

## NEL BONTE – SEASONS.IN.THE.SUN.

Nel Bonte (°1986) is exhibiting the installation SEASONS.IN.THE.SUN., made up of several sculptures, in the K1 display case at Kunstenplatform WARP.

Four very different objects have been brought together and set against each other. On the ground is a small, organic form made of various materials alongside a thin yellow rod made of wood. A shiny, deep red balloon is hung low on the left-hand wall. The dominant sculpture is an impressive, round, black block with protrusions, resting on an elegant metal tripod.

For Nel Bonte, this installation entailed a new process of reflection. In the past, Nel has mainly concentrated on monumental sculptures for public spaces or natural landscapes. She doesn't shy away from sculptures 10 or 15 metres long. For this installation in the small, white K1 display case, she created preliminary studies in her studio for which she built several 'white cubes' with polystyrene slabs. This method is reminiscent of the models used in architecture as preliminary designs for future construction projects. It meant that she could consider in advance the angles from which a viewer would look at the work. Because viewers can only see the three-dimensional objects from the front and at eye-level, the display case becomes a kind of diorama, a 'postcard' as Nel Bonte herself describes it. The comparison is apt: she only ever exhibits her work once in the same configuration. Afterwards the photographs she has taken of the work are the only souvenirs of the installation. These photos have more than a merely archival function: they constitute works of art in their own right.

Nel Bonte pays a great amount of attention to **staging** her work. The assemblage of various sculptures is not arbitrary: it suggests a reading order. The yellow rod on the ground creates a connection between the organic form on the ground and the tripod. The colours and materials are also carefully chosen. The primary colours red, black and yellow stand out clearly against the white walls. The red balloon with its shiny lacquer contrasts with the small, inconspicuous, amorphous form that seems to be crawling across the ground like a scaly beige reptile. There is an even greater contrast with the pull exerted by the round black sculpture that towers above everything else. The different objects stimulate your **sense of touch**. The viewer perceives from behind the glass that the objects are made of different materials and would therefore feel different. Nel Bonte has no difficulty combining metal, ceramics, acrylic, wax, plaster and various *objets trouvés*. Her attention to the finish means that some objects are likely to feel soft or warm, whereas others are surely rough or cold.

Although she aims to exhibit her work as impartially as possible, Nel is not concerned with *l'art pour l'art*, and neither does she impose a prescriptive meaning on the viewer. In fact her sculptures are idiomorphic: they only refer to themselves. But by deliberately grouping the objects, with great attention to the contrasts between them, the suggestion of a narrative emerges. Likewise, the **title** SEASONS.IN.THE.SUN. stimulates our imagination: we might interpret the yellow line as a ray of sunlight on the floor of the white box and see ourselves reflected in the shiny balloon. However, the black sculpture hangs high in the air like a large, threatening shadow. Although the title seems to suggest a dreamy, happy image, that feeling of playfulness and optimism is always ambivalent in Nel's work.

With this small-scale installation, Nel Bonte has succeeded in creating her own blueprint for a possible or impossible world: it has a strong balance of colour, form and material as well as both a touch of humour and a sense of drama.

*Kunstenplatform WARP, Laureline Soubry  
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