

# Woody van Amen New Realism

Van Baerlestraat 80, Amsterdam (NL)  
June 25 – July 17, 2021



Woody van Amen | *Esso*, 1963

The gallery is proud to present nine assemblages and paintings by renowned Dutch artist Woody van Amen (b. 1936, Eindhoven, NL).

The opening of the exhibition coincides with Amsterdam Art Week, Thursday June 17 until Sunday June 27, 2021.

Van Amen's long career has seen his oeuvre span a wide variety of practices ranging from painting to sculpture, kinetic art, zero and arte povera, to organizing happenings and performances. He was one of the very first artists to incorporate Perspex, neon and plastics into his work. What has remained a key component in all his works is the use of everyday elements, which he elevates to become symbols. Van Amen works with ready-mades - using material itself as a means, other than the depicted material used - and thereby making it more real and tangible.

Van Amen also employs a specific set of invented and self-referential symbols, constructed to carry both a philosophical and mathematical meaning, such as the patented symbol TAXAT. Or his signature self-symbol based on the Matterhorn mountain range. In the exhibition three groups of three works are shown. The earliest date from 1963 and are classic 'new realism' works closely associated to early Pop-Art.

*Phillips* (1963-1974), *Stuyvesant* (1963) and *Esso* (1963) all employ the company logo's the titles are based on. *Phillips* was adjusted to incorporate an ironing board in 1974 and early Robert Rauschenberg and Jasper Johns influences can be seen in these early works. These works were part of his early career retrospective in 1977 at Museum Boijmans van Beuningen in Rotterdam (NL), which included work from 1963-1977.

The next three works show how Van Amen developed beyond Pop-Art and consist of a group of paintings incorporating neon and led lights. The TAXAT symbols appears omnipresent in these works. The neon used to set apart the painted surface such as in *Constellation with Southern Cross* (1999-2000), where the TAXAT symbols is shown to align with the Southern Cross constellation. These works show a new romanticism and influences from Van Amen's many travels abroad. A key work from the exhibition is *Starry night at Koh Phangan* from 1997-1998, which depicts the earth's cycle and the island's shape outlined in neon at night.

Lastly the exhibition includes three recent modestly scaled paintings, featuring the double cross motif, the TAXAT palindrome and all other key elements from his storied and rich oeuvre.

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For more information, interview and royalty free image requests please contact our Amsterdam press office:  
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## About the artist

Woody van Amen (b. 1936, Eindhoven, NL) lives and works in Rotterdam (NL). Van Amen attended the Academy of Fine Arts in Rotterdam in 1956, after which he travelled to the United States and studied at Cooper Union in New York from 1961-1963. The period he spent in New York was a formative moment in his career and his life; he became acquainted with Robert Rauschenberg, Andy Warhol, and other artists at the forefront of defining Pop art in United States. He later returned to the Netherlands and implemented a newborn pop aesthetic in collages and paintings.

Following this, Van Amen travelled widely in Southeast Asia where he drew inspiration from the visual language and culture, introducing these elements in and spiritual reflection into his artwork. Since the 1970s Van Amen taught for many years at his Alma Mater, the Academy of Fine Arts in Rotterdam (NL). He received an artist's residency at Baltimore Art College in 1988 and in 1993 he was awarded the Hendrik Chabot Prize. His work has been exhibited widely throughout Europe since the 1970s onwards. In 2013, His work was the subject of a 2003 a retrospective exhibition at the Museum Het Valkhof, Nijmegen (NL). His work was exhibited at the 1969 Dutch Pavilion at the World Exhibition in Osaka (JP) and the 37<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale (IT) in 1976. In 2020, the International Film Festival Rotterdam premiered *Pop Secret* by Pascale Korteweg, about the artist's life, which includes 8mm films made when he came to New York in the 1960s.

Recent exhibition include, *Some Like it Hot*, EENWERK, Amsterdam (NL) in 2020; *More Power*, ZERP Gallery, Rotterdam (NL) in 2019; *Paradise Lost*, Museum Henriette Polak and Stedelijk Museum, Zutphen (NL) in 2019; *Fang Wu Ti*, Nest, The Hague (NL) in 2018; *Woody van Amen: Time Capsules* at Museum Beelden Aan Zee, Scheveningen (NL) in 2018; *SPIELEREI* at Schunck, Heerlen (NL) in 2016; *New Romantic Spirit (with Hidde Van Schie)*, TENT, Rotterdam, (NL) in 2015, and *Woody van Amen*, C-SPACE; Beijing (CN) in 2013.

He has exhibited at such renowned museums and institutions as; The Jewish Museum, New York, NY (US); Kunstmuseum, The Hague (NL); Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels (BE); Kunsthalle, Lund (CH), Kunsthalle, Bern (CH); Musée des Arts Décoratifs (MAD), Paris (FR); Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Antwerp (BE); National Museum of Contemporary Art, Seoul (KR); University of Arizona Museum of Art, Tuscon, AZ (US); Stedelijk Museum, Schiedam (NL), The National Museum of Singapore (SG); Mu.ZEE, Museum of Modern Art, Ostend (BE); Centro Cultural de Belém, Lisbon (PT); Museum of Contemporary Art, Caracas (VE); Kunsthall Rotterdam (NL);

Musée d'Art Moderne, Villeneuve-d'Ascq (FR); Noordbrabants Museum, 's-Hertogenbosch (NL); Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam (NL); Museum Het Valkhof, Nijmegen (NL); Museum van Bommel Van Dam, Venlo (NL); Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven (NL); Museum Arnhem (NL); Chabot Museum, Rotterdam (NL).

His work can be found in numerous public collections such as, Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), New York, NY (US); Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (NL); Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam (NL); Centraal Museum, Utrecht (NL); Museum S.M.A.K., Ghent (BE); National Museum of Singapore (SG); NEKA Art Museum, Ubud, Bali (ID); Melaka Museum, Malaysia (MY); Museum Bommel van Dam, Venlo (NL); and Museum Het Valkhof, Nijmegen (NL); among others.



Woody van Amen | *Constellation with Southern Cross, 1999-2000* | detail

## About the gallery

GRIMM was founded in Amsterdam in 2005. Since its establishment, the gallery has been committed to promoting and supporting emerging and mid-career artists who work in a diverse range of media. Representing thirty international artists, the gallery has two spaces in Amsterdam, and one in New York. GRIMM recently expanded to a new 6,000 square foot gallery space in Tribeca, New York in 2021.

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