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## Emo Verkerk

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Emo Verkerk (°1955 Amsterdam, lives and works in Den Helder) belongs to a generation of Dutch artists, together with René Daniels and Marlène Dumas, among others, who were unwilling to proclaim the death of painting but who, quite contrarily, explored new possibilities and significances within the medium itself. In the meantime, Emo Verkerk can look back on a career that spans more than 30 years in which he has been in and out of public interest. Even recently, there was the exhibition at the Gemeentemuseum in The Hague, presenting the 100 most beautiful drawings in his oeuvre.

Emo Verkerk's oeuvre consists of paintings, drawings, sculptures, and assemblages. Through his own interests and passions, he has reinterpreted the significance of painting in a very personal way, without necessarily using the artistic dogma of 'innovation' as his starting point. His inspiration comes from many different sources: from life stories of known and lesser known people he is fascinated with, but also from his personal environment. People who appear in his work are, among others, the Jewish-Hungarian writer and journalist Joseph Roth (1894-1939), the Yugoslavian writer and poet Danilo Kis (1935-1989), or Alfred Jarry (1873-1907), the writer of *Ubu Roi* and the godfather of Dadaism. Emo Verkerk combines their biography, which belongs to the collective past, with very personal and absurd elements. The life at sea is dominantly present as Emo Verkerk himself has been living in the port town of Den Helder on the Wadden Sea for years. In this way, Joseph Roth becomes the captain of a gondola, a flat-boat, and a seagoing tug in the artist's imagination.

With a mild and disarming irony, Emo Verkerk embraces the beauty and romance of life, in all its merriness and melancholy. His observations go beyond the mere registration of reality: he inflates certain things, makes others smaller, adopts various observational perspectives,... Virtuosity and clumsiness seem to go hand in hand more than once. Portraits, birds, but also landscapes or seascapes are animated by his visual imagination and power of association. The use of all kinds of, apparently randomly chosen, discarded material – such as a piece of a bathtub for the portrait of Joseph Roth or a sink used as Alfred Jarry's couch –, create surprising visual interpretations. In this way, an ongoing, inventive, and unexpected play with themes, materials, colours, and motifs originates from his artistic freedom.

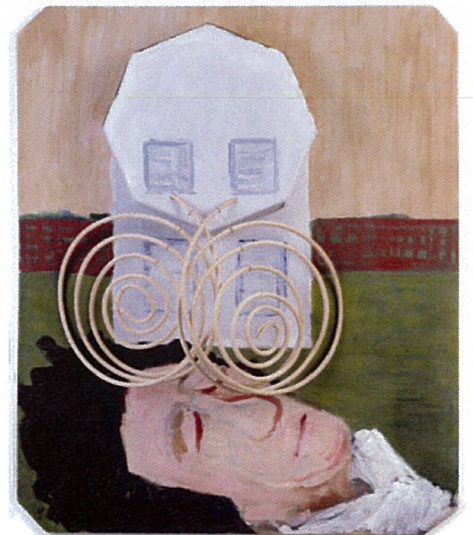
This exhibition brings together a very subjective choice of paintings and sculptures from the period between 1993 and 2009. It was never the intention to work in a retrospective manner, but to present the very surprising and eclectic palette of possibilities the artist draws from throughout his oeuvre.



1.



2.



3.

### Images:

1. "Engels bier", 2004, oil on linen on wood, 97 x 93 cm  
Collection of mr. & ms. Bakker. Heemstede

2. "Venedikt Jerofejev (met visnet)", 2006, oil on wood, fishnet, 59 x 100 cm  
Stichting Kunst & Historisch bezit ASR Nederland

3. "Danilo Kis", 2004, oil on linen on wood, wicker, 72 x 60 x 12 cm  
Collection of the artist