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“Topsy Turvy”

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05.25.12-09.23.12 *De Appel Arts Centre*

Curated by director Ann Demeester, “Topsy Turvy,” the first exhibition in De Appel’s new location and renovated space, lives up to its title, as many of the works create a sense of confusion, or at least point to the more aberrant aspects of life. The exhibition includes a collection of David Lloyd’s drawings from 1982–85 for *V for Vendetta*, the comic book written by Alan Moore, as well as a portrait of the anarchist V shown in his Guy Fawkes mask, which was appropriated by the Occupy movement—a recent example of Oscar Wilde’s antimimetic, life-imitates-art position. Ugo Rondinone’s hyperrealist sculpture of a dozing plump circus clown in bright garb, *If There Were Anywhere but Desert*. *Sunday*, 2000, shows the human side of the performer, who exhibits the same foibles as the rest of us, appearing gluttonous and lazy rather than entertaining.

Although not a part of the exhibition, the alluring long-term installation of LED lights that continuously shift color in Allard van Hoorn’s *Skies over Snaefell*, 2012, refers to the sky over a glacier in Iceland and helps connect the first and second floors, as it is situated on a wall that is viewable from both above and below. Upstairs, the James Ensor painting *Carnival in Flanders*, 1931, is not as festive as it initially appears; on careful examination it reveals a bloody bird that was ravaged by two cats amid a parade of colorful performers. Toshie Takeuchi’s film *Tampopo Head and the Name of the Dogs*, 2011, focuses on two reclusive men: Ed—an avid reader of philosophy and the father of Takeuchi’s friend Janneke—and Hilko, who lives with six hounds that he has named after women from real life. A creepy psychological portrait, the reality-inspired work provides undeniable voyeuristic pleasure, while emphasizing the strange dynamic among the four characters in several dreamlike sequences.

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