

Salt, a new work by
Marie Julia Bollansée

Last Whit weekend Marie Julia Bollansée presented her most recent video installation "Salt" at the studios of MEN@WORK +VIDI SQUARE in Antwerp. In "Salt" Bollansée continues to examine the format of the "sculptural video" with which she went public for the first time last year in "Zone" at the venue Lokaal_01 (Antwerp); and in which she convincingly managed to combine video, photographs and performance. "Zone" was a space-filling installation in which video images of a dancing woman interfered with photographs of Bollansée herself. The result was a tranquil and penetrating portrait of a woman. The work centred round dealing with the loss of a deceased partner.

Shortly after completing this work she started with "Salt", a work in which once again she took her own life and a woman's aura as a starting point. With the title "Salt" she refers to the salt of the earth, a metaphor for a strong spirit, able to strengthen the weaker spirits of others. The central person, a solid woman from Bollansée's circle of acquaintances intrigued her because of this woman's unpretentiousness, calm and altruism. She was filmed in her own biotope, a lush garden on a sunny autumn day. In the installation fairy-like images of the woman bathing in bright autumn colours pass over monumental photographs picturing Bollansée. Her naked body is covered with gold pigment and takes on various fetus-like moving positions that refer to classic sculptures. The work breathes a regained joy of living and vitality and seems to celebrate the richness of life. Because of this it can also be looked at – both as far as content and theme are concerned - as a kind of answer to "Zone". Given their mutually intensifying effect it would be quite exciting to see those two monumental works next to each other. By partially projecting on screen and partially on the surrounding space Bollansée breaks open the frame of the video images, thus creating an interaction of two- and three-dimensionality. Looking at this video installation the video art of Pipilotti Rist recently shown at the Boijmans Museum comes to mind. Lying down the visitors saw naked women's bodies appear and disappear in rapidly changing utopian sceneries above them. Just like Rist Bollansée is looking for strong participation with the public. However, what she comes forward with is not a staged dream image accompanied by sugary music, but instead a precise registration of what is visible and audible around her. Tranquil, powerful and highly poetical self-portraits of special women are the result.

Isabelle DE BAETS in H art, 25 06 2009
Translation Erika Peeters