

Press Release

The Hague, 17 February 2017



Auke de Vries – Tussenlanding

18 March to 25 June 2017 inclusive

Only a relatively small number of Dutch artists are well known far beyond this country's borders, and Auke de Vries is one of them. His works for public spaces are numerous, and are to be seen not only in the Netherlands, but also in Germany, Great Britain and Spain. In his sculpture his aim is to control and 'handle' space, and his works create a link between the street, the architecture and the infrastructure. In the spring of 2017 Beelden aan Zee celebrates the artist with a major overview of his recent work. The heart of the exhibition consists of suspended figures, which are vividly coloured compositions of such vitality and dynamism that they give the impression of flying or even 'whizzing' into their environment. In the museum's Grote Zaal and the adjacent outside areas the artist creates a new world in which the works and the architecture of the building relate to each other in a balanced, almost theatrical exhibition.

The sculptures that De Vries creates are often abstract, but also make reference to reality. There are recognizable architectural shapes that bring to mind bird houses, tree houses, a place at which to stay for a little while. The stay is temporary, but so is the place itself, as it appears to be able to ascend, take off or sail away. Intuition and imaginary leaps are important elements in the creative process. The sculptures in public spaces are characterized by long, fanciful stakes that reach out into the air. The centre of gravity of these sculptures often lies at their top, creating a form of tension in the space.

Although De Vries is represented at prominent points in many towns and cities in the Netherlands, he is perhaps better known further afield. One of his most important works is the sculpture *Gelandet [landed]* (2001), which is sited the roof of the Daimler-Benz headquarters in Berlin. In the event that a work has been commissioned, its final destination is seldom the one that the client had in mind. De Vries explores the site himself, looking for the place where he believes the sculpture is needed. In doing so he also often makes plans for the actual surroundings in which the work will be placed, an approach that strives for synthesis of sculpture, architecture and urban planning.

De Vries is self-taught. However, he has taught others. For a long time he was a teacher at the Royal Academy in The Hague and the Rijksakademie in Amsterdam. He has had exhibitions in Museum Boijmans van Beuningen in Rotterdam, the Gemeentemuseum in The Hague, the Bode Museum in Berlin, the Institut Néerlandais in Paris and the Nirox Sculpture Park in Johannesburg. To this very day he continues his artistic practice unabated, and in the near future will be creating sculptures for public spaces in Apeldoorn and Manchester.

Accompanying the exhibition will be the richly illustrated catalogue *Auke de Vries – Tussenlanding [stopover]*, with textual contributions from Jan Teeuwisse, Emma van Proosdij, Frits Scholten and Antoon Melissen (Zwolle: Uitgeverij Waanders & De Kunst, 2017). During the exhibition a documentary will be screened that shows the making of the exhibition, offering at the same time a deeper insight into the way that De Vries works. The documentary is a production by Dialoog Producties, made by Ard van Rijn.

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