



Seek & Hide
Laurence Aëgerter

Museum Van Loon



Seek & Hide
new works by Laurence Aëgerter

One remarkable feature of Museum Van Loon is its Contemporary Art projects. The museum was founded fifty years ago by Professor Maurits van Loon in order to safeguard the house and the family collection and to make them accessible to the public. His daughter Philippa van Loon has been chair of the Foundation for a number of years. Since 1996 she not only strives to maintain the family's house, but also invites contemporary artists to show their work amidst the historic Van Loon collection. Being trained as an artist herself, Philippa van Loon offers artists an opportunity to display in a totally different environment than today's whitewashed museum space. As artists bring new life to the house, she encourages them to produce new works inspired by the family history or collection, in the same tradition as the many Van Loon's commissioned artists such as Molenaer and Santvoort in the 17th century. As director and curator I have the privilege to not only be involved with artists from the past but with today's artists as well.

The museum has been following Laurence Aëgerter for some years. She is a French artist who lives and works in Amsterdam. Laurence infiltrates in exciting structures. Her work gives great attention to detail from which she derives larger works. Last year she

was invited by the Stedelijk Museum Bureau Amsterdam to transform a former brothel. During our first conversations about the exhibition I showed Laurence around the house and told her the stories of the people who have been forever immortalised in the portraits on the walls. Soon enough Laurence was mesmerized by Antoinette de Bach - van Loon (1891-1981); a rather eccentric family member, nicknamed 'Tante Netje'. Married to the last envoy to the Russian Tsar in The Hague she never owned a house but spent her life travelling around the globe. The last years of her life she was in the habit of spending the winter on the Keizersgracht, during that time the house was already open to the public. Many a visitor was surprised to find Aunt Nettie still in bed in the Bird Room when she hadn't woken up on time. The large trunks she used on her travels remain in the museum's attic and contain her personal and remarkable archive.

When the trunks were opened they contained an unexpected treasure. For some forty years Antoinette de Bach held spiritual seances with her husband Henry de Bach. This keen interest in the occult fascinated Laurence Aëgerter. Is Antoinette's spirit still lingering in the house?



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The photographic and textile works Laurence made for the house all have to do with this search. She was the first to gain full access to Antoinette de Bach's archive. The textile installations in the Garden Room and Bird Room directly derives from the archive. In the fabric's design she not only uses archive material, but also the occult itself. It is as if the spectator can read Antoinette's handwriting. Or perhaps not?

The works in the other rooms also seem to have evolved from the spirit of Antoinette. Historic portraits take the shape of living family members and museum staff is hidden in the garden room. The most important portraits seem to reveal much more than they normally do.

For this exhibition existing works by Laurence Aëgerter will also be shown in certain rooms. These provide a context to the works she produced specifically for the house. Through a piece from Le Louvre series Laurence Aëgerter herself becomes party to the house in a kind of invisible manner.

Laurence Aëgerter has pleasantly surprised both the museum and Philippa van Loon. We hope to be able to show Laurence's film *A. de B.*, currently in progress, in the museum later this year. This summer further works by Laurence Aëgerter's, will be on display at the Chateau d'Avignon en Camargue (France) on Philippa's invitation and initiative.

Tonko Grever
Director / curator

Colophon

This brochure has been printed on the occasion of the exhibition *Seek & Hide, new works by Laurence Aëgerter* at the Museum Van Loon, 28 May – 13 July 2010.

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Middle pages: Laurence Aëgerter, *The Marriage of Willem van Loon and Margaretha Bas*, C-print, 2010

Page five: Laurence Aëgerter, *Jan van Loon en Maria Munter*, C-print, 2010 (photo shop)

Back page: Laurence Aëgerter, *Allegory of the Six Senses*, 2010



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