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Amie Dicke: Reimagining the world around us

By Paul Laster



Fresh off a mid-career survey show at GEM, museum of contemporary art in *The Hague*, and a one-person exhibition at her Amsterdam gallery, *Stigter Van Doesburg*, *Amie Dicke* presents an integrated selection of her imaginative pursuits from the past few years in *Collecting Alibis*, her first solo at Los Angeles' Anat Ebgi, which marks her seventh showing the City of Angels over the last ten years.



Amie Dicke, *X-173-Key*, 2013. Sandpaper abrasion on paper print, 80 x 60 inches (203 x 152 cm)

Making works from existing images, materials, and contexts, Dicke explores the psychological impact of absence and presence by altering found photos from books and magazines, constructing ghostly doubles of domestic furniture, and crafting hybrid paintings from ink blown through the plastic cartridges of *BIC pens*. At Ebgi, she displays three recent bodies of work from *Afterimage*, her show at GEM, to a new end.



Amie Dicke, *AU AU VI* (L) and *AU AU VII* (R), 2013. Sandpaper on bookpaper, 7 x 12 inches (17 x 30 cm)

Occupying two rooms of the gallery, *Collecting Alibis* offers blown up photographic portraits of men that have been partially erased by the artist with sandpaper; painterly abstractions made by applying layer after layer of blue, black, and red ink on Plexiglas; and a floor installation consisting of a framed pool of water filled with colourful inkjet prints, that are decomposing daily.



Amie Dicke, Battle of Magenta, 2013. Container, prints, water, 11 x 6.5 feet (335 x 198 cm)

“Because it’s my first exhibition with the gallery, I decided to present works related to my show at the *GEM*, which took place exactly one year ago,” the *Amsterdam*-based artist shared in a telephone conversation. “I wanted to show the engagement with images and my testing of imagery, which the photos in the water of *Battle of Magenta* represent, alongside my de-inking process of taking images and objects out of their context, out of their pages, or out of their zone.”

At *GEM*, Dicke’s *Battle of Magenta* floated thousands of images from the archive of The Hague’s *Gemeentemuseum*—documenting the history of its famous *H.P. Berlage* building and its celebrated collection of art and design—mixed with pictures from the artist’s personal archive.



Amie Dicke, Detail of Battle of Magenta, 2013. Container, prints, water, 11 x 6.5 feet (335 x 198 cm)

“When I was testing out the idea, the first thing that struck me was the behaviour of magenta,” Dicke said in an interview with Laura Stamps, curator for her GEM show. “It’s the first colour to seep out of the prints but also the one most likely to stain other images. The colour magenta was discovered in 1859 and called after a battle that took place on 4 June 1859, as part of the Second Italian War of Independence, near the town of the same name.”



Collecting Alibis, installation view by Amie Dicke

At Ebgi, the artist used hundreds of leftover prints from the first adaptation in a smaller, more intimate pond, which became more layered and murkier—creating a primordial soup, wildly concocted from deconstructed imagery.



Amie Dicke, 4 X U, 2013. Sandpaper abrasion on C-print, 80 x 51 inches (203 x 130 cm)

“For me, the work is about the fact that our memories contain a multitude of images, but that these become faded, distorted or sometimes even completely lost over time, Dicke added. “In that sense, our memories are the result of a battle between different images.”

Amie Dicke: Collecting Alibis is on view at Anat Ebgi in Los Angeles through January 4, 2014.