

*à redouter*

Edition series by Gert Verhoeven

From 1784 until 1840, the Belgian painter Pierre-Joseph Redouté focused on meticulously drawing and painting botanical elements. Most known are his roses. His talent made him the court artist of Joséphine Beauharnais's rose garden. She was Napoleon's first wife and Redouté had had the honor of accompanying Napoleon during his travels in Egypt. The extremely meticulously painted little roses are close to perfection, although, looking more closely, an insect, a withered leaf or a broken branch is concealed in the painting.

The pictures became very popular, also in Flanders, where everyone seemed to have a reproduction of one of these roses in their hallway, toilet or bathroom at some point. That is how these pictures have become part of the collective memory, so to speak.

With the play on words 'à redouter' (translation: to be feared), the title of the series, Gert Verhoeven refers to this piece of domestic history. With pictures and a design reminiscent of Redouté's roses, he creates his own 'greeting cards', as a gesture of sincere affection. Analogous to Redouté's pictures, Verhoeven's roses have a Latin inscription. The artist has exchanged the roses' names for the name of several skin diseases – a disruption of the skin, of the surface that separates inside and outside, that conceals what is hidden underneath – in combination with a 'small artist problem', a symptom of the neverending struggle of the artist. The doubt, despair, procrastination, thorns, ... small and big problems or formulations of problems.

Gert Verhoeven wants to link a piece of domestic history and the contemporary houses of culture. At first sight, he wants to introduce an element of nostalgic recognition and familiarity, an atmosphere of homeliness and cordiality into the antechambers of our contemporary museums and institutes.

That's why he proposes to hang one rose in 14 different cultural 'houses' and to offer this rose to the visitors in an exclusive edition that is only sold by the respective house. This way, the artist tries to spread the series of 14 as a 'Via Dolorosa', a sort of Way of the Cross by the artist, so that together they form a virtual exhibition. As indicated, the works are not meant for the actual exhibition spaces, but for the antechambers, such as the museum shops, the cloakroom, the hallway, the toilets, ...

Offering the edition also refers to the idea of the Fluxus multiples that played an important part in the ambition to democratize art at the time. In the museum shop, the edition is open to a larger audience. But – contaminated by unwanted skin diseases – it also refers to the insidious threat of the commercialization of these museums, to the risk that, together with the democratization, commercialization will flood our museums and undermine

the serene frame needed to show art. The way a disease can irreparably damage the skin. The way a little insect can completely swallow the rose.

The first in the series, *Procrastinatio in Rosacea*, was released at Museum M in 2015, the second, *Castratio and Menopausis*, will be produced in co-operation with LLS387 in December 2017. The edition will be presented as part of the yearly edition sale at Etablissement d'en face. During the opening on December 8th, together with Gert Verhoeven, children will sign the entire edition.

Gert Verhoeven

Edition series à redouter: *Castratio and Menopausis*

Dimensions: 60 x 90cm

Edition of 33 (+ 2 AP)

Price: 270 euro (incl. VAT); for official Sympathisanten van LLS387: 216 euro