

## **Midnight Jump. Hreinn Friðfinnsson at Rozenstraat - a rose is a rose is a rose**

February 15 – April 4 2020

Opening Saturday February 15 17:00 – 19:00.

Rozenstraat 59, 1016 NN Amsterdam

Visiting hours: Wednesday- Saturday 13:00 – 18:00

Hreinn Friðfinnsson (1943) uses the Rozenstraat - a rose is a rose is a rose as a stage to transform time, space, objects, the rational and irrational into captivating miracles. Jump along and immerse yourself into his universe.

Friðfinnsson's conceptual work has been characterized as poetic and playful, dealing often with storytelling, nature and time. It can be almost anything: a photograph, a story, a tracing, a mood, a quasi-scientific experiment, a paint stirring stick or a secret. A split second up in the air between the years 1975 and 1976, one shoe searching for the other one to form a pair, spiderwebs from the studio caught between glassplates, a pressed autumn leaf. Simple everyday objects or moments are used in a poetic and evocative way, simultaneously prompting confusion and delight.

Friðfinnsson's works are often structured around dualities and reversals – between left and right, past and present, near and far, inside and outside, empty and full, light and shadow, seen and unseen, cognition and perception, dreams and waking reality. Hence Friðfinnsson's frequent employment of mirrors, which not only reflect (and thereby double), but also reverse that which has been doubled. Mirrors also play tricks with perception of space, as in a site specific installation for the Rozenstraat where the columns are visually levitated and seem to float in infinity. A doubling twist is also apparent in Friðfinnsson's playful use of text, manipulating images by pairing them with a narrative. Other motives in his work are a link to his Icelandic roots and tributes to artists.

Both in form and content Friðfinnsson's work is hard to pin down. There's a transformative quality, always a surprise lurking around the corner. The works remain in state of flux even after their conception, often older works are re-used or expanded upon. Not even titles are stable in Friðfinnsson's practice. His assistants made up a word to describe this re-titling (an archival nightmare): Titlaflakk. Titla is 'title' in Icelandic, flakk is 'wandering'.

The exhibition in Rozenstraat - a rose is a rose is a rose presents a selection of works from the late 60's to now, with the focus on the start of his career in the 70's and the latest works. The exhibition includes photographs, drawings, paintings, videos, text, sculpture, installation and ready-mades. There is a selfportrait from his first show in Iceland, text and image based works from the 70's, documentation of his involvement with artist run spaces in Iceland and Amsterdam (Sum, In Out Center, Fignal) and documentation of Friðfinnsson's famous secrets project.

There are a few new presentations that have been made specifically for this show.

Friðfinnsson returns to his mythical *House Project*, a project based on the story of an old eccentric Icelander who intended to build a house inside out. In 1974 Friðfinnsson built the house based on the story in a remote area of the Icelandic volcanic tundra. Inversed, the wallpaper, curtains and framed pictures hanging on the outside, the house thereby contained the whole world, except itself. Since 1974 Friðfinnsson has returned to the work and developed new chapters in the life of the house thereby maintaining the mythology around it and adding new layers. The last episode of the project, the Fourth House, was shown at Skulptur Projekte Münster in 2017. For the Rozenstraat a presentation is commissioned that encompasses the complete *House Project*. The project will be discussed in depth during a special event (see events).

Friðfinnsson might well be Amsterdam's best kept secret. Famous abroad as one of the most influential artists of Iceland, inspiration to young artists internationally, but hardly known here (although in his neighborhood he is well appreciated as Mister Finson). It's certainly time now to celebrate the artist in his hometown, where he started in the seventies as part of the experimental art circuit and continues to develop his artistic vocabulary into ever expanding unknown territories.

Born in 1943 in Baer Dölum, Iceland, Hreinn Friðfinnsson has been living in Amsterdam since 1971.

Hreinn Friðfinnsson was co-founder of the Icelandic avant-garde artists' collective SÚM in Reykjavik in 1965. From 1972 to 1974 he was a member of In-Out Center, the first artist run space in Amsterdam. In the same period until 1980 he also ran a very small gallery named Fignal with Hlíf Svavarsdóttir, at their home at the Kerkstraat and later the Banstraat in Amsterdam.

Just recently Friðfinnsson's career was highlighted in a major traveling retrospective *To Catch a Fish with a Song: 1964-Today*, at KW Institute of Contemporary Art in Berlin and Centre d'Art Contemporain in Geneva. For this occasion *Hreinn Friðfinnsson: Works 1964-2019*, a catalogue raisonné has been published by Koenig Books. The book will be available at the in-house bookstore San Serriffe during the exhibition period at Rozenstraat / a rose is a rose is a rose.

Friðfinnsson has exhibited internationally since the 1970s. He had solo exhibitions at respected institutions such as the National Gallery (Reykjavík), the Serpentine Gallery (London) and Bergen Konsthall (Norway). Amsterdam based venues such as Gallery 845 (1970's), Galerie van Gelder (1990's), Kunstverein (2015) and Eenwerk (2018) have also hosted solo shows.

Hreinn Friðfinnsson is represented by Galería Elba Benitez (Madrid), Galerie Nordenhake (Berlin, Stockholm, Mexico City), i8 Gallery (Reykjavik), Meessen De Clercq (Brussels).

Midnight Jump is curated by Corinne Groot and Rob van de Ven (Zapp Productions) in collaboration with studio Friðfinnsson.

The exhibition is made possible by the Mondriaan Fund and AFK.

Special thanks to the 4 H's: Hreinn for everything, Hrafnhildur Helgadóttir and Halla Einarsdóttir for the smooth studio production and expertise on Friðfinnsson's archive, Hlíf Svavarsdóttir for lending some beautiful time-worn masterpieces.

#### Midnight Jump Events

February 18: House Project, Lectures by Cassandra Edlefsen Lasch and Annabelle von Girsewald on Hreinn Friðfinnsson's House Project.

February 20: Styrmir Örn Guðmundsson, Performance *The Red Eyed Artist Assistant. A lyrical storytelling performance by Styrmir Örn Guðmundsson about the experience of working as an artist's assistant for Hreinn Friðfinnsson.*

March 22: Home galleries, an informal meeting to explore the concept of home galleries, moderated by Noor Mertens with Hreinn Friðfinnsson, Hlíf Svavarsdóttir, Dorothé Orczyk, Corinne Groot, Sylvia van Berkel and others.

March 26: Friðfinnsson's Video Night.

April 1: Anecdotes from the archive, personal tour through the exhibition by Hrafnhildur Helgadóttir and Halla Einarsdóttir.

<https://www.rozenstraat.com/nl/>

Press contact: Corinne Groot, [mail@zappmagazine.nl](mailto:mail@zappmagazine.nl), 06-54995039