

MARINUS BOEZEM

Bird's-eye view

Curated by Lorenzo Bruni
Project by Marinus Boezem

Opening reception: Tuesday 22 January, 2019 from 6.30 pm
From 23 January to 5 April, 2019

Galleria Fumagalli presents the first solo exhibition in Italy since 1978 by Dutch artist Marinus Boezem, one of the main representatives of Land Art, environmental art, conceptual art and process art in the Netherlands since the late 1960s.

The project "Bird's-eye View" by Marinus Boezem, curated by Lorenzo Bruni, features a wide site-specific installation made with various birdseeds. The organic matter, animal nourishment and evocative of the natural life cycle, draws on the gallery floor the physical and conceptual space of the Basilica of San Francesco in Assisi's floor plan. The installation, which also includes tree branches on the walls and the work on paper evoking the performance *L'Uomo Volante* (1979), transforms the architectural interiors in a suggestive space where categories of exterior and interior, culture and nature, history and memory, reality and poetry, require to be reformulated. Boezem invites to reflect on the role of Art in re-establishing the present space and the time of sharing knowledge, focusing on the individual sense of responsibility in rethinking the community in a global and virtual world. Next to the installation *Bird's-eye View* (2019), the video *A Volo d'Uccello* (2010) documents a similar intervention made by the artist on the roof of his studio in Middelburg, and a selection of works (*The Vanishing of the Artist* (2019), *God Bless You* (1971/2013), *Della Scultura e la Luce* (1985), *Cartografia* (1980)) show how, in the course of his career and from different perspectives, Boezem dealt with the same themes evoked in the new project "Bird's-eye View".

"The title of the installation *Bird's-eye View* (2019) - explains curator Lorenzo Bruni - does not refer exclusively to the ideal condition of observation of the site-specific intervention: the perimeter of the Basilica of San Francesco in Assisi displayed in the gallery's white cube with various seeds on the floor, and the tree branches on the walls suggesting the imminent arrival of birds, as if there were no more separation between inside and outside. But it also refers to the artist's profound reflection on his long career, which led him to use the floor plans of Gothic cathedrals, such as those of Reims or Assisi, in various ways, decade after decade. In fact, the title of the exhibition "Bird's-eye View" focuses on Boezem's research and compare between nature and culture started in the 1960s, with landscape's interventions and reenactments of climate changes within the museums - an alternative proposal to the American Land Art of the same years -, continued during the 1980s with collages and environmental sculptures inspired by the "medieval perspective". And it shows the interest of the artist, since the 1990s, for "landscape-sharing" at the time of global communications and social networks. It thus suggests the need to re-establish the concepts of observing and looking, since images are used not to communicate but to control reality. The artist has sought this specific topic since 2010 with landscape-works, adopting surveillance camera to make his videos, so that from every corner of the world and at any moment, night or day, people could follow the process of the work. The site-specific installation *Bird's-eye View* (2019) focuses on human being - through his absence, by representing nature and culture (the cathedral and the seeds) - inciting to take a position, both physical and conceptual, on how to observe and share not only the reality but also the stratifications of individual experiences and History."

Curator Lorenzo Bruni explains: "The research of Marinus Boezem is fundamental for conceptual art because from the 1960s onwards it introduced in Europe, and from a new point of view, aspects related to the concepts of history, landscape, cultural identity and the role of the artist. His works arise in dialogue with the physical and mental context in which they are conceived, and involve the assembly of ephemeral and very different materials aiming to open a reflection on the concept of representation, as well as to stimulate the public to demand an active role with respect to the images produced by "Mass media". This approach led him in 1960 to realize his first landscape intervention creating on the dam of Nieuwe Zuiderlingedijk - South Holland - a moment of meeting with a specially invited audience,

predisposing outdoors folding chairs, tables and wine. It was an ironic comment on galleries openings but above all a way to share a different vision of the Polder landscape, which had undergone major physical and, consequently, visual changes. The artist considers this his first intervention of Land art because he presented "the landscape and the whole world as instruments of art". The works also focuses on the evolution of the concept of ready-made and the need to eliminate the distance between the art space and that of reality, key topics in his future work. The next step led him to create the work *Immaterial Sculpture* for the exhibition "Show V" in Amsterdam in 1965: an empty room where hidden air conditioners generated columns of cold and warm air into the space, offering a strong perceptive impact through an invisible presence such as air conditioning. In 1968 he created the *Wind Table* installation in which a high and round table, typical of the cocktail bars of that time, was covered by a long light white tablecloth, moved by the air produced by a domestic fan placed on the ground. In this case the artist provoked a totally different imaginary, starting from the association of two existing elements in conflict. Boezem did not aim at the dematerialization of art to save it from the market, as suggested by the co-founder of Situationism Guy Debord or by Lucy Lippard in her famous text written from '66 to '73, but not even to realize the spiritual emptiness of Yves Klein or the metaphysical silence of Kazimir Malevič. Instead, he focuses on the mechanisms of perception and interpretation that reveal the elements of the world in a different light. Thanks to this radical and poetic approach in 1969 Boezem was invited to take part in two exhibitions, representatives of those year's researches in America and in Europe - including Arte Povera - linked to conceptual practice, Land Art and process art. The first is "Op Losse Schroeven. Situaties en Cryptostructuren" (1969), curated by Wim Beeren, at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, involving artists such as Walter De Maria, Mario Merz, Bruce Nauman, Robert Smithson, Gilberto Zorio and others. On that occasion, Marinus Boezem opened all the windows of the museum and hung white sheets outside and pillows on the windowsills, to highlight the project's attempt to cancel the border between art and life, between public and private dimensions. This installation has been realized again out of the windows of the Stedelijk in the recent exhibition "Amsterdam, the Magic Center. Art and counterculture 1967-1970". Going back to the 1969 exhibition, in one of the rooms of the museum, the work *Weather Drawings* (1969) concentrated for the first time on the immaterial context of weather by means of the presentation of meteorological maps of the turbulence of that specific day accompanied by radio broadcasts of weather forecasts. The other exhibition he took part in in 1969 is "When Attitudes Become Form", curated by Harald Szeemann at Bern Kunsthalle. This became legendary in the following years for the innovation of exhibition-making practice and the choice of artists - including Carl Andre, Joseph Beuys, Richard Long, Lawrence Weiner, David Medalla and others - who expanded in all possible ways the notion of art and the role of the public. Marinus Boezem exhibited two identical windows facing a blind wall with sheets and pillows. The reference is to be found in the work done in Amsterdam, but it is as if he provided the "resting instruments" for a future intervention, but also to be able to analyze them as objects among other objects. "

Biography

Marinus Boezem (1934, the Netherlands) is among the most significant representatives of Conceptual Art and Arte Povera in The Netherlands, together with Jan Dibbets and Ger van Elk. In the 1960s, Boezem started to use elusive elements such as air, weather, wind and light as visual materials and made a name with radical, immaterial works that were far ahead of their time. He was one of the initiators of the ground-breaking exhibition "Op Losse Schroeven: Situaties en Cryptostructuren" (1969) at the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam and took part in the equally influential exhibition "When Attitudes Become Form" at the Kunsthalle Bern in the same year. In 1969 he created one of his most famous works of art, *Signing the Sky Above The Port of Amsterdam With an Aeroplane* (1969): as stated in the title, an aircraft's condensation trails were used to spell out Boezem's surname in the sky, the ephemeral wording disappearing almost as soon as it was created. Boezem created numerous works in public space and land art such as the *Gothic Growth Project (Green Cathedral)* (from 1978/1987): 174 Italian poplar trees (*Populus Nigra Italica*) are planted to reproduce the floor plan and measurements of the Cathedral at Reims, in a flat polder near Almere, the Netherlands. In an oeuvre spanning more than sixty years, Marinus Boezem has created a body of work that stands quite independently in contemporary art. His works are part of many important museum collections, including Museum of Modern Art, New York; Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam; Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam; Gemeentemuseum Den Haag; Museum Kröller-Müller, Otterloo; Museum Voorlinden, Wassenaar.

GALLERIA FUMAGALLI

Via Bonaventura Cavalieri 6, 20121 Milano

From Tuesday to Saturday from 11 am to 7 pm

Info: +39 02 36799285 | info@galleriafumagalli.com | galleriafumagalli.com

Press office PCM Studio | +39 02 36769480 | Silvia.Cataudella.silvia@paolamanfredi.com