

Artist of the week 91: Rezi van Lankveld

This Dutch painter's queasy colours and ghoulish forms wreak hallucinatory havoc

Skylar Sherwin Thu 10 Jun 2010 10.53 BST First published on Thu 10 Jun 2010 10.53 BST



The ghosts of painting past ... detail from *On the Prairie* (2010), by Rezi van Lankveld. Photograph: courtesy of The Approach, London

Rezi van Lankveld whips up flurries of pigment in her eerie, mysterious paintings. She favours pallid shades such as lilac, blue or grey, which she swirls with eddies of black to create dense abstractions. They recall the marbled endpapers of 18th-century books. Yet amidst these trippy paint-fests, figures can be glimpsed: rippling, shadowy forms wearing tricorne hats, pinafores or capes. They rise up from the churning colours like the ghosts of painting past.

Born in 1973, Van Lankveld is part of a generation of younger painters who, following in the footsteps the enormously influential Luc Tuymans, experiment with tensions between figuration and abstraction. Her paintings are created in a single effort: she pours paint on to blank wood boards, Jackson Pollock-style, before rearranging it to form unexpected images. She describes it as an "all or nothing situation".

The images that emerge often suggest familiar Old Master scenes. In *Ideas of Solution* (2004), for instance, a macabre decapitated head looks as if it could be derived from Goya, while the two carnivalesque figures who lead a procession of blurry phantasms in *What About You* (2007) bring to mind Victorian fairy paintings.

Van Lankveld isn't so much interested in the history of these allusions, however. For her, they're not so different to any of the more recent images painters might borrow for their work; they're just a memory of something already seen. And while the queasy colours and ghoulish forms suggest that, if figurative art isn't quite dead, it is certainly unwell, Van Lankveld's spontaneity and black humour are disarming. Her frock-coated spooks are always ready to wreak some hallucinatory havoc.

Why we like her: *I'm Only Dancing* (2007) features a couple who might be folk-tale lovers: ink-black cameos depicted against a sickly pink squall.

Nowhere girl: Van Lankveld attributes her artistic sensibility to growing up in the quiet Dutch province of Almelo, a place with nothing much going on and plenty of room for daydreaming.

Where can I see her? Rezi van Lankveld's solo exhibition is at The Approach, London E2, until 27 June.