De Entertainer

mixed media on paper

1979

54 x 75 cm

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Kees van Bohemen

Kees van Bohemen (1928-1985) is considered one of the Netherlands' most accomplished twentieth century painters, and commands a wide international reputation.

After his studies at the Royal Academy of Visual Arts, Van Bohemen, then 24, won a scholarship to study in Paris. During his five-year stay there he came into contact with several artists of the CoBrA movement.

In the late Fifties, Van Bohemen, who mainly painted in an abstract way at the time, joined the 'Hollandse Informele Groep' whose members included Armando, Jan Schoonhoven and Jan Hendrikse. Van Bohemen also felt drawn to the 'Zero' group but soon went his own way. Colour started to play a more important role in his work and he made his name with paintings in which he combined figurative and abstract elements.

In the early Sixties Van Bohemen embarked on a series of large female nudes. After a sojourn in the United States he painted a series of striking paintings that take sports such as boxing, horse racing, cycling and car racing as their theme. These large canvases displayed his technical virtuosity. Trips across Africa yielded exotic paintings of savannah and jungle. For Van Bohemen, colour and form were paramount, his choice of subject less important. "I don't want to work in an anecdotal way, no story-telling in paint", he said of this.

In 1985 Kees van Bohemen died in hospital in The Hague, aged 56.

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