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Orari Museo Villa Croce:
giovedì-venerdì: 12-19
sabato-domenica: 10-20

Kees Goudzwaard
ASCENDING / DESCENDING

installazione Site-Specific / Staircase of Villa Croce
Project by Ilaria Bonacossa
Assistant curator Ginevra D'oria

14 July – 24 September 2017
opening 13 July 2017, 18.00-21.00

Villa Croce presents **Ascending / Descending**, the first site-specific installation by **Kees Goudzwaard** in an Italian public museum.

This Dutch artist stands out on the international scene for his abstract and always recognizable stylistic language, in works that at first glance might seem like simple color studies created with small pieces of paper and adhesive tape. Upon closer examination, the observer can discover minor variations of the tones that are actually the result of a long, painstaking procedure, painted with remarkable care.

For each work, in his studio Goudzwaard creates a model with small square and rectangular pieces of paper, acetates, transparent sheets arranged in more or less regular grids, attached with masking tape. This initial collage phase always calls for lots of time and develops gradually until the artist has reached the desired composition and atmosphere. At this point, he carefully paints the original collage on canvas, on a scale of 1:1, perfectly reproducing every single fragment, transforming the creative act of painting into a long process of transposition.

In a certain sense Goudzwaard's creativity emerges in the first phase, where the slow process of assembly allows him to capture time as a solid entity, bringing out the sense of calm and peace often associated with his works. In the second phase the artist transforms the copy into a new original, and when the work is complete he destroys the collage. Totally controlling the world he represents, trying to leave no room for change, the hard work of transferring a two-dimensional object of his own making onto canvas allows him to reclaim authorship of an image that doesn't seem to imply any creativity. This way of working allows Goudzwaard to concentrate exclusively on painting and color, permitting him to come to terms with the painting without distractions, because the composition and the subject have become somehow less significant. The intentional repetition of the structures, created with flat forms held together by barely visible pieces of tape, becomes a way to increase the sensitivity of the viewer to the variations of the surface, the borders and contours of the reproduced fragments.

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Beyond the apparent simplicity of his poetics and a limited formal language, Kees Goudzwaard reveals an extreme pictorial complexity, between abstraction and representation, thanks to his indisputable talent. The precise realism of these still lifes and the three-dimensional character of the compositions generate the illusion of multiple planes of depth. Through the different levels of transparency of the color, he creates a sense of perspective space that reminds us of the *trompe l'oeil* effects of the Flemish Renaissance tradition.

Like all the artist's works, the wall painting made for the staircase of Villa Croce had a long genesis. About one year ago, in his studio Goudzwaard made an actual-size model of the wall on which to prepare his collage. When every piece was in place, he made a smaller preparatory study in oil paint, entitled *Ascending / Descending*. This work is a sort of zoom into his canvas; the surface to be painted is greatly enlarged, while at the same time the fragments of paper are also enlarged. The wall chosen by the artist reflects the approach of transition of the work, just as the painting does for the artist. This wall painting moves towards an archetype, a sort of passage, a space between one dimension and another. The door on ground floor and the staircase of the villa connect different spaces and levels, while the painting adds another dimension: the entry into a pictorial space. Observing this image, simply standing in front of the work, one has the sensation of being able to freely move for a certain distance inside space and time. The artist's meticulous work generates an image in which the parts seem to *ascend and descend* at the same time. Is like if the gathered parts are held in *suspense* in a temporarily frozen moment; like a continuous shift from one side to another, captured in the instant in which small and large elements are about to find their own right position in relation to the others, or are perhaps about to move away from that point.

Ascending / Descending is made with a series of signs, in tones of white and gray, distributed on the surface of the wall, like a path of access to the imaginary space of transparency of the tones of a color scale. Overlapping different layers of semi-transparent fragments, Goudzwaard creates an *aerial perspective* like that of Leonardo, managing to convey the impression of depth through very light glazings that create a sensation of atmosphere, of a space where air, humidity and subtle shadings of light blend imperceptibly and distort the visual clarity.

This wall painting is not just an improvisation on movement, on the ascent and descent of a staircase, but refers in a wider, spatial and atmospheric sense to thermal movement, that of the air – according to the artist – that rises from the port of Genoa along the Carignano hill where the museum stands. In this work light, form, volume and structure blend together in a temporary covenant permanently captured in an image that embraces fragility and power of the pictorial parts.

Kees Goudzwaard was born in 1958 in Utrecht (NL) and lives and works in Antwerp (BE). Major solo shows include: *Walled Garden*, Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp Borgerhout (BE, 2016); *Between Red and a Transparent Plane*, De Kabinetten van De Vleeshal, Middelburg (NL, 2014); *Setting for White*, Cardi Black Box Gallery, Milano (IT, 2012); *Tuning*, Stedelijk Museum, Schiedam (NL, 2011); *Provisional space*, Museum of Modern Art, Arnhem (NL, 2010); Culturgest, Lisbon (PT, 2006) and S.M.A.K., Ghent (BE, 2005). He has taken part in many group shows in several institutions around the world such as MMCA, Seoul (KR, 2016); Palazzo Fortuny, Venice (IT, 2015); Fondazione Giuliani, Rome (IT, 2014); Galerie Crèvecoeur, Paris (FR, 2013);