valerie\_traan gallery

NIKOLAAS DEMOEN

**Who is playing the magic flute?**

29.10.2020 – 05.12.2020

The Magic Flute is an instrument with which Tamino, in Mozart's eponymous opera, succeeds in whistling his way through various trials.

The flute is the instrument of the shepherd who leads his sheep over mountain ridges.

The Bansuri is the flute with which the audience is brought into a rush during Indian ragas.

Frans Brüggen plays Baroque block flute sonatas, only on stage.

Eric Dolphy's jazz flute solos seem to come from a different world.

Who is playing the magic flute today and leading us through the many challenges that await us? In a time without god nor leadership, we are seeking the flute player, not seeming to find him or her, even though from time to time, we hear echoes of the game.

In the exhibition 'Who is playing the Magic Flute?' the characters in the drawings and paintings of Nikolaas Demoen are on a walk, disappear around the corner, leave a room, enter another room as if they were looking for something or someone.

After 'L'homme qui marche' and 'Discuter la Peinture' - which were shown in S.M.A.K. Ghent (2015) and in MuZEE Ostend (2017) respectively - the artist once again seeks to transform the hesitation of choosing a direction into images.

Striking in the new series of paintings are the large fields of colour and the sometimes monochrome approach to the image plane. By treating the canvas as parallel to reality, the paintings retain an autonomous eloquence. At the basis of the paintings are a series of drawings in which the idea of the search is already contained.

In contrast to other exhibitions where sculpture or painting were used as a character in a film or performance, in this series the action originates from the painting itself.

In addition to the monumental and complete series 'Who is playing the Magic Flute?', Valerie Traan also exhibits a number of related works from his recent multi-disciplinary oeuvre.

In his drawings, sculptures, collages, poems and film installations, Nikolaas Demoen explores the boundary between human, often artistic actions and their visible or invisible end result. In one of his videos we see the artist walking through his studio with large steps. He is not going anywhere, but there is the unspoken promise that something will happen. Demoen plays the role of the artist and the artistic process, a quest in which he sometimes disappears behind stilled, poetic objects.

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Thu - Fri - Sat: 2–6 pm

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