

LUHRING AUGUSTINE

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Emo Verkerk: Why Not?
Curated by Karel Schampers
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Luhring Augustine is pleased to announce a solo exhibition of new paintings by the Dutch artist Emo Verkerk. The presentation, organized by the art historian and curator Karel Schampers, marks Verkerk's first solo show with the gallery and his first in New York since 1982.

Curator's statement:

Over the past forty-five years Emo Verkerk has built a consistent and homogeneous oeuvre of "portrait studies." He makes portraits of distinguished figures who intrigue him or for whom he has great admiration, people such as Edgar Allan Poe, Frank Zappa, Aby Warburg, Wallace Black Elk, among many others. The diverse people portrayed might be anyone: a writer, a philosopher, a cartoonist, a musician, a magician, a shaman, and so on. They all have one thing in common – once they are painted by Verkerk, they become an integral part of his universe. Which turns out to be a world of its own.

The range of the portraits paints a striking picture of his interests and reflects his world of ideas. As Verkerk says: "You can see my portraits as an allegorical diary: the persons whom I paint represent thoughts or ideas that occupied my mind or struck me. It's about empathy. See it as a tribute, a present to the person portrayed."

Verkerk does not paint portraits in a traditional sense. Usually one strives for a true-to-life representation of the person portrayed, but Verkerk tries to arrive at a personal vision and a unique interpretation of the subject. For him it is not the image that matters, but it is all about perception and imagination. The ease with which he looks at his subject and the personal touch that he adds to it, is precisely what makes his paintings so special. The pictures are fresh and lively – his paintings continue to fascinate and to claim their presence. They never become anonymous furniture. As a critic once wrote: "His work hits your face like a spring breeze. A tingling feeling of freedom."

About the Artist

Emo Verkerk (b. 1955, Amsterdam) has exhibited around the world; solo exhibitions include *Graag of niet / Love me or leave me*, Gemeentemuseum Den Haag, The Hague, NL (2015); *Belle van Zuylen*, Willem Baars Projects, Amsterdam, NL (2015); *Emo Verkerk*, Fries Museum, Leeuwarden, NL (2000); *Nass und Trocken*, Brandenburgische Kunstsammlungen, Cottbus, DE (1999); *Schilderijen, aquarellen en objecten*, Art & Project, Slootdorp, NL (1999); *Emo Verkerk*, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, NL (1988); and *Emo Verkerk*, Marian Goodman, New York, US (1982). His work is featured in the collections of Kunstmuseum Den Haag, The Hague, NL; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, NL; Centraal Museum, Utrecht, NL; Bonnefanten Museum, Maastricht, NL; Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam, NL; Rijksmuseum Twente, Enschede, NL; ABN AMRO Kunststichting, Amsterdam, NL; Kunstcollectie KPN, The Hague, NL; Akzo Nobel Art Foundation, Amsterdam, NL, and various private collections.

For information on the exhibition, please contact Julia Speed at julia@luhringaugustine.com. For press requests, please contact Caroline Burghardt at caroline@luhringaugustine.com.