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NADA MIAMI:
ROBERT ROEST





ROBERT ROEST
Dagiel, 2024
Oil on canvas
78 x 55 inches
USD 20,000



ROBERT ROEST
Satchmigal, 2024
Oil on canvas
78 x 55 inches
USD 20,000



ROBERT ROEST
Ezequeel, 2024
Oil on canvas
78 x 55 inches
USD 20,000



ROBERT ROEST
Ezoil, 2024
Oil on canvas
78 x 55 inches
USD 20,000



ROBERT ROEST
Abatcha, 2024
Oil on canvas
78 x 55 inches
USD 20,000



ROBERT ROEST
Asrafil, 2024
Oil on canvas
78 x 55 inches
USD 20,000



ROBERT ROEST
Naromiel, 2024
Oil on canvas
78 x 55 inches
USD 20,000

Interview

STUDIO VISIT

Robert Roest on Idols, Angels, and the Anthropocene

By Gideon Jacobs

January 30, 2024

GIDEON JACOBS: How do you react to moments in your life in which the universe arranges itself in a way that can feel like a “sign,” or synchronicity?

ROBERT ROEST: The universe can seem something like that, part of a narrative and you are woven into. And that is a tremendous, amazing feeling. Some people have that sometimes, maybe *all* people, but when such a thing happens, I’m very happy and I dive into it and I take it. But I also know that it could be, another time, the other way around. I used to hold onto such grand narratives that stitched everything together, that the universe aligns itself or whatever you call it. That’s as if something is meant to be, as if the universe had you personally in mind. I have thought a lot about meaning. In some circles some people say there is a “meaning crisis.” Have you heard of this term?

JACOBS: Yeah. Personally, I see it more as an image crisis. I think we are living entirely in the realm of arrows, as opposed to spending some of our lives in the realm the arrows are pointing to. So, if there’s a void of meaning—clearly things are pretty weird out there these days—I think it starts with images and the problem of how we relate to them.

ROEST: I think something is lost in trying to forbid idols. You have, let’s say, a tribe that still lives in a hunter-gatherer way and they have magical art. Now we totally dissected that stuff so that all of these great idolatrous values or purposes are lost. But let’s say they had some sort of art that was not just meant to be consumed, or to make a house pretty, or to develop an idea that roots them in a narrative. This art is superstitious art, they could use to touch on something that is very real. In the Bible, it says a lot of negative words as if these people were literally worshiping stone and wood. I think they got that wrong. They were touching on some immaterial reality or thing, and fear that sculpture or painting or whatever it was. But the thing is, it seems you cannot have the profit of both thought processes. There is something to say for being aware of images and idolatry, but in the end, these people have an image about god they cannot do without.

JACOBS: I think that is an example of images serving as means to non-imagistic ends, properly functioning as arrows. But as technology gets more advanced and images grow more dynamic, engrossing, and convincing, do you trust our species to not get thoroughly lost in images, slip down that slippery slope?

ROEST: Well, I don’t trust our species and we will surely slip down many slopes. But images and representations—it’s the only way in which we can communicate, with ourselves and other people. So it’s slippery, but it can be an interesting slip, or I guess, or *slide*.

JACOBS: I like that. The anthropocene as just one long slippery slide.

The New York Times

What to See in N.Y.C. Galleries in February



Some of the details in Robert Roesel's paintings seem too good to be true, like the blazing eyeholes in "Barael." Robert Roesel, via Europa; Photo by Alex Yudzon

FORWARD



REALITY IS ALWAYS DEEPER, LARGER,
MORE PROFOUND AND CRAZY THAN
WE CAN COMPREHEND

Vivianne Pärli - 03.05.2023



In this conversation, the artist Robert Roest offers insight into his complex body of work, creative processes, how he deals with doubt and why he uses microsoft word to work with images

So you aim to create a little crack in the observer to let something else in?

Yes. It would be helpful, and maybe result in a more kind and understanding society, if more people realized that what they think, is not the world. Oftentimes, it's a little more complex, a little bit more nuanced or even completely different — and its' no problem. That is a very moralistic interpretation of my work maybe, but it is somewhere around that.



ROBERT ROEST

For Robert Roest, the act through which sensory information is reproduced, imitated, and transfigured into thought, speech, dreams, images, film, art, writing, and so forth is a evolutionary survival tactic—it creates meaning. This process is so omnipresent and natural that, at times, it might feel that mimicked objects surround us more than anything. Plato would argue that these reproductions of nature force us further and further away from their original source material but Roest believes this interpretative process allows us not only to be conscious but self-conscious, even meta-conscious. Our mimetic acts are the way in which reality catches a glimpse of itself.

Roest works in focused sets of five to ten paintings, most often investigating a specific theme, premise, or concept in a thorough fashion. This latest series—the angel paintings—investigates the relationship between representation and deception by pushing the potential of artifice to its nth degree. Even the frames are an apt example of illusion: the weathered structures are meticulously rendered trompe l'oeil of actual window frames. They invoke time's sunbleached snapshots of the sublime. The eroded, peeling lead paint of the frames work in sharp contrast with the traditional, pastoral landscapes below while a shining angel is crisply rendered above. Yet what is this angel but the most timeless, ineffable and complex system of all—weather, specifically crepuscular rays, an effect that occurs when the contrast between light and dark is most evident. Humans have not only read the stars, but noticed and interpreted spiritual images in the sky since the beginning of mankind, since the dawn of consciousness.

When images spark fear—why? And at what point might they spark faith? Staring into the angel in the clouds, how we might wish for our suspension of disbelief to kick in and startle us back into our bodies?

The eye immediately registers angelic shapes and forms. We see past fluffy clouds, blue sky, skinny strip of land. Our minds work with models of reality, not reality itself, Roest argues. One might even recognize some of the original source images considering the paintings are imitations, exaggerations and violations of photos that live on the internet. Lelabel seems to float on the azure blue and grassy hills of the infamous Microsoft desktop (which in itself is a reference to 19th century landscape painting) and Asrafil is not formed of clouds but by their angel-shaped absence, backlit by the streaming sun. Roest takes it to the next step by asking the viewer to join this next permutation: paintings that were memes that were photos that were angels that were clouds. Roest cites Northern Dutch landscape paintings as well as the work of Volodymyr Orlovsky and Isaac Levitan as key influences. Here, new forms and classical art tradition are reproduced and married in paint. The magnitude of reality continues to thwart and baffle our attempts to understand and accurately represent it. How might an artist enchant us into manufacturing a reality in which, for better or worse, we are watched over by angels?

ROBERT ROEST

Robert Roest (b.1992, Leerbroek, NL) lives and works in Jersey City, NJ. Roest studied painting at Hogeschool, University of the Arts in Utrecht, NL. Recent solo exhibitions include *Meatware Eco System II*, *Images for Deep Relaxation*, and *Physiological Hygiene*, Cinnamon, Rotterdam, NL, *I wanna leave the snakeskin*, Herman Van Veen Art Center, Soest, NL. He has shown in group exhibitions in the U.S. at Timothy Taylor Gallery, Westbeth Gallery, TW Fine Art, in NYC, Mana Contemporary in Jersey City, and abroad at Andratx, Mallorca Spain; New Gallerie, Paris, France; Guts Gallery, London, UK; Gallery Sophie Van de Velde, Antwerp, Belgium, and at the Gemeente Museum Den Hague in NL. Roest has been featured in the publications *The New York Times*, *Interview Magazine*, *Document Journal*, *Forward Festival*, and *Swarm Magazine*

ROBERT ROEST

b. 1992, Leerbroek, NL

Lives and works in New York, NY

Education

2017 HKU University of the Arts Utrecht, Netherlands

Solo Exhibitions

- 2024 *Eight Paintings Proving Angels Really Are Watching Over Us*, EUROPA, NY
- 2020 *Meatware Ecosystem II*, Cinnamon, Rotterdam, NL
- 2019 *Images for Deep Relaxation and Physiological Hygiene*, Cinnamon, Rotterdam NL
- 2019 *I wanna leave the snake skin*, Herman van Veen Art Center, Soest, NL *Meatware*
- 2017 *Ecosystem*, Cinnamon, Rotterdam, NL
- 2016 *Exorcise from a safe distance*, Cinnamon, Rotterdam, NL

Group Exhibitions

- 2024 *Dog Days of Summer*, Timothy Taylor Gallery, New York, US
- 2024 *Into The Abyss*, Embajada, San Juan, Puerto Rico
- 2023 *I don't mind, if you forgive me*, Bridddge gallery, New York, US
- 2023 *Dads*, Westbeth Gallery, New York, US
- 2022 *Message from the Underground*, Mana Contemporary Art, Jersey City, US
- 2022 *Direct Message*, TW Fine Art, New York, US
- 2022 *Hidden Remains*, Fontana Gallery, Amsterdam, NL
- 2022 *Winter Show*, CCA Andratx, Mallorca, ES
- 2022 *Art Rotterdam 2022*, Gallerie Fontana, Amsterdam, NL
- 2021 *Art Rotterdam 2021*, Cinnamon, Rotterdam, NL
- 2021 *The Interior*, Venus over Manhattan, New York, US
- 2021 *The Modern Dog painter II*, New Galerie, Paris, FR
- 2021 *Richard Waar?, Pictura*, Dordrecht, NL
- 2021 *When shit hits the fan again*, Guts Gallery, London, UK
- 2021 *A New Art World*, Guts Gallery, London, UK
- 2021 *Cave Canem*, Eve Leibe Gallery, London, UK
- 2021 *The Modern Dog Painter*, Karl Marx Studio Space, Paris, FR
- 2020 *Let me tell you a story*, LIS10 Gallery, Milan, IT
- 2019 *Ballroom Project*, Cinnamon, Antwerp, BE
- 2019 *TWENTYFORSEVEN*, academiegalerie, Utrecht, NL
- 2018 *Sky is one, ground is zero*, Allard Wildenberg Art Projects, Naarden, NL
- 2018 *Soft?*, Gallery Sophie van de Velde, Antwerp, BE
- 2018 *Screw Your Courage To The Sticking Place*, Showhouse JayJay, Antwerp, BE
- 2018 *Young Utrecht Delight*, Galerie SANAA, Utrecht, NL
- 2015 *Driemensionaal*, Galerie Kunstliefde, Utrecht, NL
- 2014 *Licht*, Zomerexpo, Gemeente Museum Den Hague, NL
- 2013 *Promise Promise*, Frank Taal Galerie, Rotterdam, NL

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