

For immediate release

RAOUL DE KEYSER

March 18 – April 23, 2016

Opening reception: Friday, March 18, 6 – 8 PM

Press preview with curator Ulrich Look: 10 AM



Photo by Jef Van Eynde

David Zwirner is pleased to present an exhibition of paintings by Raoul De Keyser at our 537 West 20th Street location in New York. The show was on view at our London gallery in the Fall of 2015, and here features additional works by the late Belgian artist.

Raoul De Keyser: Drift is organized around a group of twenty-two works completed shortly before his death in October 2012, and known as *The Last Wall*. Together, they revisit some of the major subjects that occupied the artist throughout his nearly fifty-year long career, including the landscape of the Belgian lowlands where he grew up and lived his entire life, the inconspicuous things close at hand, and the partition of the picture plane. These paintings, which were shown together for the first time at David Zwirner in London in 2015, will be accompanied by a careful selection of works from the 1990s onwards that are likewise representative of these subjects and further contextualize the later series.

De Keyser's subtly evocative paintings appear at once abstract and figurative. Made up of simple shapes and marks, they invoke spatial and figural illusions, yet remain elusive of any descriptive narrative. Despite—or precisely because of—their sparse gesturing, De Keyser's works convey a visual intensity that inspires prolonged contemplation. Individually as well as collectively, they revolve around the activity of painting, but also move beyond its physical means to become more than the sum of their parts. Their apparent simplicity belies a lengthy gestation period, yet one that does not adhere to a pre-existing plan.

Formally and materially restrained, the delicate compositions that make up *The Last Wall* are sometimes reduced to a line against a white background or two adjoining monochrome areas. While their often singular focus sets them apart from the earlier works on view, parallels emerge both in terms of color schemes and the artist's unorthodox approach to the pictorial surface, which integrates an unpretentious use of basic materials with a lightness of touch that remains far from the expressive gesture. Among the paintings selected from public and private collections are some of De Keyser's most significant works, including *Front* (1992), which was first exhibited at documenta IX in 1992, and *Siesta* (2000). Both eschew a compositional center in favor of a non-hierarchical arrangement of forms and marks, but a sense of constancy throughout the earlier and later works is found in the relationships between figure and ground, plane and depth, as well as the artist's alternatingly sparse and dense brushstrokes, through which a broad range of surface textures is achieved.

Raoul De Keyser: Drift is curated by the art historian Ulrich Look. The exhibition will be accompanied by a fully illustrated catalogue published by David Zwirner Books, featuring new scholarship and a biography by Look, as well as a selection of personal accounts by De Keyser's close friends and family.

Raoul De Keyser (1930–2012) was born in 1930 in Deinze, Belgium. His work has been represented by David Zwirner since 1999, and the present exhibition marks the seventh solo show of his work at the gallery. In 2018, a major retrospective of the artist's work will be presented at the Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst (S.M.A.K.) in Ghent.

Since the mid-1960s, the artist's work has been the subject of several solo exhibitions at prominent institutions. In 2000, a large-scale retrospective was presented at The Royal Hibernian Academy, Dublin, which traveled to the Goldie Paley Gallery, Moore College of Art and Design, Philadelphia, and The Renaissance Society at the University of Chicago. A major survey of the artist's paintings traveled extensively from 2004 through 2005 to the Whitechapel Gallery, London; Musée de Rochechouart, France; De Pont Museum for Contemporary Art, Tilburg, The Netherlands; Museu de Serralves, Porto, Portugal; and the Kunstmuseum St. Gallen, Switzerland. In 2009, his paintings were

(continued to next page)

exhibited in a retrospective at the Kunstmuseum Bonn, Germany and his watercolors were presented jointly at the Museu de Serralves, Porto, Portugal and the Douglas Hyde Gallery, Dublin. Other venues that have hosted important solo exhibitions over the past decade include the Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst (S.M.A.K.), Ghent (2001); Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens, Deurle, Belgium (2002); Museum van Deinze en de Leiestreek, Deinze, Belgium (2007 and 2013); Fonds Régional d'Art Contemporain Auvergne, Clermont-Ferrand, France (2008); De Loketten, Flemish Parliament, Brussels (2011); and the Inverleith House, Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (2015).

Work by the artist is held in permanent collections worldwide, including the Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens, Deurle, Belgium; Museum Ludwig, Cologne; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst Antwerpen, Antwerp; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst (S.M.A.K.), Ghent; among numerous others.

Ulrich Loock is an independent curator, art critic, and lecturer based in Berlin. He was Director of Kunsthalle Bern (1985–1997), Director of Kunstmuseum Luzern, Lucerne, Switzerland (1997–2001), and Deputy Director of Museu de Serralves, Porto, Portugal (2003–2010). He has curated numerous exhibitions of artists such as Michael Asher, Matthew Barney, Marlene Dumas, Robert Gober, Katharina Grosse, Eberhard Havekost, Maria Lassnig, Sol LeWitt, Brice Marden, Raymond Pettibon, Gerhard Richter, Wilhelm Sasnal, Thomas Schütte, Thomas Struth, Luc Tuymans, and Christopher Wool. Loock wrote an essay for *Al Taylor: Rim Jobs and Sideeffects* (2011), co-published by David Zwirner and Steidl. He is the curator of the exhibition *Raymond Pettibon: Homo Americanus*, opening at Deichtorhallen Hamburg – Sammlung Falckenberg in Spring 2016 and traveling to the Museum der Moderne Salzburg, and editor of the large-scale exhibition catalogue, co-published by David Zwirner Books and Deichtorhallen Hamburg – Sammlung Falckenberg.

Special Event

Guided tour of the exhibition with Ulrich Loock and Paul Robbrecht

Saturday, March 19, 11 AM

Curator Ulrich Loock and the Flemish architect Paul Robbrecht will lead a guided tour of the gallery's exhibition. Co-founding his practice in 1975 with Hilde Daem, Robbrecht has maintained a close relationship between architectural design and the visual arts, and has worked alongside several contemporary artists including Isa Genzken, Juan Muñoz, Gerhard Richter, and Luc Tuymans.

For all press inquiries and to RSVP to the March 18 press preview and the March 19 guided tour, contact

Kim Donica +1 212 727 2070 kim@davidzwirner.com