

all about drawing – 100 dutch artists

text by yasmijn jarram

ben kruisdijk's drawings look exceptionally clear, almost simple. nevertheless, they do not allow themselves to be directly elucidated. there are works that are accompanied by text, but whether or not this serves to clarify or confuse is not evident.

whatever the case, confusion is regularly present at a visual level. sheets of paper on which cuttings from comic strips or colour books have been stuck with tape look like collages, whereas everything is actually very precisely drawn.

in addition, kruisdijk integrates art-historical influences in his work, particularly influences from the modernism from the early 20th century.

the carriers that kruisdijk chooses for his drawings are not always self-evident. for example, he processes (used) x-ray photos, among other things. he scratches the pictures with a knife and sees what happens to them in another context, i.e., that of the artwork. liberated from their societal function, the aesthetic qualities of the x-ray photos are immediately apparent. due to their sober colours, transparency, shadow element and fragile play of lines, the image acquire a quality that is almost poetic.

kruisdijk often takes the motifs for his work from nature: animals, leaves, people and especially anatomy capture his imagination. his drawings with an 'academic character' recall posters in the biology classroom, but have a humorous twist: a half-dissected male hand with polished nails, or two hand skeletons that caress one another affectionately.

the combination of various visual resources leads to a carefully structured visual language in which kruisdijk the artist is not easily identifiable. within the discipline of drawing, which is frequently associated with intimacy and personality, that is a tense paradox. as an explorer, kruisdijk investigates the boundaries of drawing: he plays with the medium. works are disguised as colouring pages and childish stickers. he invites you to connect imaginary numbers, to cut along dotted lines, or to fill in the missing letter. kruisdijk sketches the contours, the spectator colours them in.