

Althuis Hofland Fine Arts

Bart Kok

You are a painter, do your job, and let those who can, talk.

Opening 9 March, 2019

exhibition until 6 April, 2019

Bart Kok's paintings are grounded on the belief that the main concept of painting should always be the act of painting itself. Borrowing from different styles and techniques, such as pointillism, expressionism and art brut, he applies numerous layers of colorful paint onto the canvas. Poetic brushstrokes and drawn lines alternate with filthy globs and smudges. But even though his work is full of different layers and variations, the end result always seems to be perfectly balanced out.

His recent work focuses on general existing romantic ideas about "the artist". It forms an exploration into artist clichés such as the tragic, the heroic, the lonely soul, the drunk and the philosopher. Even though these romantic notions are mostly highly exaggerated, they play a big role in the way that the artist is presented to, and is perceived by, the main public. In a way, the autobiography of "the" artist, has become so much intertwined with the work that we cannot see the work without seeing the artist within it. In a humorist way Kok plays with the notion of the dead artist being a transcendental entity who is suspended between life and death. These apparitions of skeletons and skulls serve as a way to put artistic endeavors into perspective and jab at the tradition of Memento mori and Vanitas painting. Within the tradition of painting, the painter, when deceased, becomes part of tradition and serves as a form of reference to other painters. They become immortal via their paintings and the works of the artists they influence. Within the tradition of painting there is always a conversation going on between the dead and the living.

Bart Kok (1985, Lochem, The Netherlands) graduated MA from St. Lucas Antwerp in 2015 and completed the Manama program at St. Lucas in 2017. He won the Royal award for Painting in 2016.