

Confronted with "What to do?" in his studio soon after graduating, Bruce Nauman had the simple but profound realization that "If I was an artist and I was in the studio, then whatever I was doing in the studio must be art. At this point art became more of an activity and less of a product."
(Wikipedia)

A person who is given hospitality
(Wikipedia about Guest)

Eleye Boerenkamps (Helmond, 1994) desires to work with the material world through placements of ready-mades and their representations. It is an attempt to find meanings, structures, memories and experiences through the object in spaces. By doing so she relates herself to the infinite world of objects.

In 2016 Eleye Boerenkamps won the Leo XIII-award, which gave her the chance to work during six months in the guest studio 'Leopold XIII' (quotes). She took the word 'guest' very seriously and carefully investigated the space in which she was given hospitality for a defined period. Her approach can be seen as a step by step approach as if the space were a stand-offish person that needs to be convinced of the artist's good intentions. Eleye started by spanning a few ropes in bright colours between opposite walls and walked between, over and under these new lines. She stood there for moments to become aware of the space in relation to her own existence. Then she brought in some chairs from the kitchen, hung them in the ropes, pulled, well: One chair fell down, the other kept hanging upside down, and one rope couldn't hold it anymore, brutally snapped from the wall. No problem, just a thing that can happen. Eleye patiently tried out another balance exercise in the cautious space. She invited inhabitants from the studio building for a so called 'spaghetti evening' in the guest studio: Nicely laid tables, candles, spaghetti on plates in a space full of ropes. Spaghetti in the mouths, ropes directing the movement of bodies, all lit by candles.

The next step was to bring a few personal belongings into the guest space. Eleye looked for objects from the house she grew up in. She wanted to overcome the dependency of objects with which she felt signified and connected them to an independent space which she got a bit familiar with already. Besides her own memories that are related to the objects of her parental house she had to deal with the meaning that is given to certain objects. Each thing has a context in which it comes to existence and has a reason why it is still present. All these forms require an understanding of the formative principles which give rise to them like their shape, mass and structure.

By reproducing the objects in plaster and wax Eleye even challenged this relationship between herself and the object even more. Doing so she got to know the actual objects better. While making molds she sometimes lost an element of the original such as the varnish layer of a wooden sculpture. The original sculpture transformed, losing a layer that now was the top layer of the reproduced sculpture.

The meanings of objects and the context in which an object is involved are aspects that create a playground for formal approaches. While relating to this collection of objects Eleye found a new position towards them. While putting the objects from her youth and their molds in the studio, making compositions with them she created an interface between her physical actions and the objects. It had everything to do with the reaction between space, object and person. To emphasize this interaction in the space the coloured ropes kept hanging from ceiling to floor. Some objects were balanced on the ropes, other objects got tangled up or fell, like the chairs, while moving other objects. Ropes were skipped, ropes were added. The making of all these temporary installations were captured on film.

As a guest Eleye brought in very personal objects representing such ephemeral and subjective values like emotion and memory, which precisely are the solid reasons to hold on to objects. She realized how vulnerable we are when it comes to objects we are strongly attached to. As an artist she was confronted with the tension between the formal and personal approach. What happens if the artist formally tackles the value of an object: does she tackle also something in herself?

Eleye Boerenkamps
Finding the Object in Me

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