

Yasmijn Jarram, curator and art critic

(translation: Jesse Voetman – Donald Schenkel)

Visual artist Bram Braam (NL, 1980) is captivated by the makeability of our daily surroundings. Apart from his photos, collages and assemblages Bram focusses on sculptural works of a subtle or –juxtaposing– monumental scale. Many influences can be found in these works: the American minimalism of Donald Judd and Sol LeWitt, the utopian thinking of architects as Le Corbusier, yet also the modernism of Bauhaus and De Stijl. In his work the schematic clarity of the Dutch landscape meets with the raw, urban chaos of Braam's place of residence Berlin.

Braam looks at public space through the eyes of a sculptor. He photographs the unsigned 'non-spaces' in the city, or especially the urban areas where the old and new meet. In Braam's studio these concrete observations are transformed into abstract artworks; balancing between the formal and the narrative. The grey area between coincidence and control, between nature and culture continues to be questioned. When is something considered original and 'real' and when is it carefully constructed? Nowadays artificiality is omnipresent: from Photoshop to plastic surgery, from virtual reality to hologram. It comes to no surprise that Braam is fascinated by the concept of 'hyperreality' by philosopher Jean Baudrillard (1929-2007). With this term Baudrillard refers to an artificial, improved version of the everyday actuality where it is barely possible to distinguish between reality and illusion.

In his solo exhibition *Welcome to the real world* Braam aims to gather these different actualities. This is among others reflected in the distinctive mix of artificial and found materials. The exterior of the site-specific installation *Black White* consists of weathered black plates that are used in construction for the pouring of concrete – a phase between planning and execution. Meanwhile, the interior of the installation shows a structure of glossy glass plates and white surfaces. The various displayed stones are merely partially authentic: the fluorescent orange segments are plastic 3D prints. In the assemblage *Horor Vacui* Braam combines his unpolished construction plates with traces of vandalism, gentrification and decay, in combination with high gloss Plexiglas.

The photo series *Accidental Visions* shows locations in Berlin where unintentionally artistic references to modernism have emerged: ragged layers of paint in just slightly deviating colours are applied on walls full of graffiti. Braam completes the composition with an added layer of tightly painted colour shapes. A comparable contrast underlies the installation *The different possibilities of a truth*, where a raw street object is placed alongside a stylized shape. In Braam's public research into shape and material he does not only expose the artistic process but also the speed at which the public space of a metropolitan city such as Berlin is constantly transforming. Here, the heterogeneity of Braam's place of residence finds its mirror image in the (literal) layering of his work.