

Portrait of an artist 'Robbie Cornelissen' by Loes van Dorp

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In this portrait I will talk about why I choose to research the working methodology of Robbie Cornelissen. I will explain the connections and the differences with my work.

After that I will introduce Robbi Cornelissen by briefly go through his background, education and show a selection of his c.v.

Than I will go into his way of working and the way he funds himself. In the last part I tell you how he get his work exhibited.

Why Robbie Cornelissen?

I became familiar with Robbie Cornelissen and his work by participating in his big drawing project in Centraal Museum Utrecht. This drawing 'Little boy pissing the universe' was about drawing straight lines on a 17x4,5 meters piece of paper. In the end it would be a drawing of hundreds of lines, who together will form a plane.

The intensity of and the way of working in the project were a good and additional drawing experience.



'Little boy pissing the universe' in progress



Finished 'Little boy pissing the universe'

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Staring into his other drawings (big and small), I felt recognition and strangely connected. I was impressed.

While reading about Robbie Cornelissen and his way of working I discovered why I felt this way.

His drawings are a journey through his memory and mind. He creates images from the innerworld: 'chimeras'. This way of working corresponds with my way of drawing when I don't know what to draw: I just start drawing en let the lines tell me what to draw next. Very intuitive, being open to everything I encounter while drawing.



'Open your mouth', 2002 24x32 Robbie Cornelissen



'Connected' 2009, 20x30 Loes van Dorp

The interest of Robbie Cornelissen to search for the border of figuration and abstraction and the metamorphoses of one reality into an other is similar to mine, but with different method.

I also like the way he research drawing through animations and objects in his exhibition at Centraal museum Utrecht.

The big difference is that he has more life experience and enough work to fill a whole exhibition space.

Unlike me, is it for him quit clear what his work is about. He has the ability to talk about it very clear. He also knows how to create the best working conditions.

His work is more made from within, it is a more abstract translation. My work is more a literally translation of my memories and thoughts.

Short introduction

Robbie Cornelissen(1954) lives and works in Utrecht, the Netherlands.

Initially Cornelissen studied to be a Biologist/ Ecologist and did not start drawing until he was older.

He felt inspired by ecology, by the related nature of all elements. But he found out that he could not use his fantasy in this scientific profession. There was not enough space for self contribution.

That is why he decided in the end of the 80's to study at the Rietveldacademie in Amsterdam to become an artist. He graduated as painter, but after rediscovering drawing he noticed that he had found something interesting. With his drawings he worked from the innerworld to the outside, instead of the other way around, what he did with painting.

When he showed his drawings for the first time, people were directly attracted by them. Everybody wanted to see them and buy them. This was a confirmation that he had found something he could develop further.

His scientific background is proved to be a advantage for his role as an artist. In his work he travels through his mind and memory, where he images/creates ' innerworlds'.

He knows how complicated the cellular system within a human being works, because of his knowledge of the physical human body and looking at the world through a microscope. This proofed to be very useful knowledge in creating his worlds.

C.V.

education

Biologie/Ecologie, RU, Utrecht 1973-1980
Vrije Akademie, Den Haag 1982-1984
Rietveld Akademie, Amsterdam 1984-1987

Solo Exhibitions (selection)

2011 Galery Art Mur, Montreal, Canada (cat)
2011 Gemeentemuseum Den Haag, Den Haag (cat)
2011 Centraal Museum, 'Studio Vertigo', Utrecht (cat)
2010 38 CC, 'Pueblo', Delft
2008 Centraal Museum, 'Living Room', Utrecht
2007 Galery Art Mur, 'The Capacious Memory' , Montreal,
Canada (cat.)
2007 CBK Apeldoorn, 'Het Grote Geheugen' , Apeldoorn
2005 Galleria Astuni, Pietrasanta, Italy (cat.)
2004 Stichting Kik, artist in residence(1), Kolderveen
(cat.)
2003 Galerie Maurits van de Laar, Den Haag
2003 Motive Gallery, Haarlem
2003 CBK Provincie Utrecht, Amersfoort (cat.)
2001 Archipel, Apeldoorn
1997 VB Galerie- Kunstuitkijk, Deventer
1996 Grafisch Atelier, Utrecht
1993 A.Wulfse Startgalerie, Amersfoort
1992 Galerie Bert Mertens, Utrecht
1990 Galerie Trajekt, Utrecht

Group Exhibitions (selection)

2011 Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, 'All About Drawing',
Schiedam
2010 Galerie 37 Spaarnestad, 'Diepsel', Haarlem
2010 De Ketelfactory, 'Wijdbeens', Schiedam (cat.)
(met Harm Hajonides en Roland Sohier)
2009 White box, 'Towing the line drawing space', New
York
2009 Salon du dessin contemporain, Galerie Maurits van
de Laar, Parijs (cat.)
2009 Close Encounters, VHDG, Leeuwarden (cat.)
2009 Stressed Spaces, KW 14, Den Bosch (cat.)
2009 Art Amsterdam, Galerie Maurits van de Laar,
Amsterdam (cat.)
2008 Museum Catharijneconvent, 'Allemaal Engelen',
Utrecht (cat.)

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- 2008 Galerie Maurits van de Laar (with Ed Pien), Den Haag
2008 CBK Gelderland, Avecom, 'It's all in the game',
Arnhem
2008 De nieuwe Salon, 'U Home', Utrecht (cat.)
2008 Dropstuff Pleinmuseum, (with Chris Brans),
Amersfoort
2008 Stedelijk Museum Schiedam, 'Verloren Paradijs' ,
Schiedam (cat.)
2008 Salon du dessin contemporain, Galerie Maurits van
de Laar, Paris
2007 Art Amsterdam, Dubbelbee Galerie, Amsterdam
(cat.)
2007 Stedelijk Museum Den Bosch, 'Comfort Discomfort',
Den Bosch
2007 Vrije Akademie Den Haag, 'Under Controle', Den
Haag (cat.)
2007 Museum Het Prinsenhof, 'Contour. Continuïteit',
Delft (cat.)
2007 Art Rotterdam, Galerie Maurits van de Laar,
Rotterdam (cat.)
2006 Museum Jan Cunen, 'verworvenheden', Oss
2006 Stichting Kik, 'reis door mijn kamer', Nijeveen
(cat.)
2006 Kunstfort Vijfhuizen, 'Hidden' (with Harm Hajonides
en Daniel Pflumm), Vijfhuizen
2006 Galerie Maurits van de Laar, (with Marc Nagtzaam)
Den Haag
2006 Art Rotterdam, Galerie Maurits van de Laar,
Rotterdam (cat.)
2006 Dubbelbee gallerie, 'drastic drawing', Amsterdam
2006 RC de ruimte, 'tekeningen', IJmuiden
2005 Museum Jan Cunen, 'papier. schaar. steen'
(with Karin van Dam en Roland Sohier), Oss (cat.)
2005 Kunstrai, Galerie Maurits van de Laar, Amsterdam
(cat.)
2005 CBK Rotterdam, 'my satellite mind', Rotterdam
2005 Galery Art Mur, 'dutch nature', Montreal, Canada
(cat.)
2005 Tekengenootschap Pictura, 'eighteen inches personal
space' (met Hans de Wit), Dordrecht
2005 Galerie Luca, Zaltbommel
2005 Stichting Obras, 'Inter-Actif', Evora, Portugal
2004 Galleria Astuni, Pietrasanta, Italy
2004 Centraal Museum, 'Mikrokosmos', Utrecht (cat.)

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- 2004 Galerie Loerakker, Amsterdam
2004 Kunstrai, Galerie Loerakker, Amsterdam (cat.)
2004 Stedelijk Museum Aalst, 'Wish you were here', Aalst (Belgium) (cat.)
2003 York Quay Gallery, 'Intravention', Toronto (Canada)
2003 Fonds BKVB, 'Tussen Droom en Daad', Amsterdam
2003 W 139, 'Intravention', Amsterdam
2003 Kunst Mondiaal, 'Tekenketen', Tilburg (cat.)
2003 KW 14, 'Tekenen des Tijds', Den Bosch (cat.)
2003 Kunstrai, Galerie Maurits van de Laar, Amsterdam (cat.)
2002 4e Salon van Utrechtse kunstenaars en vormgevers, Centraal Museum, Utrecht (cat.)
2002 Motive Gallery, '4x Tekeningen', Haarlem
2002 Galerie Maurits van de Laar, Den Haag
2001 Stichting Kik, 'No Milk Today', Kolderveen (cat.)
2001 Galerie Maurits van de Laar, Den Haag
2001 Galerie Tegenbosch, Heusden a/d Maas
2001 Artis, Den Bosch
2000 CBK Provincie Utrecht, 'Zinnenprikkelend' Amersfoort (cat.)
1999 Stichting Zet, Galerie Outline, Amsterdam
1999 Archipel, 'Kunst boven de Bank', Apeldoorn
1999 Kunstmanifestatie 'De Dubbelkamer', Schiedam
1998 3e Salon van Utrechtse kunstenaars en vormgevers, Centraal Museum, Utrecht, (cat.)
1996 Nouvelles Images, 'Past Transparencies', Den Haag
1996 De Brakke Grond, Amsterdam
1995 Kunsthuis 13, Velp
1994 Begane Grond, 'Openingstentoonstelling', Utrecht
1994 Hermen Molendijk Stichting, 'Het Getekende Gelaat', Amersfoort (cat.)
1994 Museum De Wieger, 'Het Getekende Gelaat', Deurne (cat.)
1993 Galerie Van den Berge, Goes
1992 1e Salon van Utrechtse kunstenaars, Centraal Museum Utrecht (cat.)

Publications

- 1995 'About Silent Heroes and Idiots', Mark Baltser, Godert van Colmjon, isbn 90-802815-1-4
2003 'The Reservation', Meta Knol, Alex de Vries, Harm Hajonides, isbn 90-802815-2-2
CPNB Prize The Best Dutch Book Designs 2003

Bibliography (selection)

- 2006 W. van der Beek: 'Een vlucht naar binnen';
Kunstbeeld #6, pp 36-39
- 2006 X. de Jong: 'Kunst koestert verdedingsfort'; de
Volkskrant, 4 juli
- 2006 S.Smets: 'Beklemmende kunst in koel fort'; NRC, 27
juni
- 2005 R.Pingen, K.Schippers: 'Papier. Schaar. Steen'
G.van den Hoven: 'Sneeuwvitjes intocht en andere
verhalen'; Brabants Dagblad, 31 augustus
- 2005 M.van der Voort: 'Cornelissen blijft hopelijk nog lang
tegen de wind in plassen'; Brabants Dagblad, 15
februari
- 2005 K. Duking: 'De Mentale Ruimtes van Robbie
Cornelissen'; Utrechts Nieuwsblad, 14 februari
- 2004 W.van der Beek: 'Robbie Cornelissen'; Kunstbeeld
#28 6
- 2004 H.den Hartog Jager: 'Volle tekeningen van Nieuwe
Neuroten'; NRC, 16 juli
- 2004 W.Prins: 'Dol op een Oortje', Centraal Museum Krant;
#13,pp 5-7
- 2003 H.Hajonides, M.Knol, A.de Vries: 'Robbie Cornelissen
'Tekeningen Het Reservaat'
- 2003 I.Poppe: 'Post uit het Reservaat'; NRC, 14 februari

Film

- 1998 Animation film, 'The Boy' (Moving Drawing Pictures)
Press Prize City of Utrecht 2000
- 2006 Animation film, 'Het Grote Geheugen' ('The
Capacious Memory') (9.47) animation: Daniel Dugour
sound: Kees Went
- 2009 Animation film, 'The Labyrinth Runner' (10.25)
Presentations of the film 'Het Grote Geheugen'
(selection):
Galerie Maurits van de Laar;
Animation Festival Utrecht;
Stichting Kik, Nijeveen;
Museum Jan Cunen, Oss;
Institut Neerlandais, Paris (F);
CBK Apeldoorn;
Stedelijk Museum Den Bosch;
Impakt, Utrecht;
European Media Art Festival, Osnabrueck (D).

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Teaching and advising

- 2001-04 Member Advisory Committee of Art for the Province of Utrecht
- 2001-10 Member Advisory Committee of Drawing for the Province of Utrecht
- 2006- Teaching at Artez, Zwolle

Working methodology, General

For research he does several things. He reads books and newspaper articles. Looking in photobooks and making a lot of notes in a diary. And finding moments where he was touched and connect images by this moments.

Robbie Cornellissen told me he has two different starting points. He used to work from imagination, abstract or figurative. But lately he starts with copying a photo/picture. He works from imagination to something more realistic, or he starts with something realistic and works towards imagination. Both of these processes will end in the middle of realistic and imagination, but the result will be different. Sometimes he copies a picture without adding something, and other times something happens in the drawing; an other world comes in.

With big projects he has a clear idea where it will go. Than he is very focused. After being focused on one project it is hard for him to get the same focus again. This will give new and other ideas space to be developed. He discovers new things and that makes it exciting to keep making work.

There is a tread in his working methodology, because there are things he found out he is good at and can be repeated. The most important thing for him is to keep the fun in the work.

' When it is entertaining to make, the drawings will be better, the project will be better and is therefore good for yourself and the work. If you like what you are doing, or are happy with what you achieved, it will be noticed in the work.'

A drawing has to tricker him in one way or another, in order to like working with it.

Ideally he only want to do things he feels like doing.

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Working methodology, exhibition in Centraal Museum Utrecht.



Robbie Cornelissen and the maquette of the Centraal Museum Utrecht

For the exhibition in Centraal Museum Utrecht he had as goal to remake some of his existing drawings, but than in the scale and form as he wanted for the space. He already had made a lot of drawings. He had the animation film 'The Capacious Memory' which go's through a 3d space and shows his work in that space.

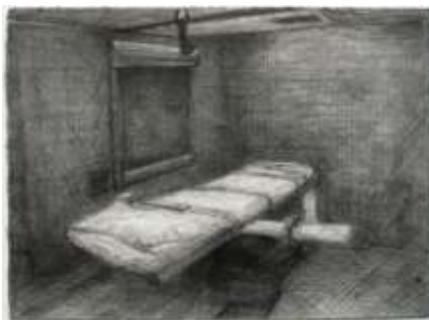
From this film he reselected images he wanted to make again, but than as places to visit. Not as in the filmlike context that you sit down and everything passes by, but you had to walk there yourself.

For example when he is drawing a very difficult copy of an image and noticed that he gets tired. He than has to find a way how it will evolve faster and different, to make it interesting enough to go on with it, to give him energy again.

He is searching for some elements in the work what makes the drawing come alive. Sometimes a realistic drawing needs to be mixed with a fantasy world, but sometimes it doesn't ask for anything.

He likes to make something on the border of reality and fantasy. *'It is a search for the borders, where you can develop yourself, where you can do what you like.'*

He remade the small 'executiekamer' in bigger scale.



'Small'



'Big'

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The line drawing ' little boy peeing the universe' a couple of times before, but not as big as there and for first time together with other people.

The cube arised inspired by the architecture. He felt that when everything was on the wall it stayed very flat. And because all his work is about space; the films had a spaciousness and the drawing has a spaciousness, He wanted to add a 3d element in it, together with the tribune. The cube and the tribune were spaces where you had to walk around, what would give you even more the feeling of spaciousness.

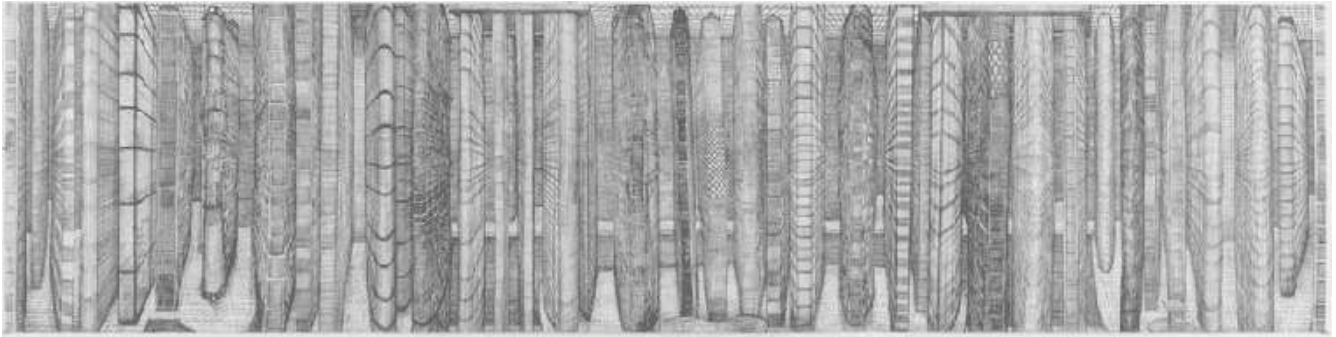


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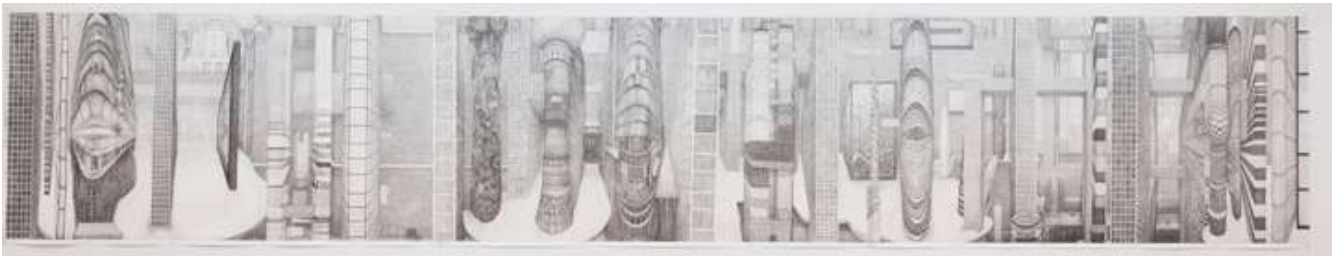
In den Haag he did kind of the same thing. He remade a drawing he already did before. He had used the concept 'The Capacious Memory' before and re-used it there.

The good thing is that it doesn't really matter if you remake the same drawing ten times, he will never be the same. Especially if you work as complicated as Robbie Cornelissen does.

If you compare 'The Capacious Memory 2003', which was in the exhibition in Utrecht, with the 'The Capacious Memory 2011' you will see they have a total different energy, but they are created from the same reasoning. There is, of course, a pattern of his handwriting, there are some continuities in those works.



'The Capacious Memory 2003'



'The Capacious Memory 2011'

With this project in Den haag, he had asked for an assistant, because it was a big work. Therefore he had to think of a concept where she could do a lot.

He worked different than normal, there was more structure, but it didn't influence his work in a negative way.

Because of this big projects he didn't have enough time to make drawings himself, and knows he has to pay attention. Drawing is his source to feel good, he draws because it makes him feel better.

Why Pencil

He loves the feeling of the pencil, the graphite, the structure, the gloss. You can erase things and work with a lot of nuances. It is the love for the craft. You can create the most complicated things with just a pencil, eraser and a piece of paper.

Technique and film

' I am not technical at all, I even hate technique.'

For the animation films he works together with a 3D animator. He understands the basics of that technique, but prefers drawing where you can change your mind every second. You have more control over the situation. Animating on a computer is way more complicated.

Working together with some one else is a advantage, because that gives an other layer to the work. But sometimes that layer represents to much the technique and gets to slick. That is the reason why he made the charcoal animations.

'To get more psychic and to represent drawing more.'

The ideal for him would be if he could do it all by myself, but he decided that it is to complicated.

Drawn animations is to much work for him, he draws to precise for that technique. It takes to much time to see the result.

For making the films he had to think as a film maker. He had problems with that. It was to much work and to complicated. It took a year before the film was finished.

What he likes is that you can do a lot with little resources. He sees himself not as a inventor, but as a drawer/illustrator.

For film you have to have a sort of storyline.

What he liked about his films is that he was able to use some pieces of the film and re-edit them into the most simplistic form.

These animations are really nothing, just moving numbers or charcoal spaces, but he was surprised by the result and how they work because of that it is nothing.

Always when he finished a film he never wants to do it again, but after a while it starts tinkling again.

Still he prefers drawing above film.

He like how the animation in the exhibition in Centraal Museum in Utrecht is shown as a painting/drawing on the wall, not as a film.

He is thinking going back to that simplicity, away from that complicated film stuff.

He doesn't want to get caught in the technique.

' Technique is complicated during exhibitions also. You have to know what the space has and you are depended on the people who work there. It could cost a lot of energy, especial when things do not go the way

you wanted.'

Funding

He doesn't want that money will play a big part in his creating process.

When he started his work as an artist he mainly lived on grants and benefits. In that time it was more easy to get financially support of the government.

He applied for a grant to be able to make his big drawings.

He tried to make his living by only selling his work, but it was impossible to get that amount of money to be able to take care of his family. His work takes that much time that the work had to be very expensive to cover the costs.

The strange thing in Holland is that it is harder to earn your money with selling work than getting a 'uitkering'(financially support of the government)or ask for grants.

It is easier to get 20.000 by grants, than by selling your own work. But that is probably going to change now.

The most attractive thing to do is to do both. And selling work and asking for grants.

He works also as an teacher, does commissioned work, sells his work.

He has a lot of different ways to get his money.

The first ten years he hardly earned anything.

'If you have jobs next to your own work,you have to be aware that you still have enough time and energy to make your own work.'

He knows that he needs at least 3 days a week to be occupied with his own work to keep the work flowing.

Exhibit

He likes to be asked by galleries and musea.
Visiting the galleries with his work felt very humiliating.
By taking the changes you get to exhibit, via artist initiatives ,
CBK exhibitions, using his network, he made his work seen.

At this moment he has to make a selection of where to exhibit. If you exhibit to much, it will take away a lot of energy and you will not have enough time to concentrate on your work. He chooses the exhibitions who feel good, who are adding something to your work,who give energy.

The exhibition in Utrecht and Den Haag was the change to finally show his work the way he wanted.
These are the highlights of his career till now.

Collaboration can give you a other impulse to your work. It can really add something. The same with assignments, they can give you an impulse and make you do things you else would not have done.