

$E=Mc^2$ © [Filip Van de Velde]



Tableau vivant in polyester, carbon and living human skin

“Completely against the general opinion of the phenomenon artist (smokes, drinks, boozes, paunch, flacid valves, the condition of a broiler hen) Filip Van de Velde pounds at the pedals of his bike on rollers. The fact is that we here deal with a tableau vivant in polyester, carbon and living human skin under the title $E=mc^2$: energy is meditation, concentration, creation.”

In this way Bert Wagendorp described in the sport pages of the Dutch newspaper ‘Volkskrant’ the artistic performance of Filip Van de Velde in the Municipal Museum for Actual Art in Ghent on the occasion of the start of the ‘Omloop het Volk’ (= a famous bicycle race in Flanders) on the museum square.



For Filip Van de Velde it is about time. He is moving, driving the rollers in an unstoppable tempo, while at the same time his movement is frozen. He does not advance one centimetre. According to the artist the movement is imprisoned in time. He builds further on Einstein's way of looking at the world: time and movement in space are relative.

The spectator can not touch the performer, otherwise he would be snatched from his world, his dimension. When performing in an art gallery, the racer was biking inside a showcase of glass. A transparent envelope encircled the image as a kind of aura. And precisely this protection carries a risk: if the performer loses his concentration for a moment, he will fall from his saddle and fly straight through the glass, 'un accident de parcours' (= an accident on the track). The performance is not without risk.



This performance is not a performance with a beginning or an end, it does not last. It is a tableau vivant, a living painting. A painting is also without beginning nor end. The performance is all about image: the image of the cyclist standing still yet moving at the same time. In this image the dynamics are made visible. The generation of energy, dynamics in a stationary image is a quiet ambition of visual artists. Dynamics and tension are notions, which are often used in the criticism of art. The cyclist must find the correct line on a quick roll of 36 cm wide. It can be stated objectively, that the flamboyant paintings of Rubens stand still. You can compare this to finding correct proportion in all works of art.

A concentrated cyclist will carry away his public. Encouraging words are shouted. Nowhere in Flanders people talk so much and so spontaneously with each other as when "cyclists" are passing. The performance attempts to evoke the same emotion. Bringing people closer together, inviting them to spontaneously start talking about what they have seen and experienced together. Filip Van de Velde seems to be standing still, but there is a stylized movement, dynamic and energised. His movement is rather meditative, vertical.

text by Geert Vermeire



The performance $E=mc^2$ was performed at the following locations:

28.th december 2003: Première White Out Studio, Van Bunnanlaan 58A 8300 Knokke Belgium. 29th may 2004: De Groene Valleij, Ghent, Belgium. 8th october 2004: Day of the library 2004: City Museum for contemporary art Ghent Belgium. 26th february 2005: city museum for contemporary art Ghent (SMAK) Belgium. 8th July 2005: 7th Etappe der Tour de France 2005 (Lunéville – Karlsruhe), KM 74 – Col du Hantz, ein Berg der 3. Kategorie, 3,5 KM lang mit einer Steigung von bis zu 5%. Frankreich. 17th november 2005: exhibition Robert Van Dromme: paintings, Nocturne library Lier Belgium. Salon for new art, St-Pieters Abey, Ghent Belgium 2006.

