**valerie\_traan gallery**

**BABS DECRUYENAERE**

**Equilibrium**

opening weekend
Saturday 26.12.2020 | 14-18h
Sunday 27.12.2020 | 12-18 in the presence of the artist

Rain or shine, Babs goes on long walks - at times to inhospitable places – where she picks up tiny objects. She observes, selects and hand-picks all sorts of rejects which she consummately makes her own. To pick up a trinket is to accept and appropriate it, take it to your heart and intensely cherish it, for it fills a particular inner need. Going walking - this modern-day hunter-gatherer’s quest - is always a momentous occasion.

Their morphology, structure and texture make stones into the archive and library of the origin of earthly life. Each time Babs places a stone in the palm of her hand and clasps it between index and little flinger, she makes up a warm bed for it and embarks on her own story. The hand is the unit of measure: when it fits in one hand, you can keep it. At times, it’s as if the artist’s soul has nestled in the palm of her hand. Bab’s creations harbor her physical and psychological essence: fragile, vulnerable yet also firm and strong.

After graduating in graphic design and photography, she resolutely opts for the back-to-basics approach of analog black-and-white photography without a camera. This entails, amongst others, camera obscura works/installations, photograms, images of all that blooms and flourishes, and lots of arduous dark-room work. She photographs aspects of nature: a landscape, its many minuscule details, and associates them with the flow of her own, meandering inner life.

Her oeuvre may take on many forms, but the central principle remains the same, in that it moves from the simple and minute, over enduring effect and transformation to our complex, large-scale world.

Take the monumental mobiles representing the cosmos an its up-currents, for example. From micro to macro, from cell to organism, from dot, line, circle to spiral. Yet always keenly aware of man’s insignificance.

Babs’ compositions never stray from her own self. Images and stones are not vehicles for romantic metaphors or artistic demonstrations. She indeed only assembles what feels right. Her quest is an intuitive one, even though the route may have been mapped out ages ago. This work is essentially the activity of the child Babs, who spent years in a seaside sanatorium, pockets bulging with what today forms the basis of her oeuvre. ‘Surely I could do this myself ‘, some beholders will say, since it all looks very familiar. What matters, however, is the potential for empathy; which, incidentally, is the way an artist forges a link with his/her public. This kind of beachcombing brims with youthful, tireless attempts at solving the morphological mysteries of the cosmos and universe. These are strong, pared down specimens by someone who lives and breathes nature, and has embarked on a quest that will never end. Going to see this work is like witnessing the elation of first stumbling upon something in nature. Watching rapture being rekindled is highly infectious.

text by Wim Van Mulders