

A collection of boxes

The inadequate box

Every time I try to write a text about my work I use the same method. I look at what I've made so far and find a box to fit it all in. I've put my work in the box 'balance', I've written about how in my work 'immaterial and temporal things can take a solid form', I've tried to force everything in an 'associative working method'-box, and I've written about how form and material follows concept. Reading back all these texts (which I all wrote in the same year) I feel ridiculous. Of course work

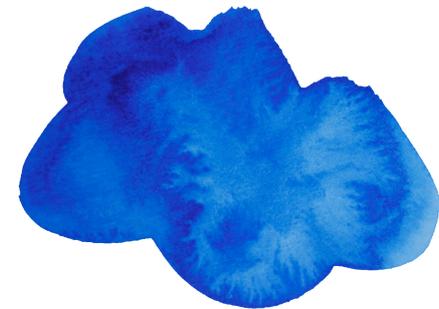
develops and vision changes but that's not what's happening here. I don't write about the work, I write about a box in which I force the work. So in this paper I'll not try to categorize all my work into the same box, but will focus on only one small part.



The cloud box

I'm interested in clouds. It started with these basic childlike painted clouds. They're so simple, everyone understands them even though they are nothing like real clouds. I wonder when society decided that those forms are the depiction of clouds...

I gave my clouds colors normal clouds don't have, I experimented with the shapes. I made a book full of little cut out watercolor paintings of clouds. I made a video out of these paintings. Finally it became a whole



installation.

But I'm not completely sure why I'd go for so much trouble for some childish clouds. Is it the childlike aspect that keeps me fascinated? Do I want to understand and name clouds like Luke Howard? Or is it more the poetic side of the subject that fascinates me, like the way Roni Horn is fascinated by weather and water. But then again, maybe there is not one reason for these clouds, maybe it's a rhizomatic structure of reasons and thoughts and causes and motives and longings and wishes and hopes and maybe just doing without thinking and becoming and creating.

The rhizomatic box

Saying it's a rhizomatic system may be true, it's also a trap. For everything I'm not sure of, of which I don't know what it is or what it will become it's way easier to say: 'Oh well, it's rhizomatic, who knows where it comes from and how it's all connected'. So here I am stuck in the rhizome, getting paralyzed by all these possibilities and connections. Stuck in the rabbit hole. But maybe that's not what a rhizomatic thinking is about. It's not a concept of confinement and restrictions. I can go into one theory without denying the possibilities of a hundred different ones. I can focus and refocus. Every direction will lead to so many new directions, but it's still worthwhile to start somewhere. To just start walking, or thinking, or writing. So here I go...

The nostalgic box

The childlikeness of the paintings comes from some kind of nostalgic feeling I've had for some time. A year ago I wrote this poem for another essay (Poetic dictionary) which captures this feeling.

Kinderlijke dromen
Verzadigd in kleur droom ik weg
naar een wereld waar ik ben
naar een tijd waar geen moment verstrijkt
niets ongebruikt, niets leeg en somber
angst wellicht, dat monster in het donker
Maar dat gevoel -
zo leeg, zinloos, onbeduidend, zo onbedoeld
- nog onbekend

I tried to translate it many times but I never get to a point where it conveys any of its original meaning, so I won't do that here. It's about a longing to be like a child again. To be afraid of the monster in the dark, if that means you won't feel more difficult emotions, like emptiness and purposelessness. Out of a similar kind of feeling I started to paint clouds. Looking outside to the sky is always an escape, I think this must be a thing every human does from time to time because you see it happening everywhere. People look outside and dream away. It's like a rule. And since I've always lived in the Netherlands looking to the sky means looking to the clouds.

This nostalgic side of this work I can connect with work from Rachel Whiteread and Ronni Horn.



Rachel Whiteread makes plaster molds of buildings which give a strong sense of nostalgia. In the work *Ghost* for instance she casts a space of a room in an empty Victorian house in plaster. The result is a massive block of plaster in the form of the room. You see the mantelpiece in negative, little details on the wall, a door that you can't open. This work is very massive and physical while my clouds are really translucent and almost not there, but still there is for me a same kind of feeling of dreaming away to something that is gone.

The work of Ronni Horn is very different from Rachel Whiteread and very diverse. But all of it has some poetic feeling which I really like. She made an installation called *Library of water* in Iceland, in which she collected water from glaciers. She made round glass sculptures (untitled) with mat sides and a shining top which look like blocks of frozen water - with melted water inside - that could overflow every minute. The work has a timelessness over it that I can't quite explain.



The dreaminess of Rachel Whiteread, and the timelessness of Roni Horn is something which I try to capture with my cloud installation as well. I'm trying to create a moment of focus as well as defocus. A zooming which is exactly the same as a zoom out. Losing your thoughts in the close up or in the distance. In the end it doesn't matter so much. You just dream away. A bit nostalgic. A bit childlike. Maybe it will rain.

On the modifications of Clouds

Luke Howard
released: 1803

Practice as Research approaches to creative arts enquire

Estelle Barret and Barbara Bolt
2010
chapter 7: Rhizome/Myzone: a case study in studio-based dance research
by Kim Vincs

De spanning tussen leven en dood

Hans den Hartog Jager, NRC
Released: 12 February 2016
retrieved on 10 may 2017 from:
<https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2016/02/12/de-spanning-tussen-leven-en-dood-1586736-a1335372>

Rachel Whiteread: "Ghost"

National Gallery of Art
Released : 4 August, 2009
retrieved on 12 may 2017 from:
<http://www.nga.gov/content/ngaweb/audio-video/video/rachel-whiteread.html>

Artangel - library of water

retrieved on 5 may 2017 from:
<https://www.artangel.org.uk/project/library-of-water/>

Rachel Whiteread: Master of the Miniature and the Monumental

ARTSY EDITORIAL
released: 31 January, 2014
retrieved on 05 may 2017 from:
<https://www.artsy.net/article/editorial-rachel-whiteread-master-of-the-miniature-and>