

YOU WANT IT DARKER

YELLOW GALLERY April 2025 Leiden

YOU WANT IT DARKER – reflections on Floris Verster

Floris Verster (1861–1927) was a Dutch painter known for his distinctive floral still lifes, which are marked by rich, often somber tonalities. His work stands as a bridge between traditional painting and the more personal, expressive approaches emerging around the turn of the century. In choosing flowers as his subject, Verster found both a connection to the Dutch artistic tradition and a medium through which to explore his unique vision of light and darkness.

Verster's floral still lifes are layered and enigmatic, with an almost palpable atmosphere. While his early work retains a certain clarity, his later paintings grew increasingly darker—both through deliberate choice and the natural aging of materials. His works reflect a melancholic meditation on beauty and transience, leaving them continually captivating.

The exhibition *YOU WANT IT DARKER* at Yellow Gallery recontextualizes Verster's oeuvre within a contemporary framework. Here, his fascination with darkness and decay is connected to the work of modern artists, fostering a dialogue about the role of light, shadow, and emotion in still lifes and nature painting. In doing so, the gravity of Verster's work is both intensified and renewed.

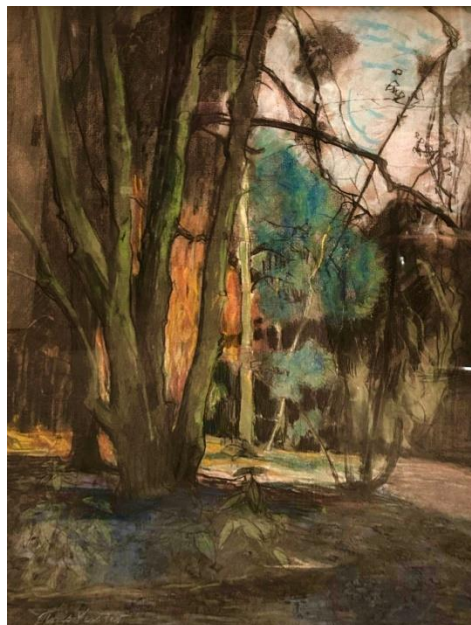
Contemporary artists such as Anne van As, Ronald Zuurmond, Tosja, and Marika Reuten build upon the theme of darkness in nature. Anne van As, for instance, presents a series of nocturnal paintings of thistles, where the night enshrouds nature in mystery. The penetrating black tones of her canvases evoke a nearly meditative silence, with the harsh forms of the thistles feeling simultaneously powerful and fragile. Meanwhile, Ronald Zuurmond introduces a more abstract interpretation of the dark floral still life. His work suggests shapes and movements that slowly emerge from what appears to be an impenetrable darkness, imbuing his paintings with a dreamlike, introspective quality.

Tosja and Marika Reuten further contribute to this dialogue by emphasizing the raw, sometimes ominous aspects of nature. Tosja's small works "a peak into the future" and "Shadow of an old friend" floral compositions depict flora on the brink of decay. These arrangements underscore the fleeting, fragile nature of life in the face of time's passage. Marinka Reuten's work powerfully combines black-and-white photography of withered flowers with delicate, fragile monochrome paintings, creating a striking contrast that evokes a sense of personal reduction to a primal abstraction, where the intricate details of life are distilled into raw, elemental forms.

With *YOU WANT IT DARKER*, Yellow Gallery reflects not only on Floris Verster's legacy but also on a broader artistic theme: the allure of darkness. By bringing together historical and contemporary works, the exhibition underscores the timeless nature of darkness as a subject of exploration. Where Verster achieved this mood through thick layers of paint and intense color usage, today's artists seek new ways to imbue the interplay of light and shadow with meaning.

Sara van Vliet's work explores nature's quiet resilience, as wildflowers overgrow houses, blurring the line between human order and organic chaos. Her imagery reflects our struggle to control nature, only for it to reclaim its space. This echoes Floris Verster's atmospheric floral paintings, where beauty and decay coexist in a delicate balance, reminding us that nature, despite our efforts to subdue it, will always find a way to flourish.

The exhibition demonstrates how darkness is not only aesthetically compelling but also a way to depict emotion, decay, and the mystery of nature. It invites viewers to look deeper, beyond the superficial beauty of flowers, to uncover the hidden layers of life and art. In doing so, *YOU WANT IT DARKER* affirms that the still life, even in its darkest form, has lost none of its power and continues to captivate.



Floris Verster

RONALD ZUURMOND

Night plant
Oil on canvas
80 x 70 cm | 30,50 x 27,56 in.



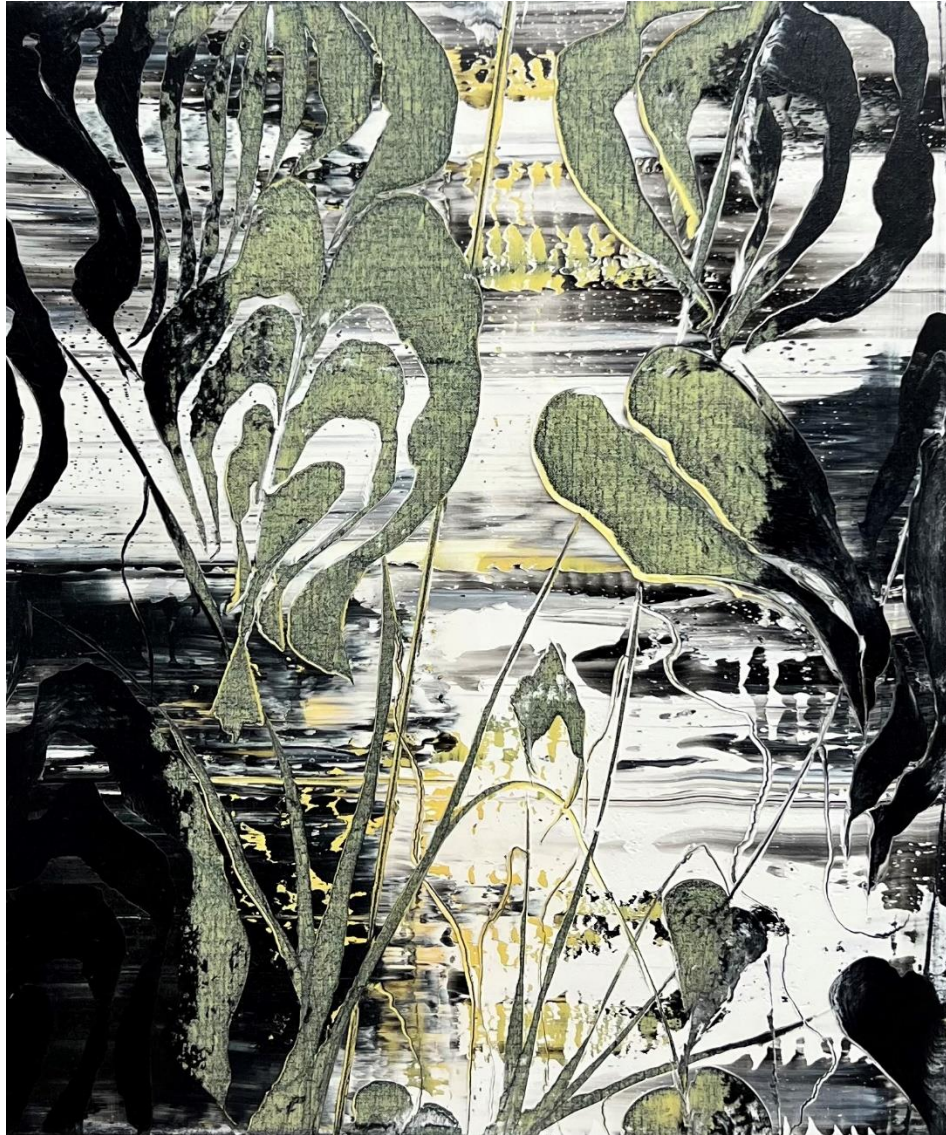


RONALD ZUURMOND

Water plant

Oil on canvas

60 x 50 cm | 23,62 x 19,96 in.





RONALD ZUURMOND

still life

Oil on canvas

120 x 130 cm | 47,24 x 51,18 in.





RONALD ZUURMOND

Water plant
Oil on canvas
65 x 50 cm | 25,59 x 19,96 in





ANNE VAN AS

Purple Night

Oil on canvas

65 x 80 cm | 25,59 x 31,50 in.



ANNE VAN AS

Grimm

Oil on canvas

40 x 50 cm | 15,75 x 19,69 in.





MARINKA REUTEN

Forever / How to be at ease #5

Left: c-print

100 x 80 | 37,39 x 31,50 in ed. \$+2AP

120 x 100 | 47,24 x 37,39 in. ed. 4+2AP

Right: Oil on canvas

120 x 100 cm | 47,24 x 37,39 in.



MARINKA REUTEN

Always today #1

Oil on canvas

100 x 120 cm | 37,39 x 47,24 in.



MARINKA REUTEN

Always today #2

Oil on canvas

100 x 80 cm | 39,37 x 31,50 in.

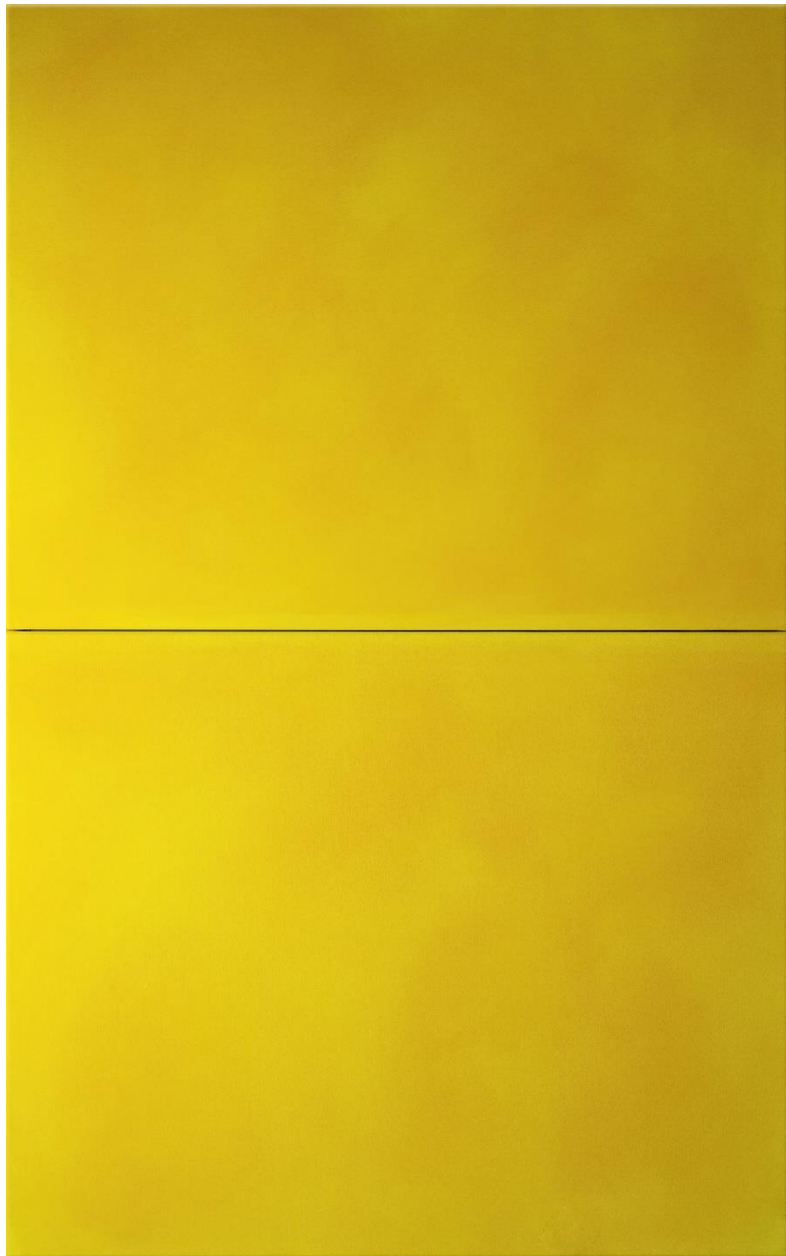


MARINKA REUTEN

Always today #3

Oil on canvas

160 x 100 cm | 62,99 x 39,37 in.



MARINKA REUTEN

How to be at ease

Oil on canvas

100 x 80 cm | 39,37 x 31,50 in.



MARINKA REUTEN

Yesterday

c-print

100 x 80 cm | 39,37 x 31,50 in. ed. 4+2AP

120 x 100 cm | 47,24 x 39,37 in. ed 4+2AP





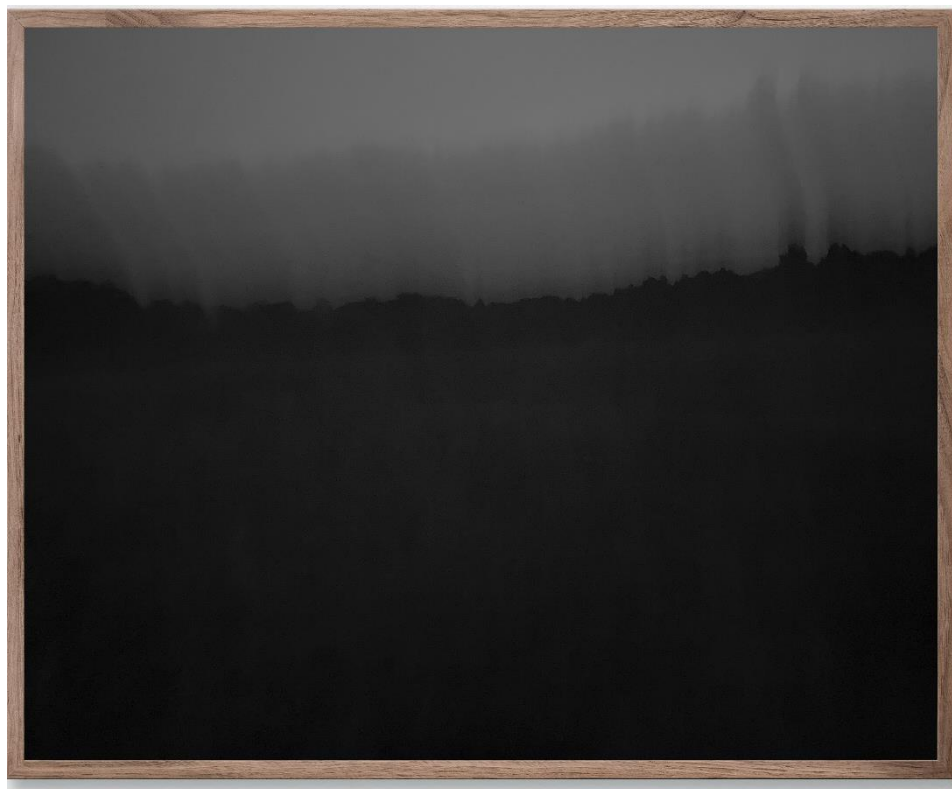
MARINKA REUTEN

Magnify

c-print

40 x 50 cm | 15,75 x 19,69 in. ed. 5+2AP

60 x 75 | 23,62 x 29,53 in. ed. 4+2AP



MARINKA REUTEN

Moments #2

Oil on canvas

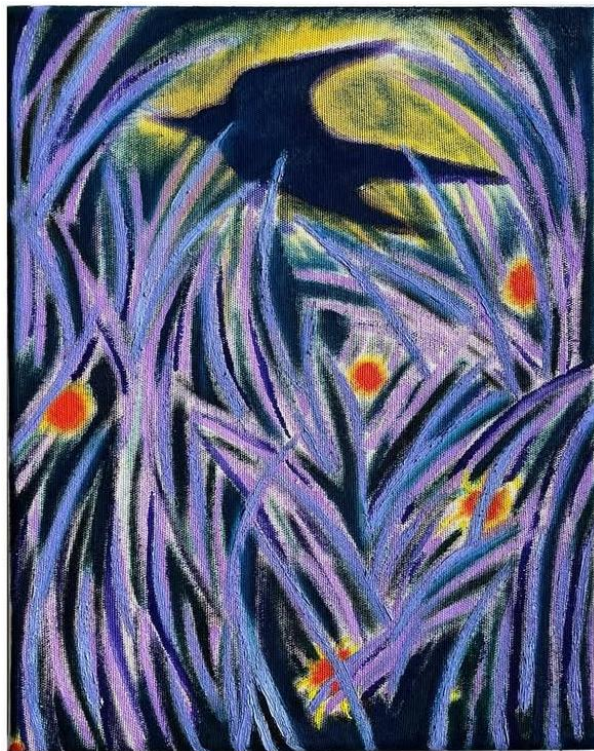
30 x 24 cm | 11,81 x 9,45 in.



TOSJA VAN LIESHOUT

Shadow of an old friend

Oil and gouache on unprepared cotton
30 x 24 cm | 11,81 x 9,24 in.

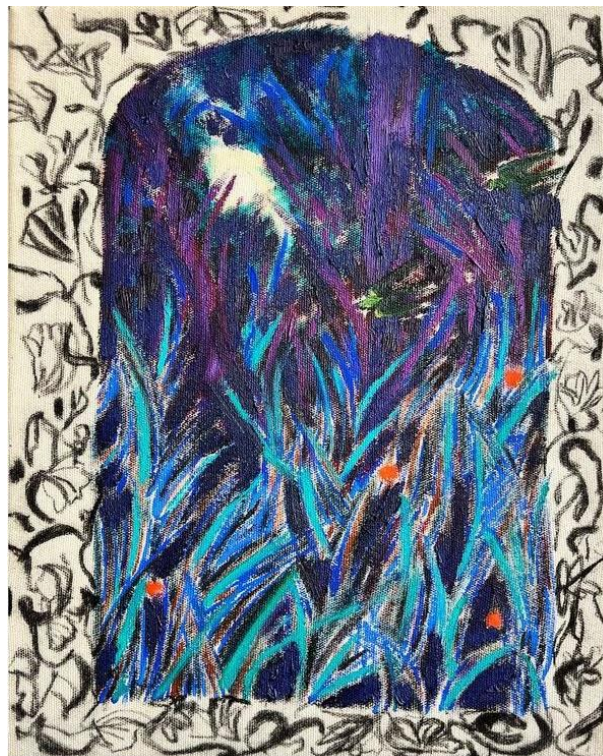




TOSJA VAN LIESHOUT

A peak into the future

Oil charcoal and gouache on unprepared cotton
30 x 24 cm | 11,81 x 9,24 in.





SARA VAN VLIET

Heiling ontzag
Oil and acrylics on canvas





SARA VAN VLIET

Bloesem

Oil and acrylics on canvas

80 x 60 cm | 11,81 x 9,24 in





SARA VAN VLIET

Bloem
Oil and acrylics on canvas



GALLERY INFORMATION

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Opening times:

By appointment

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