

lily van der stokker  
*exhibition of the medicines*

kaufmann repetto is pleased to present *Exhibition of the Medicines*, a solo exhibition by Lily van der Stokker. Following four solo exhibitions with the gallery in Milan, this exhibition is the artist's first with kaufmann repetto's New York location and is the inaugural exhibition since the gallery's relocation to 55 Walker Street in Tribeca.

Lily van der Stokker has been making immersive artworks in the form of wallpainting-based installations since the 1980s, at which time she also operated an art gallery in New York's East Village sharing a street with such influential programs as Colin de Land's Vox Populi and Pat Hearn's eponymous gallery. In their immediate delivery, van der Stokker's works beckon happy-go-lucky intonations in their fanciful, 'feminine', curlicued and flower-powered familiarity. Their formal bubbled, blobby, and loopy approachable techniques may recall the doodlings more traditionally relegated to the notebook margins of a teenage girl, while the textual inclusions create dichotomies that illuminate more cutting messages and comment upon more condemning realities. van der Stokker presents us with works that require the viewer to consider the implications of 'Kissy, Kissy' but also of 'no improvement / no progress'. As Roberta Smith noted in 1990, "The messages conveyed in this terminally cheerful manner usually have a double edge."

van der Stokker's wallpaintings are frequently accompanied by three-dimensional forms, be it an inclusion of functional furniture, alluding to themes of domesticity, or the introduction of more minimal box-like forms, the disruptions of which represent a destabilization of the repressive ideologies that such historical conventions potentiated. The particular themes which van der Stokker continuously seeks to pursue seem to overwhelm the viewer in their banality, often executing associations to the everyday that, as Leontine Coelewijn has noted, "are rarely if ever the subjects of artworks, because they are completely unremarkable and utterly dull". In the instance of van der Stokker's *Exhibition of the Medicines*, the works on view address the platitudinous nature of individual health-care and self-preservation as seen in our relationships with health practitioners, concerns of aging, and attempts at / preoccupations with the prevention of maladies.

As with the majority of van der Stokker's subject matters, art about sickness provokes another set of cultural taboos, exposing rather than concealing what is more conventionally considered as delicate, forbidden, or private in manners that resist our expectations of aesthetic experience. The artist embraces this 'embarrassing display of privacy' as a gesture of disarming honesty. In his essay 'Easy Fun' (2010), Martin Clark rounds up these concerns in van der Stokker's work that are unified in their burden of indiscretion - "family and friends, relationship issues, arguments, gossip, chitchat, home improvements, money problems, and moans" - which he explains are "all the supposed 'little things' in life,

but [are] those fundamental things that are common to us all". Perhaps it is in their shared commonality that such information is rendered useless. Moreover, this useless information, shrouded in its 'disarming honesty', is suspect to a simultaneous undoing of truths, at times straddling both the autobiographical and charade.

In the front gallery of 55 Walker, which also functions as the space's office, van der Stokker welcomes visitors with introductions of deadly diseases in her 'Lymphoma' wallpainting. Formally, the wallpainting is composed of shapes that contradict or separate themselves from relation to the texts, thereby supporting the statements in their strangeness. This sense of unease seems exaggerated by the operations of the gallery staff themselves, going about their daily business, as van der Stokker's work behind them broadcasts the troubling health-related realities of her aged 60-something friends. There is something foreboding in this misalignment.

'Age 65.75' and 'Washing Machine', both presented in the main gallery space of 55 Walker's ground floor, similarly reveal texts referring to illness and flaws. The wallpainting and sculptural work are both expansions upon artworks first exhibited in van der Stokker's mid-career retrospective on view at the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam earlier this year and traveling to the Migros Museum of Contemporary Art, Zurich, this November. van der Stokker relates the use of yellow in these physiotherapist-centric works as a glowing device that 'lifts to heaven'.

van der Stokker's works and preparatory drawings on view in *Exhibition of the Medicines* are neither judgemental or didactic in their delivery. Rather, through a conceptual distance, these works ultimately shed light on certain facts of life which are generally tip-toed around and acknowledged by associative complaint or the surrender to sadness and worry. These themes are indeed emotional, but van der Stokker liberates them from defect by making them into artworks.

Lily van der Stokker (b. Den Bosch, NL, 1954) lives and works between Amsterdam and New York. van der Stokker has exhibited extensively in both Europe and the United States with solo exhibitions including those at the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; SCAD Museum of Art, Savannah, GA; Hammer Museum, Los Angeles; Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam; Tate St.Ives, Cornwall, UK; Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, NL; Museum Ludwig, Cologne, DE; and Le Consortium, Dijon, FR; among others. Her work has also been included in group exhibitions at the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; Centre Pompidou, Paris; New Museum, New York; Aspen Art Museum, CO; and Villa Arson, Nice; among many others. van der Stokker has completed numerous monumental public art projects such as the Celestial Teapot, Hoog Catharijne, Utrecht, (2013) and Pink Building during the World Expo in Hannover (2000). She earned a degree in monumental design and painting from the Academy of Art and Design St. Joost, Breda. van der Stokker's mid-career retrospective initially exhibited at the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam from October 2018 through February 2019 will travel to the Migros Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Zurich, opening November 30, 2019 and on view through February 2020.