



Fiction forms what streams in us

**R 18,000.00 ex.
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This work is part of a series titled *Omens in hot bacon contradiction*, a new body of work by Anna van der Ploeg. The unassuming table has long been the subject of Van der Ploeg's work; through oil paintings, sculptural woodblocks, etching editions and unique paintings on paper, this innocent object of functionality and site of bounty and beauty in art history is brought into a disquieting arena of dinner table talk and capricious human interactions.

Van der Ploeg first created etchings at the David Krut Workshop in early 2021, and she continues to weave a narrative about reciprocity and its intricacies, and hidden messages concealed in the smoke and the breeze. *Omens in hot bacon contradiction* includes new etching editions and unique paintings on paper made in collaboration with Printer Roxy Kaczmarek. The artist is an accomplished printmaker herself, having studied printmaking and awarded residencies in France, India, and Japan, where she worked with Mokuhanga, a water-based woodblock printmaking technique. This ancient technique lends itself to building up many layers of colour – creating depth while maintaining subtlety. A sense of moodiness emerges from the prints as they probe notions of performativity, concealment, and tenderness in social interactions, not only in the subject but in the layering of different techniques, such as tonal aquatint layers integrated with subtle, suggestive drypoint marks.

Traditionally, tableaux present a scene for a distant observer. Van der Ploeg's works, while staging and positioning participants in a rehearsed scene, subvert the tableaux with angles that position the viewer dizzily within it. The images depict a constant tension, a push and pull, between individuals who simultaneously reveal and conceal in the dance of conversation and the uncertainty of a new social group. While a space for closeness, exploration, and unveiling narratives, it is also a space for 'preserving strangeness', maintaining a façade, and keeping with prescribed behaviours.

Instruments illustrate the precarity of these relations and interactions, notably the community poster, which introduces an avenue for strangers to find a common sentimentality that may or may not become actualised in our increasingly individualistic society. Another trope is that of the social game, an activity which allows for connection while including rules and prescribed manners of engagement. Knots of limbs and hands encircling a circular pool are featured in Van der Ploeg's monotypes, or unique paintings on paper; this representation of a futile game of holding water within one another's hands for as long as possible creates radial visuals surrounding what could be deep, portal-like spaces. The titles of other works refer to 'gates', as if into adjacent realities.

With imagery that evokes smoke signals or white flags of surrender, van der Ploeg's work delves into scenes of domesticity with a polaric, touching, obscurity.

Anna van der Ploeg (1992) is a contemporary South African artist. Her professional practice is far-reaching including but not limited to painting, printmaking, and sculpture. Anna has held several solo exhibitions, has shown in galleries locally and abroad, and has works in private collections and institutions, among which the South African National Art Bank. She recently completed her Master's degree in Fine Arts at KASK Royal Conservatory of Art in Belgium with high distinction. Though the catalyst to her work is loosely conceptual, her process is labour-intensive, perceptive, and specialised. As a figurative artist, she searches for new metaphors to convey insights about our common assemblies, to find rhythms in the motion of social, artistic, and intellectual contexts.

Frame	Kiaat wood shadow boxed frame.
Medium	Oil painting on canvas
Height	100.00 cm
Width	72.00 cm
Artist	Anna van der Ploeg
Year	2023

