

LÜ 6/07

FRANS VAN LENT: RAAM

Opening: 7 June 2007, starting at 6.00 p.m.
Exhibition runs from 8 June – 22 July 2007
Opening hours: Thu-Su 2.00 – 7.00 p.m

A step to the window. A hand shielding the eyes from the light. A long gaze out on the street.
The way back into the room.

These activities take one minute in time; the artist Frans van Lent has repeated this simple and day-to-day action sixty times. What at first sight looks like a loop which - as common in artistic videos – accommodates the viewer with a sixtyfold repetition, then turns out to be an action unfolding itself in a flow of time.

In contrast to the elusive impression of the same time segment passing sixty times, you have to realise that there is just time passing. 60 minutes in which things and people will change, history will happen, the course of the sun will proceed, thoughts may pass, concentration will decrease, the body will get tired. Actually, the lighting situation changes in the run of the video. Actually, the gesture of stepping-to-the-window becomes subject to variations which are inevitable and subtle at the same time. But this isn't the topic just as its repetition isn't.

On the first floor of the former border watchtower which is structured by the iron shutters of the eight loop holes, the video with a window as main topic is projected onto the wall heading to the West. The fictitious window seems to open the wall. But there is symbolism beyond. The wall remains impenetrable and closed just as the world behind the window glass. Again you find repetition and variation: The moving of the leaves on the tree, the cars scurrying by which you can only see indirectly, as a reflection in the window pane of a car parked in the foreground.

There is no secret. Even in case you are patient enough to digest – in a kind of quasi-meditation – the entire 60 minutes of the video, you will not see anything else but the opening sequence. There is no visible reason to step to the window. Its repetition turns the gesture into an autonomous one, just acting self-referentially. Likewise, the position of the viewer becomes arbitrary and therefore dubious. With him, the assumed viewer at the window becomes an object of watching. Diverging from the former assumption, the glance of the viewer is not directed over the shoulder of a fictitious viewer to an objectified world – the outside – but is reflected, back into real space and into the present.

It is this direction of impact that lead to the artist's decision of - for the time of the exhibition - blocking the way to the upper floor with its view to the outside in order to obstruct just this view to what happens on the outside of the watchtower. Here again, the window (in dutch: raam) opens to the inside.