

Het Parool

The Rijksakademie opens all its studios

During RijksakademieOpen, 45 artists present work in their studios. There are also films, performances and guided tours.

BY KEES KEIJER NOVEMBER 22, 2018

The RijksakademieOpen is a barometer for the art of tomorrow. During the Amsterdam Art Weekend, 45 international artists show their latest work. The 2018 edition is varied. Artists often go back to age-old stories, which are then depicted with ultramodern techniques. Or they want to make invisible power structures visible in the financial world. You can follow what security guards film on Wall Street and see wondrous structures that resemble mysterious puzzles. Artists let film stories escape from film strips or have robot fingers tap nervously on a glass display case.

Three artists talk about their work.



Esteban Cabeza de Baca. Credit: Tammy Van Nerum

“Removing boundaries between spaces”

Esteban Cabeza de Baca was born in the much-discussed border region between Mexico and the United States. He pierces walls with holes and circles.

Esteban Cabeza de Baca (33) studied in New York, where he mainly painted. He also wanted to take pictures at the Rijksakademie.

His presentation at the RijksakademieOpen consists of a mix of works of art. “It brought together a lot of ideas, whether it be the iconography of Native Americans or Mexicans or waste I used, in reference to environmental issues affecting my community.”

Cabeza de Baca’s mother is from Mexico and his father is from the USA. Both are Native Americans. The border received a lot of attention due to Trump’s election campaign.

Cabeza de Baca’s work also contains many walls, but he pierces them with holes and circles. “That has to do with removing boundaries between spaces.”

He is also especially interested in cave paintings, pre-Columbian statues and sand paintings of the Navajo.

Science fiction

In the corner of one of his two rooms is a portable easel. “With that I painted outdoors in American deserts. There you are sweating a lot and you are baked alive, but under such circumstances the paintings remain spontaneous and direct.”

By painting with ‘the tools of the colonists’ he investigated whether his view is different from that of white Americans. “I see a lot of beauty in the landscape. The other painters probably see that too, but I connect that with the history and strange stories associated with the country.”

In addition, Cabeza de Baca loves science fiction. A large wooden figure seems to come from a distant planet, but at the same time is reminiscent of an ancient figure who stepped out of an American cave. “There is a lot of knowledge to be gained just by looking at cave paintings.”