

GER VAN ELK

ART|BASEL FEATURE

June 14 – 19, 2016

GRIMM is proud to announce a solo presentation with an important selection of historical works by the Dutch artist Ger van Elk at Art|Basel's Feature section in Basel this year.

Ger van Elk (Amsterdam, 1941-2014) made a significant and highly personal contribution to the development of conceptual art. With this solo exhibition at Art|Basel, GRIMM emphasizes the importance of the artist and his influence in conceptual art from the seventies until today. Like other conceptual artists at that time Van Elk searched for the boundaries of traditional art. As an artist he occupied a nonconformist position: radical, humorous and always engaged in a quest of ambiguity.

The pieces in the presentation represent Van Elk's on-going play with reality and illusion that is seen as so characteristic of his oeuvre. In this context two of his iconic 16mm film works will be on display, *How Van Elk inflates his left foot with his right one* (1969) and *Little man behind the door* (1999). Another classic Van Elk work; *The Co-Founder of the Word O.K. (Marken) nr.6* (1971/1999) is presented alongside. In this work the artist portrays the word 'OK' with a smoked sausage dangling on a stick, carried over his shoulder as a knapsack. This photograph is the perfect example of the artists' typical Dutch humor and the touch of absurdism that is often present in his work.

The Adieu, an important theme for Van Elk about final goodbyes, links all the more recent works on show. Formal goodbyes are the subject of his framed video works such as *Adieu a K.* (2004) and *Talking Trees - Window* (2004) and with his *Conclusion series* (2007-2012) Van Elk says his goodbyes to the idleness of digital photography.

The Conclusion series consist of painted over photographs of different urban and rural landscapes, a historically Dutch genre, that are pulled into abstraction by the multiple layers of paint. The monochrome color of the paint is based on the main colors of the photographed landscape. The photograph becomes nearly invisible, and the brush strokes in the paint form a cloudy pattern that establishes a new landscape. The title of the series, 'Conclusions',



How Van Elk inflates his left foot with his right one (1969)

implies an end. Possibly the end of painting or photography, but the blank canvases can simultaneously be seen as new beginnings.

About the artist

After studying at the Institute for Applied Arts from 1959 to 1961 in Amsterdam, Ger van Elk moved to Los Angeles in 1961, where his father was working at the time. He attended the Immaculate Heart College, where his long time friend Bas Jan Ader joined him the following year. Ger van Elk's work from that period, across a wide range of mediums, often draws humorous parallels between Amsterdam and Los Angeles.

Ger van Elk's work had been exhibited in numerous international museum and gallery exhibition such as MoMa, New York, the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam and Marian Goodman Gallery, New York. Recent exhibitions include Kunsthalle München, La Casa Encendida, Madrid, The Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo and the Art Institute of Chicago. His work can be found in many institutions and museums around the world such as Fondazione Prada, Milan, Francois Pinault Foundation, Venice, Tate, London, MoMa, New York, the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, and the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven.

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