

# Catharina van Eetvelde



*Equation*, 2006, watercolour, acrylic and crayon on paper, 178 x 140 cm.



*Extended identity*, 2007, example 2, watercolour, acrylic and crayon on paper, 110.5 x 74.5 cm.

The line is rigorous, the colour applied with extreme precision. Catharina van Eetvelde's drawings present an implacable universe, within the confines of science and mechanics or cartography, depicted with great exigency. Although her virtuosity is not revealed through demon-

strations of shading and scrolling, her mastery is by no means less evident. The stroke is hard, dry. She even says incising the paper. "That's the great difference with painting. In drawing, there is not only pressure and concentration but also something that happens in the sketching. As I try to be pre-

cise, I sketch." In this manner, she sketches unidentified universes of ice. The line is almost like a razor slicing into the paper. Even when animals are depicted, they eye the viewer from head to foot in a hieratic style recalling the portraits in Byzantium art. The self-portraits turn out to be just as intriguing with big questioning eyes.

Catharina van Eetvelde will not say anything about the sense of her work because according to her and, here, we might paraphrase Daniel Arasse: *We don't see anything there*. "There is no exact cartography and in the domain of the micro, if we do not say what it is about, it is impossible to make, for instance, the difference between the surface of the moon and the inside of the lungs". Is her technical precision and laboratory universes a discreet criticism of an overly hygienist society? Perhaps. Is the choice of her medium in opposition to the star system that increasingly dominates contemporary art? Certainly. To satisfy her own rules of conduct and of life, she produces a lot and doesn't need any exterior to nourish her universe.

Since 2008, the drawings are more abstract and become geometrical. The work's subject becomes the line in itself, even if some figurative sproutings still spring up. The drawing seems to conceptualize itself even more. It is about showing another reality that she names mental, to lay things flat, dissect them, so that afterwards she can reconstruct them intuitively:

"For instance, if I draw a rabbit in a house, it will be positioned outside of it." Like in a game, we then recreate the scene. Which is not anodyne, for Catharina van Eetvelde loves to tell stories when she is drawing. It is for this reason that she also makes cartoon films. Therefore, we must not place our trust in these vectorial lines and this apparent rigour. The artist says that the most important thing is to have fun and never do the same thing twice. Whether it is in crayon, ink, acrylic, or by way of her graphic palette, the freedom is always greater, conferring a golden age on the medium. "Drawing has come to maturity. Computers allow even more spontaneity, but basically the honesty of the line is the same. We always remain faced with our own line." ■

## BIOGRAPHY

*Catharina van Eetvelde was born in 1967 in Ghent. She lives and works in Paris. She is represented by three main galleries: Anne Barrault in Paris, Tanit in Munich and Meert-Rihoux in Brussels. In 2008 and 2009, her work was shown in group shows in New York, Salzburg, Seoul and Beijing.*