
CUT-OUT

19.11.2004 –18.12.2004

Irene Van de Mheen

For its second exhibition, Espai Ubú presents a site-specific intervention by the Barcelona-based Dutch artist, **Irene van de Mheen**.

Rarely does the title of an exhibition refer directly to its content, as if the meaning of the words was not enough to convey the resonance of the images. And yet, **van de Mheen**'s exhibition at Espai Ubú comes precisely from a certain literality -alliteration, even- between a word and its meaning.

Like a child playing with 'cut-outs', **van de Mheen** uses strips of vinyl to draw a space built of coloured lines and surfaces running along the windows and floor of the gallery to create a large three-dimensional drawing, or utopian architecture.

But *Cut-Out* also means 'to exclude', 'to leave out', and what van de Mheen leaves out on this occasion is precisely the space of the gallery. By using only the windows and floor, the interior space becomes a pure volume whose only support is the work itself. In the words of the artist: *'At first the viewer encounters an empty space. The gaze literally cuts across the drawing, which is floating like a hallucination, a "castle in the air" that reflects itself and continues on the floor.'*

For **van de Mheen** drawing is a way of 'recognising' or 'thinking' a space, i.e. a multiplicity of flat surfaces that create the illusion of an architectonic space. In this she recalls the Neo-Plasticism of Mondrian and the De Stijl architects who, abandoning all forms of representation, arrived at an art whose maximum expression was the abstraction of form and colour. In a more distant but no less influential manner, she also comes close to the iconoclastic culture of the protestant world, in particular the seventeenth century Dutch painter Pieter Saenredam, known for his drawings and paintings of the interiors of Gothic churches, bereft of images, in which he emphasises the sensation of pure space through his profound knowledge of geometry and perspective. Faithful to her roots, van de Mheen entitled an earlier exhibition Dutch Interior.

But **van de Mheen** is also a product of the postmodern era, and that lends her work a playful, carefree irony far removed from the formal austerity of Neo-Plasticism and the protestant culture. Far from being a spiritual alegory or a rationalist construction, her architectural interventions can more readily be described as a visual game, a 'cut-out', while still offering an exercise in sensorial and contemplative perception.

Resident in Barcelona since 1992, **van de Mheen** has had numerous solo exhibitions, among them: Drawings, Galería ProjecteSD, Barcelona 2004; Dutch Interior, Fundació Pilar i Joan Miró, Palma de Mallorca 2003; Mera Aparença, La Capella, Barcelona 1997. Selected group shows include: Extrañamientos, Sala Alcalá 31, Madrid 2003;



Espai**Ubú**.

Generación 2003, Caja Madrid. **Irene van de Mheen** is represented by Galería Magda Bellotti, Madrid, where she will have a solo show in autumn 2005.

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