

The Sacrifice - an intimate I

**A choice from the collection Swagemakers
Inspired by Andrey Tarkovsky**

**Museum De Beyerd, Breda, NL
November 21, 2004 – February 13, 2005**

The idea for the exhibition **The Sacrifice- an intimate I** is based on a film and a painting: the film *The Sacrifice* (1986) by the Russian movie director Andrey Tarkovsky and the painting *Pursuit and Possession* (1998) by the Los Angeles based Dutch painter Hans Broek.

Andrey Tarkovsky – Hans Broek

Andrey Tarkovsky (1932-1986) made the film *The Sacrifice* in 1985/1986, just before he died. Subject of this long, slow sequence of poetic, associative images and philosophical thoughts is a quest for *spirituality*. Central feature in the film is the wooden house of a man somewhere in the North at the seaside: a dreamlike dwelling on an idyllic spot, symbol for safety and harmony. But at the end of the film the house is burning: set on fire by the man himself, the sacrifice that he brings.

The painting *Pursuit and Possession* by Hans Broek (1965) shows a comparable idyllic and intimate house, in the snow. A warm orange yellow light is shining through the windows; it must be cosy and comfortable inside. But all at once you see the flames raging from the chimney: the house is burning.

Safety – Destruction

This opposition of – supposed? – safety and harmony on one side and danger and destruction on the other side, is the guiding principle for a choice from the same collection where Broek's painting makes part of, the collection Henri Swagemakers, one of the larger private collections of modern and contemporary art in The Netherlands, consisting of about 900 works of art. The question was if, with this film as a reference, it could be possible to make more specific choices out of this collection. Themes from the film in this way served as guideline for choices of the collection.

East – West

A remarkable part in the collection Swagemakers consists of works by contemporary artists from India. The imagery of these artists sometimes is far away from that of artists of the West, but on the other hand coincides with it curiously. An important characteristic in the work of many of them is the sense for *spirituality*. With this art Henri Swagemakers appears to contrive an important subcollection within his collection as a whole. His choice thereto is, like one can expect of a good private collector, distinctly *personal*.

For Tarkovsky as well the controversy between art and mentality of East and West was an important subject. The West, focused on individuality, rationality and materialism, could in his eyes learn from the East, standing for the collective, the irrational and the spiritual. And for him as well 'the personal' plays a leading part in his choices: all his films are coloured autobiographically. This specifically counts for *The Sacrifice*. Tarkovsky's 'testament' deals with the man that is fed up with being dependant on the pseudo laws of society that seem to control his life. Film and exhibition, **THE SACRIFICE - an intimate I**, deal with the decision to take personal responsibility by an individual facing the events in the world at large.

Exhibition

The exhibition consists of a close interwoven totality of four fragments from The Sacrifice and 160 works of international contemporary art. There are seven chapters: I. Changing the World; II. Strive; III. Dilemma; IV. Transformation; V. Love; VI. Fire; VII. In the Beginning.

Catalogue

An extensive catalogue accompanies the exhibition in 144 pages, Dutch-English and full colour - with an interview with the owner of the collection, Mr. Swagemakers, followed by an exhibition essay with 60 large scale images of art works and 7 film stills over two pages from The Sacrifice; Quotes on Spirituality by Albert Einstein and biographies of all 70 participating artists. € 23,00. Can be ordered by mail.

Contact

Elly Stegeman, curator Museum De Beyerd, je.stegeman@breda.nl / 0031-76-5299900.

www.museumdebeyerd.nl