

REVIEWS AMSTERDAM

## Rezi van Lankveld

Annet Gelink Gallery

By Jurriaan Benschop 🗣️



Rezi van Lankveld, *Diagonal*, 2023, oil on canvas, 23 1/4 × 18 1/2".

The motifs in Rezi van Lankveld's paintings are always in a state of becoming, with the potential to be seen as landscapes, still-life objects, or human figures, and, consequently, the typically small-scale canvases do not fit into any particular genre but remain allusive to many. The artist practices what might be called a flexible figuration, aiming to keep the paintings open and truthful to the experience not only of seeing things or remembering them, but also of reflecting on their nature.

In her recent show "Imprint," van Lankveld presented eight new paintings. Noteworthy was that every work contained some blue, and in most of them it was the most prominent color in a generally subdued palette. The title might have hinted at how painting leaves an imprint of life on the surface rather than an image of likeness. Or on a more formal level it referred, perhaps, to the compositional outlines of situations abstracted or memorized. Small in size, yet assertive in presence, each of the works was given considerable wall space, accentuating its individuality. There was

considerable diversity in touch and surface treatment, as well as in the tensions that activate the compositions. While in earlier work, van Lankveld left a good deal to chance, pouring paint onto the surface and taking her cues from the result, the artist's hand has now become more prominent as a directorial force. She still welcomes accident and chance as necessary moments in developing the work, but she shows more deliberation in the way she defines the composition through her brushwork. This approach results in more articulate differences from piece to piece, giving each of the paintings a distinct mood, as if the artist were addressing us in different tones of voice. While *Close* (all works 2023) is soft and gentle, *Arrow* has a colder temperature, and *Dream* feels easy and nonchalant.

*Diagonal* is composed in quarters, like a sheet of paper folded horizontally and vertically, with each of the four parts having its own dynamism as they all push toward the center. The fleshy colors create a slightly irritating effect; something about the combination hurts. The painting rubs against the grain, and just for that reason leaves an impression—an imprint. Having conflicting parts does not mean the work cannot have unity; van Lankveld makes sure each painting retains some kind of harmony, however elusive, so that the viewer can accept the scene in its ambivalence as plausible. Her work offers nuance. She has an eye for, and appreciation of, the complexity and dynamics of situations. This makes her paintings appear, in a time of deepening polarization and conflict, truthful and reflective.

Such embrace of ambivalent forms of figuration is not new. One can think back to Cubist painters presenting different angles of a face, or Willem de Kooning's ability to make representational motifs come and go in flashes. But van Lankveld has her own method and vocabulary for communicating ambivalence. Her poetics of fluidity involves both composition and color. In her universe, even a stone can flow like a river, just as a landscape can open its mouth.

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