the artists Peter Angermann, Jan Knap and Milan Kunc, who met in the early 1970s at Kunstakademie Düsseldorf in the classes of Joseph Beuys and Gerhard Richter. They championed the rejection of individualism and, in line with this, created a large number of joint works – paintings that in some cases were done in public. The declared ambition of the three artists was to overcome the predominating and elitist “academic avantgardism” by an art as demystified and accessible as possible.

Knap's artistic biography starts in the 80's with major solo exhibitions at the Holly Solomon Gallery in New York (1988), Galerie Mot & Van den Boogaard Brussels (1994), Centraal Museum Utrecht (1996), Sperone Westwater Gallery New York (1999) a.o. Group exhibitions include “XI Biennale de Paris” at Musée d'art Moderne, Paris (1980), “Normal” at Neue Galerie - Sammlung Ludwig, Aachen (1981), “Nice biennale”, Nice (1981) amongst many others. Works of Jan Knap are in the collection of many major museums world wide and at the private collections of artist David Hockney, pop star Madonna and many others.