The Studio #2 Morena Bamberger Ethereality

November 26, 2019- April 12, 2020

At the eye level of a cub, I lay in an unfamiliar landscape.

The cold stroked my snout, while the wind blew snowflakes in my face.

An echo of howling approached my ear.

A pack of wolves ran towards me.

They howled while their fur danced in the wina

They crushed the snow between the stars.

Between their legs shone the calm northern

Morena Bamberger, 2018

Morena Bamberger (1994, Roermond), a recent graduate yet already highly acclaimed, is a master at transforming a space into a magical universe through simple interventions. Her first museum project is aptly entitled *Ethereality*, a contraction of two words with opposite meanings: *ethereal* and *reality*. And indeed this installation of video images shows an alienating mix of boundless, intangible imagination and everyday normality, which is so characteristic of this artist. Bamberger needs little to achieve this. She conjures up her mysterious world with simple materials like plastic sheeting, glitter fabrics and polystyrene sheets that she paints in pastel colours, with turning windmills that scatter moving gleaming lights through the space like stardust. Here and there, projected video images show a world between reality and dream. "My installations",

says Bamberger, "are a reflection of how I experience reality and how I want to share this experience with my audience".

a spiritual journey to the Swiss mountains – a sort of 'vision quest', as she calls it – in order to get closer to her intuition and to experience her vulnerability and her strength. We see images of green mountain meadows and lowing cattle, but also a surreal masked figure (the artist), who bangs on a shaman's drum beside a calm mountain stream. It is the first time that Bamberger herself is the protagonist of her film. Over the past two years, her work has attracted attention for the way in which she explored the surroundings of Roermond with her video camera, and the totally open way in which she involved friends, family and random passers-by (such as two orange street sweepers in a park) in her surrealist world filled with hand-made masks, wizards' cloaks, strings and threads. This produced some unexpected, disturbing happenings, as shown in her wonderful graduation film Home ground from 2018, in which for example a man appears in a white owl's mask, who eats a dead chick next to a living white owl. (1)

to take her audience on a spiritual quest, using a disarming, colourful visual idiom.

Take, for instance, the gender political paintings in fluo and pastel colours by Lily van der Stokker (1954, Den Bosch) and the experimental videos by the Swiss artist Pipilotti Rist (1962, Rheintal) from the 1980's and 90's. Closer to home and more recently, there are the compelling, surreal video installations and performances by Melanie Bonajo (1978, Heerlen) and another artist from Heerlen, Tanja Ritterbex (1985), which form an exciting hub of filmed ego-documentaries. Besides transporting the viewer to their surprising universe, these artists also deliberately use the culturally coded visual idiom as criticism of existing social norms and pose questions about gender, sexuality and the female body.

Although there is much common ground, and Bamberger is indebted to these and other artists for her preference for the surreal, the fragile and the mobile, her relationship with reality appears differently orientated. In her work, Bamberger does not want to broach or judge anything. In her own words, she wants to "move with, rather than against". She takes her range of materials outdoors, to parks, woods and squares. People and animals gravitate towards her, curious about what she is doing. They ask questions, and Bamberger invites them to take part. On the basis of pure improvisation, they then get caught up together in "a moment of spontaneity, expression and adventure".

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Morena Bamberger
1994 - Roermond

In her installations, too, she aims to integrate her audience, as it is all about the interaction between film and environment

The wish to create harmonious connections between people, animals and landscape can apparently be explained by her background. She grew up on a caravan camp in the vicinity of Roermond, but chose to follow her own path, away from the close Sinti community, to become the first member of her family to study. In 2017, Bamberger made a film about this, called 'Terug naar de Roedel' (Back to the pack). To do so, she returned to the caravan camp for a while, in an attempt to link up with her family again through her work and experiences.

the alpha she-wolf, who runs at the front and – through her artistic practice – wants to show the pack members, people and animals she's created the way to a land where everyday rhythms and patterns are transformed into moments of attention, connection and astonishment. If they dance along as masked creatures, they belong in my world of astonishment, where everything feels like home".

Paula van den Bosch

Sources for this tout

- (1) Limburg, D. (2018, 5 september).
 'Sprookjesgrotten en een magische film vol plastic en schapen'.
- https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2018/09/05/ sprookjesgrotten-en-een-magische-film-vol plastic-a1615371
- E-mail conversation between Morena
 Bamberger and Paula van den Bosch. (2019
 October November)
- Morena Bamberger's own description of heliwork, (2019)

Morena Bamberger is the first recipient of the Limburg Beeldende Kunst Stipendium, a new grant initiated by the Province of Limburg. The grant wants to stimulate the work of young Limburg artists and bring it to the attention of a larger audience. The grant includes a residency at the Jan van Eyck Academy, an exhibition in 'The Studio' and a cash prize of € 5,000.

'The Studio' offers a stage to small-scale solo presentations in which artists report on recent developments in their work.

www.morena-bamberger.com

The Limburg Beeldende Kunst
Stipendium (Limburg Visual Arts
Stipendium) was initiated by the Province
of Limburg in 2018 as the "Lex ter
Braak stipend" for Lex ter Braak on the
occasion of his retirement as director of
the Jan van Eyck academy. The grant was
later renamed the Limburg Beeldende
Kunst Stipendium, after a committee was
formed with Lex ter Braak, Stijn Huijts,
director of the Bonnefanten Museum
and Joep Vossebeld, artist, curator and
writer, who are jointly responsible for
the selection for the Limburg Visual Art
Stipendium.









