



Aat Veldhoen

Polaroids

Compiled and edited

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lecturis



Introduction

Aat Veldhoen, born in 1934, is an artist with wide-ranging talents. As well as prints, drawings and paintings, he makes sculptures and tile panels, and he decorates ceramics. Much has been written about him, but some of his artistic activities have not received the attention they deserve.

This is true of his photographic work, especially the Polaroid prints he made. The underlying reason for this neglect is the utilitarian nature of Veldhoen's photographs, which were originally used primarily as aids in the creation of prints and paintings. Many of these photographs have their own individual qualities, however—particularly the manipulated Polaroids, which can be regarded as works of art in their own right.

Veldhoen used photography throughout his career. Initially photographs served as *aides-mémoire* that enabled him, for instance, to work on the details of a portrait without the sitter having to be there. Photography was also an indispensable way of capturing fleeting situations. His series of twelve prints of road accident victims made between 1962 and 1964 could not have been produced without photographs. Veldhoen spent weeks riding in police cars, but there was little time to draw at the scene of the incident, given the urgent nature of the situations. In those circumstances a camera

was the obvious choice. He encountered a similar problem in the early 1960s, when he created his magnificent series of couples making love, having found a friendly married couple who were prepared to pose for him. It would have been a technical tour de force if the couple had been able to prolong the moment of extreme ecstasy until Veldhoen had finished his drawing, but it was more practical to photograph the scene. The convincing way the facial expressions were captured during the climax would not have been possible without photography.

Alongside this more or less 'documentary' photography there is an experimental variant that can be compared to the traditional preliminary study. Sometimes it is an entire composition, but more often it is just one element—such as the pose of a figure. Much of this early photographic material was lost to water damage. Among the rare surviving examples are the preparatory studies for the two female nudes that flank Veldhoen's three police photographs in his painting *Police Photographs*. This material reveals how Veldhoen made changes to the pose in his search for the best solution. Practical as this approach may have been, however, there was one great drawback: the result could only be viewed once the film had been developed and printed. This meant a great deal of time was

world on three occasions. In 1989 he exhibited twenty large-format, printed reproductions at Capi-Lux's photographic laboratory in Amsterdam. Five years later he presented reproductions at Kleurgamma in Amsterdam. Here again these were large reproductions. The decision to enlarge the Polaroids must have been prompted by commercial considerations, because it would have made them saleable as works to hang on the wall. In the exhibition I staged in the Rembrandt House Museum in 2004 to mark Veldhoen's seventieth birthday, a great deal of space was given over to his Polaroids. It was the first and last time this work was shown in a museum setting.

This publication, the first to be devoted exclusively to Veldhoen's Polaroids, contains a selection of more than sixty of them. They date from the 1977 to 1999 period and coincide with a time when Veldhoen was married to the photographer Cristi Kluivers, who frequently acted as his model. Veldhoen went on taking Polaroids until 2004, the year the company went out of business. The Polaroid factory in Enschede started up again under the name of Impossible, but changed the chemical composition of the films such that manipulation is no longer possible.

Catalogue

Self-Portraits



Self-Portraits with Cristi



Still Lives



Skeletons



Models and Portraits



Abstract Compositions



Landscapes



Erotic Scenes



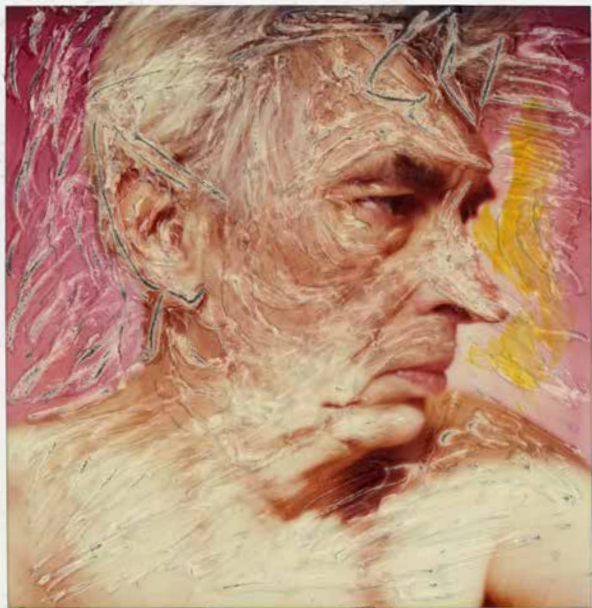
Nudes



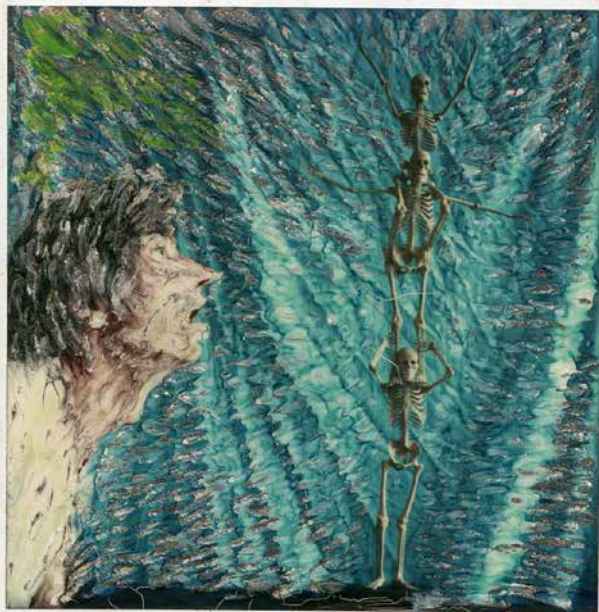
Miscellaneous



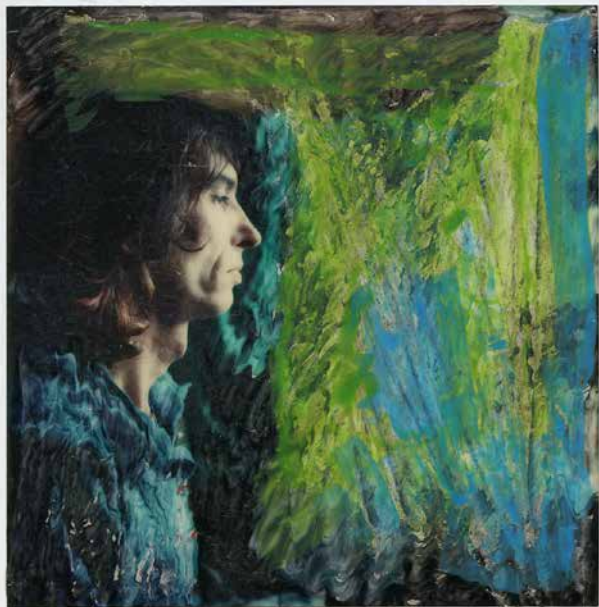
- 1 Self-Portrait with Pointed Nose (1993)
Polaroid SX-70 print, manipulated,
treated with nail varnish in places
7.9 x 7.8 cm



- 2 Self-Portrait with Skeletons (1978)
Polaroid SX-70 print, manipulated,
treated with nail varnish in places
7.9 x 7.8 cm



- 3 Self-Portrait, in Profile (1978)
Polaroid SX-70 print
7.9 x 7.8 cm



- 4 Self-Portrait, with Head Resting on the Left Hand (1982)
Polaroid SX-70 print, manipulated,
treated with nail varnish in places
7.9 x 7.8 cm



- 5 Self-Portrait (1996)
Polaroid SX-70 print, manipulated,
background treated with nail varnish
7.9 x 7.8 cm



- 6 Aatje in Clown Costume and Cristi (1977*)
Polaroid SX-70 print
7.9 x 7.8 cm



- 7 "Beauty and the Beast" (1980)
Polaroid SX-70 print, manipulated,
top zone treated with nail varnish
7.9 x 7.8 cm



- 8 Aat and Cristi, Kissing (1977*)
Polaroid SX-70 print
7.9 x 7.8 cm



- 9 Orange Roses (1980)
Polaroid SX-70 print
7.9 x 7.8 cm



10 Still Life with a Moon Globe, Shells and Blossom (1977)
Polaroid SX-70 print
7.9 x 7.8 cm



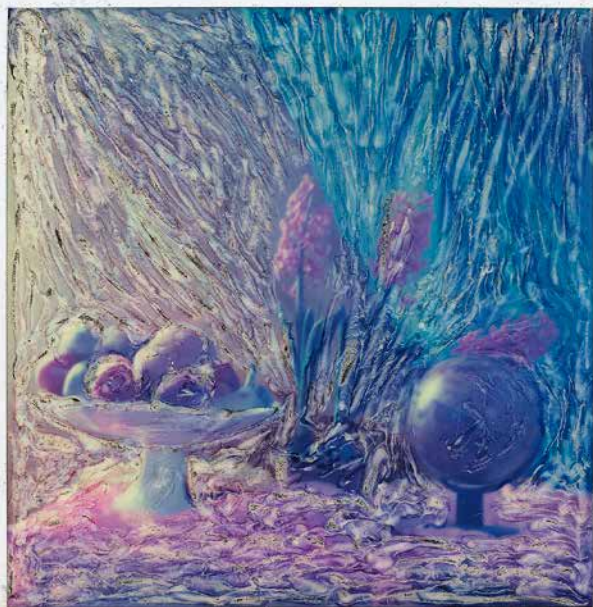
- 11 Still Life with a Mars Globe, Pears and Blossom (1977)
Polaroid SX-70 print
7.9 x 7.8 cm



12 Still Life with Globe and Coffeepot (1977)
Polaroid SX-70 print, manipulated
7.9 x 7.8 cm

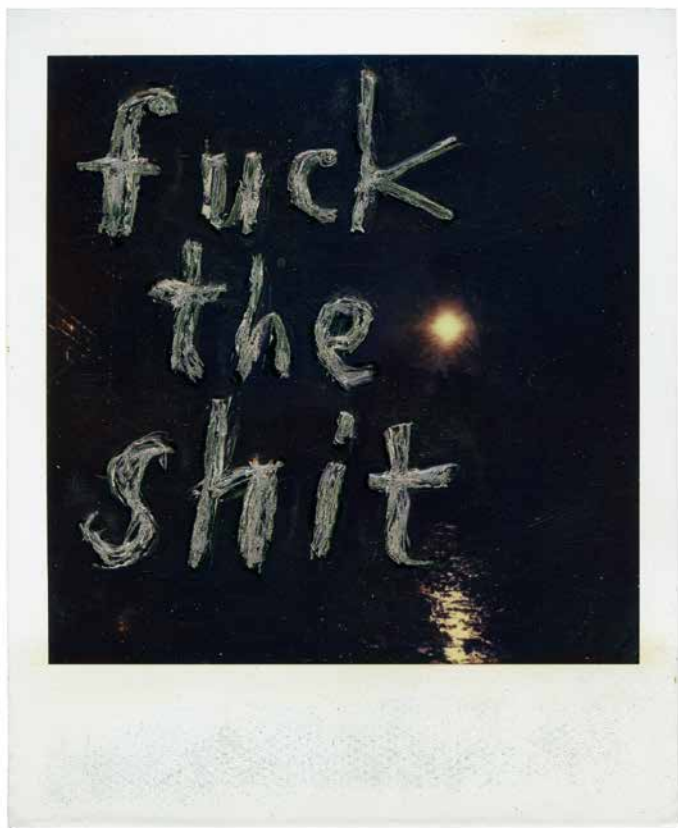


- 13 Still Life with Fruit Bowl, Flowers and Globe (1985)
Polaroid SX-70 print, manipulated
7.9 x 7.8 cm



- 14 Skeletons (1981)
Polaroid SX-70 print,
foreground treated with nail varnish in places
7.9 x 7.8 cm





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