

PREMONITIONS

Text by Dominic van den Boogerd

No matter how much knowledge, insight and experience Rezi van Lankveld (b. 1973) may have acquired by now, making a painting always begins from scratch for her, with an empty canvas and nothing more than a vague idea. Each of her paintings makes visible what previously existed only as an impression, a suspicion, a memory – the stardust of our existence.

Over the years, the painter has developed her own way of painting, combining brushstrokes with the pouring of diluted oil paint. The outcome of this process is unpredictable. Physical and chemical properties of the materials influence what happens on the canvas: pigments mix in unexpected configurations, wet patches dry to create erratic figures, with blurred or razor-sharp outlines, in nuances of colour that would be impossible to paint with a brush. Although the seeped-out patches of color are often pleasing to the eye, they are rarely to their maker's liking, so she vigorously sands them down, either partially or completely, and paints over them again. Van Lankveld says she is increasingly mastering this technique, but that this does not mean the act of painting has become easier.

Voice (2025) emerged from two shades of diluted paint bleeding together, a light creamy yellow and a very dark grey. The result is an expressive, undulating form somewhat reminiscent of a glove puppet. The blank figure is sandwiched between two blocks, each of which is purple and green in colour. Somehow the image evokes associations with Edvard Munch's panicked *Scream*, but stifled, muffled, suffocated. On the wall of the artist's studio is a photograph she once took in a museum, of an ancient Greek relief depicting theatre masks: where the mouth should be, a dark cavity gapes. Perhaps this eerie image of silencing unconsciously embedded itself in the artist's memory before she began her painting.

Van Lankveld trusts her intuition, effectively working by touch. Tactile qualities play a striking role in her paintings. Some sections seem heavy, solid and voluminous; others are light as a feather, wafer thin. Indeterminate surfaces that do not belong to specific objects nevertheless appear to express very specific qualities. Some parts look soft and damp,

while others seem hard as stone. There are sections that appear old and worn, and parts that sparkle as if brand new. In the speleological underworld of *Hold* (2025), for instance, stone-like structures prop up a blue glacial form that is threatening to slide away. The artist has jokingly said that she does not paint paintings but sculptures.

Indefinable forms keep each other in balance, chafe together, dissolve into their surroundings, float calmly by. There is a lot happening in this lively world, where everything revolves, rises, flows and falls, motions and behaviours that are subject to gravity to a greater or lesser extent. Hard fault lines alternate with meandering outlines and fuzzy boundaries. Chalky, hazy colours appear in different variations and gradations. Recent paintings are dominated by soft and subdued mixed tones; bright, artificial colours are almost entirely absent.

What Rezi van Lankveld is searching for is the unexpected. The revelation of the unknown is not, however, something that can be forced. Her paintings require a long period of incubation. Painting is time-consuming, labour-intensive and rarely efficient. The artist says most of her time is spent undoing previous actions. The image undergoes countless metamorphoses before something finally emerges from the paint that might be meaningful, a meaning that could only be expressed in paint.

“The essence of painting,” the painter Bram van Velde declared in a documentary about his work, “is giving a chance to the unknown.” Van Lankveld agrees with this statement. She does not want the image to appeal to what the viewer already knows or for figures to be easily identifiable. In some regards, her painted scenes seem akin to the dream world of the Surrealists. The strange imagery could be described, in the words of the Cuban painter Roberto Matta, as “psychological morphology.” It is all about a loss of control, about intensity and surrender. The barricades of routine, habit and common sense must be broken down.

A minuscule drama is unfolding behind the golden curtain of *Sabotage* (2025). Although it is entirely unclear what exactly is being sabotaged, you can sense from everything in the painting that something is not quite right. What Rezi van Lankveld articulates clearly and convincingly in her paintings is how persistent and dominant a vague premonition can be. This

is actually not so different from our daily lives, which more often than not are driven by subconscious motivations and hidden emotions.