

TAPPING IN THE DARK

curated by Stijn Maes

Mario De Brabandere

Edith Dekyndt

Sophie Giroux

opening 19 September, 7 pm
22 September - 21 November 2015

“Being bored as a child is key, because it helps you develop your own world. In fact, I would say that boredom is essential when you want to create something.” (Edith Dekyndt, 2013)

Earlier this year, coinciding with the start of the 56th Venice Biennial, the University of the Arts Helsinki organized a Research Pavilion: the first pavilion in the history of the biennale solely dedicated to artistic research. Through the theme of Experimentality, the pavilion explored the dynamic between artistic research and contemporary art.

One could see this initiative as the tentative highlight of the experimental turn the visual arts are facing the past ten years – but is experimenting really such a new phenomenon? Another issue is the intentional character of the act of researching. When doing artistic research, one might oversee the unforeseeable dynamics that occurs when nothing is planned. The primacy of logic and reason fails when it comes to incommensurabilities, inconsistencies, incompleteness, and contradictions. And for some artists, these offside effects are nothing but crucial to their work.

In this light, the intergenerational group exhibition “Tapping in the Dark” brings together three artists whose work reveals the pleasure of being and experimenting in one’s studio, the presence (and passing) of time, and the power of intuition and emotion.

Edith Dekyndt’s search for unions, contradictions and collisions between the ‘visible’ and the ‘invisible’ is revealed by her work with ephemeral gestures, unstable materials and the aesthetics of the mundane. As part of the exhibition “Tapping in the Dark”, the artist shows two concise works on paper. *Untitled* (2013) is the result of the artist drawing several layers of lines with a red pen; the first layer influencing the way the paper folds, which in its turn influences all subsequent layers. *A Blue Vase* (2014) was made with the help of an external object: first, the artist painted a sheet of aluminum paper with one layer of black paint, and after having it dried for a few days, she used it for wrapping an object – the later determining the drawing.

Mario De Brabandere considers himself a classical artist. Be it a still life, or an abstract work: for him, each good piece of art relies on three basics: form, composition and colour. He respects all three aspects: colour shouldn’t dominate, and form and composition should get the same and equal attention. In view of this statement, the diversity, variety and freedom that characterize his artistic practice, including paintings,

works on paper, objects, and many things in between, is astonishing. Last year, the artist made a series of autonomous, two-dimensional compositions, using some wooden blocks as study objects. A fine selection of these works is included in the exhibition.

Born in Paris, and living in New York, **Sophie Giraux** works on matter, whether it be photographic, video, light or organic, shaping their contrast or opposition. The fine subtlety of her pieces reaches a brutal and fierce dimension when the evanescent matter becomes presence, the effects become flesh and light strikes us. Sensitivity comes out of this rift which appears every time space or bodies consume each other halfway between frailty and strength, like a deep and hidden wound reaching the brutality of sensitivity. It's not what she gives us to see rather than what is to become: unravelled sensitivity. One of Giraux's works, *Sans Titre* (2015), consists of real oranges, stripped of their zest as to enhance their delicate character, and put together in groups. Over time, they slowly change in color and weight - until they are lifeless. A sublime example of how works can pop up incidentally, steadily populating the artist's studio.

Artists in the exhibition: **Mario De Brabandere**, Belgium, 1963 / Lives and works in Ghent, Belgium. **Edith Dekyndt**, Belgium, 1960 / Lives and works in Tournai, Belgium. **Sophie Giraux**, France, 1984 / Lives and works in New York, US. Curated by: **Stijn Maes**.

