



1995 The Thrill of it All 45x50 cm

"Perception is central to Hanssen's work - how the figures she selects from old magazines and photographs were once perceived, how we see them today, and how the translation into paint alters them, liberates them. (...) The sense of time, a conflation of past and present, underpins all her work, as does the sense that a woman's role is always conditioned by the society in which she exists." **Charlotte Mullins**, *Picturing People* (Thames & Hudson, 2015)

Karin Hanssen lives and works in Antwerp. She is regarded as one of the enduring female painters who emerged in the early Nineties as part of the new Flemish painting scene.

Hanssen's paintings and drawings are replete with meticulously constructed layers of philosophical and pictorial meanings, and reward prolonged looking. She incessantly explores the concepts of temporal disorientation, social semiotics, feminism, the 'Rückenfigur', the (absent) gaze, and 'The Borrowed Gaze'.

For the past two decades Hanssen has worked in series. Her clearly defined cycles of work consistently expand her temporal, spatial and gendered constructions. Her paradigmatic portraits and scenarios - painted in hazy colours - are embedded in deterministic environments, ranging from domestic interiors to holiday landscapes derived from 'Fifties' and 'Sixties' magazine photography.

Hanssen's evolution began with the painting cycle 'I have a Dream' (1994-1995) a series of paintings and the drawing series 'Die Gebildeten' on stereotypical photographic representation of class and gender, which was followed by 'Unveiled' (1995) and 'The Thrill of it All' (1995-98) with its focus on social determinism of women and the use flashback as a device and her acclaimed series of drawings 'Modern Living' (1995-2001), followed by 'Scenes' (1998-2001) and 'Time Structures', which introduces the freeze-frame and close-up as methods to merge past and present in a critical examination of modernity. The cycles 'As You Like It' (2004-2007), inspired by Shakespeare's gender ambiguous comedy, 'ABC,123' (2005-2008), which opens up a global gaze and introduces close-ups of interiors and 'Now=The Time' (2009-10) continue the cyclical explorations. 'The Borrowed Gaze' (2010-11), a re-appropriation of the famous work 'Paternal Admonition' (1654) of Gerard ter Borch, presents a departure with its conceptual examination of the averted female figure in 17th century genre painting and programmatically re-introduces the live issue of the role of female artists in the contemporary Belgian art scene. Hanssen's series of works 'A Room of One's Own' (2011-14) is named after the 1929 classic essay by Virginia Woolf in which the writer looked at the position of female writers in the then male-dominated world of literature. Hanssen's work critically examines the complacent acceptance of modernity by confidently exposing some of its faultiness.

Karin Hanssen (PhD) has exhibited at S.M.A.K in Ghent, Museum Helmond (NL), De Garage Mechelen, the MAS Museum Antwerp, the 7th Sharjah Biennial (UAE), the 2nd Yokohama Triennial (Japan), Tafa gallery, Tianjin, (China), Chelsea Art Museum, New York (USA), Kunstverein Ahlen, (Germany), New Art Gallery Walsall (UK), The Salzburger Kunstverein (Austria) and Canberra Contemporary Art Space, (Australia). Her work is in public and private collections worldwide. Selected Publications include: 'The Borrowed Gaze', Charlotte Mullins (Lannoo, 2014), 'The Borrowed Gaze/Variations GTB' (MER, 2012) Johan Pas, Daniela Hammer-Tugendhat, Kurt Vanhoutte, 'The Thrill of It All' (MER, 2010) Philippe Van Cauteren, Gregory Salzman, David Broker, Now=The Time, (Roma publication 83-11, 2010) Philippe Van Cauteren and Karin Hanssen and 'Modern Living' (Objectif_Exhibitions, 2004) Alain de Botton, Gregory Salzman.

Since 2016, Karin Hanssen is member of the class of Arts of the Royal Flemish Academy of Belgium for Science and the Arts.