

Tensions underling an apparently calm existence

(...) 'Visser is skilful in hinting at the tensions underlying an apparently calm existence. She treads the thin line between truth and its appearance but ends up in neither, leaving the storylines and meaning of her images open-ended and ambiguous instead. Open endedness is very important to me: to pretend to know the outcome of anything seems a bit too much. The idea of creating something finished seems equal to creating a dead object. Too static, is what Visser says. Rather than impose specific ideas on the viewer, the works challenge him to look closer and use his own judgement in untangling its strands. Inconclusive and open-ended, the stories that Visser narrates do not build into a climax and seem to extend forever into time creating an uncanny sense of ennui and free choice at the same time.

Visser also builds up her stories gradually and in an almost cinematic manner. For her Nice project, she produced five photographs of a staged scene in which a young man lies on the beach surrounded by a group of standing people taking photographs of him. Each image was then reproduced to resemble an advertisement billboard and was posted on a separate bus stop throughout Nice. Beginning from a close-up image of a young man, the photos gradually capture the entire scene. Bordering on documentary photography and images of a fashion shoot, Visser's work create a puzzling effect. Is the young man who appears as if fainted on the beach, the corpse of an illegal immigrant, or the body of male model posing for a fashion shoot? Is this the image of real life in contemporary Nice or the recycling of the city's myth as an idealized if not somewhat sterile place? The image seems to be caught in an ambiguity. So does the title; "The world belongs to early risers" is a saying that harbors differing connotations. Are the early risers the decision-makers, people who have a steering power, or are they the workers who toil away for their daily subsistence? Both groups are

early risers but not all own the world, at least not in a pragmatic and non-metaphorical way. The ambiguity both of the image and the title helps draw attention to how reality is never one-sided and that our perception of it is usually subject to our cultural or social stereotypes. The problem is - Visser's work seem to claim - that reality's intricacy is substituted by an oversimplified version of it. According to the artist: Recent times have proved the bigger and the more complicated the problem the louder the shouts for simplistic solutions. Populist politicians have made good use of this tendency. Sayings like 'The world belongs to early risers' serves a popular demand: they are plausible sounding one-liners, basically used to stop any discussion.

Like the image, the title harbors social and political connotations which in fact underlie most of Visser's works. Even in works which at first glance seem more involved with exploring personal identity the context is always cultural and social. Visser considers how the social and the cultural are grafted on personal identity and shape our perception both of ourselves and the world around us. Cultural values and habits seem especially influential in defining our self-image and are often treated as one of the various layers that color our reality and blur the lines between the real and the artificial. This notion seems particularly pertinent to contemporary times in which the notion of culture has expanded to incorporate almost anything (from art, to popular culture, advertisement and lifestyle) and is used to account for many different aspects of life. Even wars are nowadays treated on the basis of cultural difference. Cultural referencing can extend forever in an never ending cycle that increasingly removes us from reality and the sense of rootedness but also from ideas such as authenticity and original, firsthand experience. This is a contemporary condition that Visser repeatedly uses as the background of her work.' (...)