



press kit

Be-Part Waregem

Braeckman | Fieret |
Kooiker | Štrba

INTRO

OPENING:
SUN 07.03

07.03 –
30.05.2021

Braeckman | Fieret | Kooiker | Štrba

7 March – 30 May

Be-Part, Platform for Contemporary Art, Westerlaan 17, 8790 Waregem, Belgium

The exhibition *Braeckman | Fieret | Kooiker | Štrba* aims to initiate a meaningful conversation among four oeuvres. Each of the four artists enters into a dialogue with his or her model. Often from a different angle, with different motivations and a different intention.

Annelies Štrba has spent several decades documenting her family's life in various series, including *Shades of Time*. It is clear that she enjoys a very personal connection with her subject.

Also in the case of **Gerard Fieret**, it is noticeable that he seems to have a personal rapport with his model(s). He uses the camera to create an intimate relationship.

With **Dirk Braeckman** the tenderness with which he approaches his models is striking. Often you only see a shoulder, a leg or a back. Rarely does the model look straight into the lens. The human figure is mostly absent, but very often you find traces of a human presence in the work.

Upon the request of **Paul Kooiker** the model takes on various poses, after which the artist circles the model with his camera as if making body studies for a painting or sculpture. He examines and objectifies, and the result looks rather sculptural.

Open:

TUE – FRI: 1 PM to 5 PM, SUN: 1 PM to 5 PM

The exhibition *Braeckman | Fieret | Kooiker | Štrba* in Be-Part Waregem is a partner project of the Track & Trace photo festival, which runs from March 13 to April 25 in Kortrijk.

DIRK
BRAECKMAN

OPENING:
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Belgian photographer **Dirk Braeckman** (°1958, Eeklo, lives and works in Ghent) decided to study photography in the late 1970s as a preparation for painting. Ten years later he showed his first typical analogue prints in black and white, with suggestive and somewhat enigmatic images. His photographs balance on the border between exposure and concealment, between presence and absence, between representation and abstraction. The photographs are not so much narrative as they are infused with suggestion.

Braeckman finds the subjects for his photographic work in his immediate surroundings. They are preferably interiors, anonymous hotel rooms and places where time seems to stand still. The undertone in his work is distinctly autobiographical. A single human figure is only fragmentarily present. Emotions, place and time cannot be identified. Dirk Braeckman's visual language focuses on looking and reflects upon the state of the image. Braeckman explores the limits of the medium and challenges photographic conventions. He extends the photographic medium to the point where it is more related to the practice of a sculptor. The reflective flash light that is often prominently present in his work accentuates the tactile qualities of the texture of walls, curtains and carpets. Braeckman's images combine intimacy and distance to create a private, secluded world whose meaning is difficult to define.

Working in the darkroom and the quality of his unique prints are essential. Braeckman starts from negatives out of his archive. They are often images of fleeting moments that he once captured in everyday life or on one of his trips. Freedom and spontaneity are essential notions in his creative process. Dirk Braeckman does not stage, but selects and frames through the eye of the lens. The matte silver gelatin prints on baryta paper are dark, yet full of nuance and subtlety. They seduce the viewer with an evocative vagueness. The photographs raise more questions than they provide answers. Braeckman does not provide his works with informative titles, but with a code and a year. The year refers to the moment when the image was created in the darkroom, not to the moment that the photograph was taken.

*Braeckman's work has previously been shown in solo exhibitions at KINDL in Berlin, The Modern Art Museum in Fort Worth, Texas, Museum M in Leuven, BOZAR in Brussels, Le Bal in Paris, S.M.A.K. in Ghent, De Pont in Tilburg, Fotohof in Salzburg, Kunsthalle Erfurt and de Appel Arts Centre in Amsterdam. In 2017 Dirk Braeckman represented Belgium at the 57th Venice Biennale. His work has been included in exhibitions at the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Lille, Kunst Haus Wien in Vienna, FRAC Auvergne in Clermont-Ferrand, Hamburger Bahnhof in Berlin, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam, Haus der Kunst in Munich, WIELS in Brussels, National Art Museum of China in Beijing, Kunsthalle Wien in Vienna, Fotomuseum Winterthur, M HKA in Antwerp, MARTa Herford in Herford, Kunstpalast in Düsseldorf, among others. Dirk Braeckman is represented in Belgium by Zeno X Gallery in Borgerhout, Galerie Thomas Fisher in Berlin and recently Grimm Gallery in New York. From March 10 to April 24, 2021, an exhibition of new work by Dirk Braeckman will run at Zeno X Gallery under the title *Fernweh*.*

GERARD
FIERET

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The photographic work of Dutch artist **Gerard Fieret** (1924 – 2009, The Hague) is situated in the period 1965 – 1975. From 1965 onwards, Fieret built a formidable body of work, which was important for the appreciation of photography as an autonomous visual form of art. His ambitions to push the limits and to emancipate the medium were not foreign to this. In ten years, Fieret made tens of thousands of photographs of what he himself called *'le monde entier'*. He wanted to depict the whole world, and by this he meant primarily 'his (small) world': men, women in his studio, but also, for example, a stack of cardboard boxes in the basement. He did this in a non-hierarchical way and did not take failed photographs into account; they simply did not exist for him.

Fieret managed to combine his great artistic awareness with an ostentatious sloppiness. This manifested itself, among other things, in a very rudimentary darkroom in The Hague, where he explored the technical and visual limits of the medium. Fieret saw himself more as a 'photographer', a graphic artist who turned the technique completely to his own liking. He was also known for his experiments in the darkroom such as solarisations, reticulations, double exposures, short and long exposures, collages, compositions, two half negatives printed on the same paper...¹ Fieret never made one print that was identical to another, so one can say that each photograph was unique. He often photographed in series and also liked to exhibit those series.

What makes Fieret's work absolutely unique is the 'post-processing'. He signed his work with a felt pen and provided his photographs with copyright stamps on the image side of the photo. These additions were an extra graphic component, but also an expression of a man with a fear, bordering on the edge of paranoia, of (intellectual) theft of his work. The omnipresent stamps and signatures also confirmed his own identity.

Gerard Fieret was a child of his time, known for his preference for an authentic, unconventional and raw life. His work often has an erotic tone, it is edgy and the rawness also lurks in the condition of the photographs, which were preserved by the artist himself in anything but the best conditions. Although the compositions often give a careless impression, it is striking that he did stage his photographs. His own presence and the interaction with his models play an important role. He used the camera to create an intimate relationship between the photographer and the model. Fieret was a visual artist, painter, writer, poet, and 'photographer' who used his SLR camera as a new, experimental tool for about ten years. In the 1980s he stopped taking photographs; he then wrote poems and drew on beer mats.

Most of Fieret's photographs found a home in the Kunstmuseum The Hague and in the collection of Leiden University. His work can also be found in the collections of the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven, Huis Marseille, Museum of Photography in Amsterdam and the Bibliothèque nationale de France. All works by Gerard Fieret in this exhibition belong to the collection of the Kunstmuseum in The Hague.

¹
Wim van Sinderen,
*Gerardus Petrus
Fieret*, Hannibal,
2016.

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Credits images:

(left) Untitled, Two young women sitting on a bed in the atelier, Gerard Petrus Fieret, 1984, silver gelatine print, Kunstmuseum The Hague

(right) Out of focus, grainy portrait of a young woman, Gerard Petrus Fieret, 1965 - 1975, silver gelatine print photo paper, Kunstmuseum The Hague

(below) Untitled, Portrait of Haje Smith (artist) with signatures, Gerard Petrus Fieret, 1965 - 1975, silver gelatine print, written on paper with white felt-tip pen, Kunstmuseum The Hague



PAUL
KOOIKER

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Dutch photographer **Paul Kooiker** (°1964, Rotterdam, lives and works in Amsterdam) is one of the most interesting conceptual photographers in the Netherlands. Although he makes exclusive use of the photographic image, he can be called a visual artist rather than a photographer. The artist is fascinated by the classic genres such as landscape, still life and man. In addition to exhibitions in the Netherlands and abroad, he devotes a great deal of attention to publishing his photographic work.

Kooiker is not concerned with taking the perfect photograph. His images are sometimes over-exposed, blurred, out of focus or faded in color. The real value of his work lies in the intensive selection and editing process. Based on this, he puts together series of (often enigmatic) photographs in the form of spatial installations and photo books, in which one image acquires meaning in relation to the next. A frequently recurring theme in Kooiker's work is the female nude. The viewer often feels destabilized and a voyeur. It can be said that Kooiker's oeuvre questions both the position of the artist and that of the viewer. Kooiker's work deals with the essence of looking: the viewer sees what he thinks he sees.

For the exhibition at Be-Part, Paul Kooiker is showing a series of photographs that were commissioned by the Centraal Museum in Utrecht to accompany the exhibition *The Tears of Eros* (15.2 – 16.8.2020). Kooiker was asked to provide a contemporary commentary on historical surrealism. In response, he created a series of eighteen portraits of donkeys, which were made in a studio. Donkeys are difficult to gauge, they are complex animals who are extremely intelligent and patient. They also appear in Luis Buñuel's iconic 1929 film *Un chien andalou*, which he made with Salvador Dalí and which is full of surreal images. By photographing the animals, as it were, in a glamorous situation and giving it the title *The Rumour*, Kooiker creates an atmosphere full of mystery and alienation.

But animals previously appeared in the artist's oeuvre. For the 2008 series *Black Meat*, he analyzed the movements of swans. In some prints the swans are still recognizable, while in others they are zoomed in so much that the overall image becomes quite abstract. In this series, the artist experiments with a rather intense color palette. For the 2014 exhibition *Nude Animal Cigar* at the Fotomuseum Den Haag, Kooiker looked back at his twenty-year career as a visual artist. The result was a dizzying survey of two hundred photographic works in which nude photographs and shots of animals were alternated with close-up shots of the countless cigars he smoked in his studio all those years.

Recent publications by Paul Kooiker include Eggs and Rarities (2018) and Nude Animal Cigar (2014), both published by Art Paper Editions in Ghent. Recent solo exhibitions by Kooiker have taken place at the Museum Villa Mondriaan in Winterswijk, Otto Zoo in Milan, FOMU in Antwerp and Hydra + Fotografia in Mexico City. Kooiker's work has also been shown in group exhibitions at Centraal Museum in Utrecht, Garage Rotterdam, Museum Kranenburgh in Bergen, Galerie Zink in Brussels, ArtexArte in Buenos Aires... Paul Kooiker is represented by tegenboschvanvreden in Amsterdam and Galerie Zink Waldkirchen.

Braeckman | Fieret |
Kooiker | Štrba

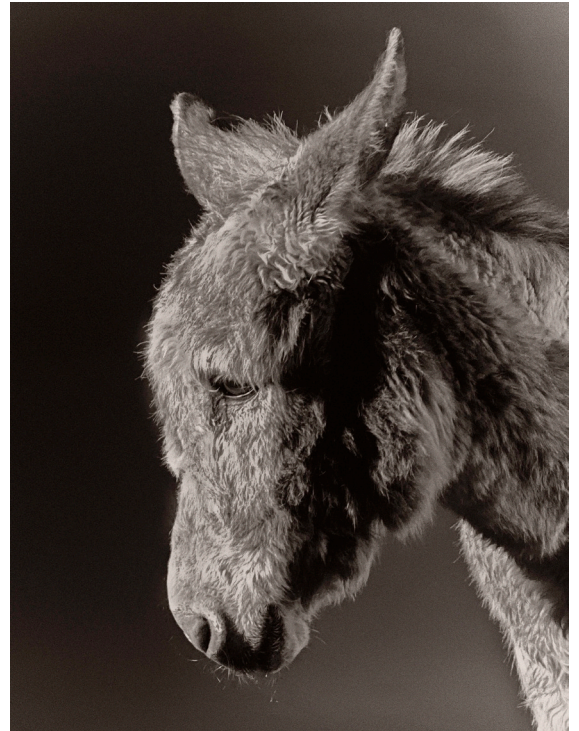
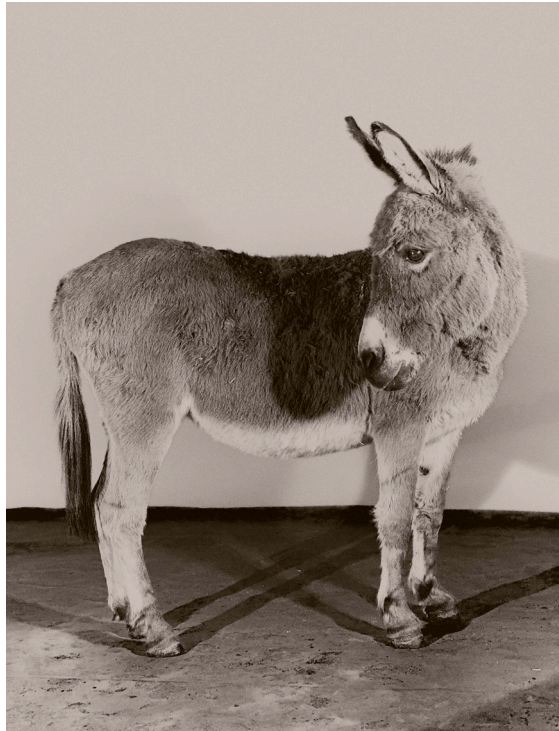
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Be-Part Waregem

PAUL
KOOIKER

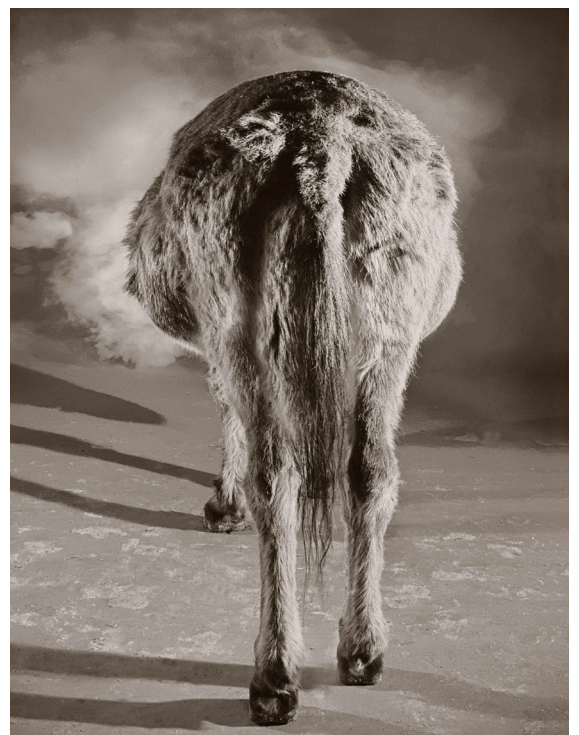
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Credits images:

*The Rumour,
Paul Kooiker,
2020*



ANNELIES
ŠTRBA

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Swiss multimedia artist **Annelies Štrba** (°1947, Zug, CH) works with photography, video and digital media. She lives alternately in Richterswil (CH), Ascona (IT) and Arcegno (CH). Her first exhibition, *Aschewiese*, took place in 1990 at the Kunsthalle Zürich and was very well received internationally.

Between 1974 and 1997 Štrba worked on a time document that was collected in the project *Shades of Time*, to this day still one of her most well-known works. The presentation at Be-Part contains 240 photographs from this project, which are shown on three screens by means of a digital projection. *Shades of Time* is a very personal work, which can be considered the second presentation of her archive since the exhibition *Aschewiese*. The photographs cover four generations of Štrba's family: from the time before she was born until 1997. They are photographs of Annelies' mother and aunts, of Annelies as a child with her sisters, of her children and her grandson. They are spontaneous shots that bear witness to a longing for closeness. The photographs freeze time, as it were, and at the same time her work connects the past with the present. The passage of time and history is expressed metaphorically through the continuity of her family across generations. Štrba's world is concentrated in the parental home in Melide. The characters are her husband Bernhard, her son Samuel, her grandson Samuel-Maria, her daughters Linda and Sonja, the cats Sushi and Ashi, various guests and boyfriends. The family evolves and grows unaware of Štrba's omnipresent camera. Sick children, messy bedrooms, meals and birthday parties around the kitchen table, first boyfriends, a pregnancy, a wedding, a new life: the familiar rites of life take on an intense meaning. The photographs are disarming and outspoken, but never voyeuristic. They are intimate recordings, expressions of security and happiness, and make the viewer reflect on the passage of time and the cycle of life.

Occasionally the outside world intrudes. Štrba is also drawn to literature, art, and places that mean something to the people she loves. The land of the Brontës, the famous rectory in Haworth (another setting of intense, familial creativity) and the windswept moors of *Wuthering Heights* are recurring images. Gender roles and independent women who lived around the turn of the century and determined their own careers and sexuality, such as the psychoanalyst and writer Lou Andreas-Salomé and writer Fanny zu Reventlow, attract Štrba's attention. She is also fascinated by places that cannot escape their history, places of catastrophe and suffering. The chaos of Kobe just after the 1995 earthquake, Auschwitz and Birkenau, or the Chernobyl nuclear disaster in 1986, which she photographed directly from the television screen. These landscapes, interwoven with family photographs, place the individual against the backdrop of a broader human history.

Family photographs are of great importance in the photography of the 1990s, and Štrba's *Aschewiese* is the beginning of a whole series of publications. In her more recent works, Annelies Štrba manipulates her images digitally with the help of computer programs.



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Be-Part, Platform for Contemporary Art

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