PRESS RELEASE

BLISS: Jorge Mañes Rubio, Sampat studio, Jule Cats, Joana Schneider, Studio Irma, Tomáš Libertíny and Catalijn Wouters

From February 16 till April 29, 2023

Rademakers Gallery Amsterdam

**Nature, spirituality, natural forces. BLISS is the name of the new exhibition at Rademakers Gallery in which various artists and designers are inspired by these themes. Ancient rituals and symbols are mixed with contemporary stories and techniques. BLISS makes us think about our relationship with nature and the value of spirituality, in the past, now and in the future.**

In addition to well-known names such as Joana Schneider and Tomáš Libertíny, Pien Rademakers selected for this exhibition a few artists of the new generation, such as the recently started Sampat Studio of Malaysian designers Isabelle Nair-Lacheta and Marcos Kueh. They tell stories through large textile works with a powerful visual imagery and soft colors; they mix contemporary stories, patterns and techniques with Asian symbols, rituals, and customs, such as in Asian temples where objects, gods and spirits are an intangible or imaginary part of life. Unlike here, objects contain a soul, so they are treated with respect and therefore not quickly discarded.

**Culture in space**

For his objects and sculptures Jorge Mañes Rubio uses materials such as unfired clay, glass beads, nylon thread, acrylic, shiny foil, hair extensions, sand, wood, pigment, cotton, gemstones, and minerals. In doing so, he expresses his ideas about humanity's relationship with the universe and all beings that inhabit it - human, non-human, material and spiritual.

His experiences working with shamans in Korea and Mexico led to the series of works he created during his artist-in-residence at the European Space Agency and will be part of BLISS.

His statement: “We are aggressively exploiting people, the earth, and the raw materials and one day people will also move into space. Spread across the solar system, will they also colonize the moon and Mars?

That statement sparked a thought-provoking TED talk in which he asks what we take with us on this spatial journey. And more importantly, what do we leave behind? Shall we leave our prejudices and the capitalist model behind and take on a journey our cultural diversity, rituals and spirituality that give meaning to our lives? Because culture gives us a reason to exist, also in the future. He believes that the artifacts that carry science, art and rituals form a bridge to the unknown world because of their recognizable human quality. As Mañes Rubio experienced with the Mexican shaman, who as a local healer creates an educational model that interweaves art, communication, and medical knowledge.

Mañes Rubio also uses a combination of science, art, and rituals with which he tries to redefine our future. In his sculptural objects and statues, he speculates with the idea of ​​restoring legends, myths and spiritual powers that were once present in the lives of Europe's early ancestors.

**Beauty of waste**

Product designer and artist, Jule Cats is fascinated by materials in a different way and by the - spiritual - stories they carry with them. In her objects, she searches for the emotional value and beauty of materials that usually go unnoticed or are seen as worthless, such as rubble from demolished buildings. After Cats lived in houses that were on the list to be demolished, she experienced the grief that comes with being forced to leave home.

By combining concrete remains from the demolished houses with acrylic resin, she creates handmade, limited editions of interior objects in which she preserves it’s history and gives the material a new life. The objects, such as vases and lamps, show the beauty of the waste product, they evoke wonder and curiosity and literally offer us food for thought.

At the BLISS exhibition, Cats will show four new 'In Disguise' vases and four 'Rise' lamps in new color variations. She also shows a new sculptural light as well as a lilac 'Flow' mirror, which is not only aesthetically pleasing but also has a spiritual starting point.

For the Flow collection made from recycled mirrors, natural minerals and acrylic resin, Cats went in search of the perfect reflection. Inspired by second-hand mirrors, she wondered to what extent memories and time can be controlled. Cats considers mirrors to be time capsules because so much time and stories are stored in the material. By using recycled mirrors, Flow says something about the many reflections that have been before ours and that many more will come. The new collection visualizes letting go of time and lets us move along with its whimsical, undulating shapes.

**Immersing in something bigger**

Catalijn Wouters uses her intuition and shows her spiritual experiences and a high degree of sensitivity while working on her painted works on paper and linen. “When I turn off my thoughts, reason and expectations are gone, and I am free. When I research, experiment and sketch without a plan, when I capture something with my brush and remove it, when I cut and paste, the most beautiful things happen,” she says.

For BLISS Wouters makes four large works on paper measuring 1 x 1.40 meters. She will also show a new box of twenty drawings and a number of paintings in which she incorporates her spiritual experiences.

As she vividly remembers when she was twelve years old, she climbed, all alone, the steps of an enormous rock. When she reached the top, she found herself face to face with the wild ocean. For her, that was the first spiritual experience at a young age. She felt that there was something bigger than herself that empowers her and that she is a part of. Thus, spirituality is the key to the infinite subconscious. “When I work, something takes over and that feeling is magical. Like I'm not there. Not in a dramatic sense, but precisely in the sense of being absorbed into something bigger.”

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