

Exhibition 22 January - 26 May 2014
Sabatini Building. 3rd floor

Elly Strik

Ghosts, Brides and other Companions



Elly Strik. *Freud's Sofa*, 2007-2013

Ghosts, Brides and other Companions is the first exhibition in Spain by the artist Elly Strik (The Hague, Netherlands, 1961). The show, which combines new work and earlier productions, is designed specifically for display at the Museo Reina Sofía.

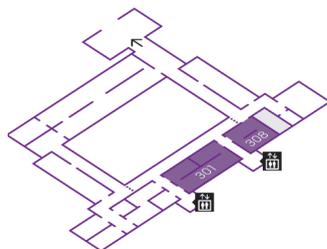
In her artistic career, Elly Strik has been particularly interested in those visionary artists who probe beyond the thresholds of human nature, such as James Ensor and Francisco de Goya. It is to Goya, whose work Strik has analyzed in depth, that one room of this exhibition is dedicated. The other sections have metaphorical subjects: Witches and Mystics, Birth and Bride, Wedding, Freud and Darwin, Rituals and Rebirth, and Dream. Taken together, they give rise to a reflection on the human condition in the present day.

In an intense and poetic quest, Strik explores the processes of physical metamorphosis in parallel with the process of artistic creation itself, transformative by nature. This takes the concrete form of figures and portraits full of energy, in oil and graphite on paper, which unfold states of being. What is suggested in this way is that the construction of identity, necessarily plural, is an unfinished project, while the creative process becomes an act of single-parented reproduction through which the artist-individual is capable of subverting natural laws. In the words of the art historian Jean-Christophe Ammann: "In Elly Strik, there is a potential for metamorphosis. She appropriates for herself Duchamp's words to the effect that every male artist is his own bride, and every woman artist her own groom. She contemplates the transformative force of her being, the multiplicity of faces and identities within her, and translates this capacity into drawings, into painting, whose pencil strokes are bearers of this potential for transformation. In this dimension of multiple identity, Elly does not fabricate a fictional self. Instead, she exuberantly diffuses her being."

Strik disrupts the everyday image which unveils the elements that cipher the hybrid nature of each individual: the male and the female, the human and the animal. This dissection of identity is visually threatening, yet there comes a certain point when her works lose this terrifying character and become an invitation to contemplation. This is how the artist summarizes that *pregnant* moment of her creative activity: "I go on with a work until it reaches the moment it tells me, "Yes, I am a totem." A totem mostly faces you. The presence of facing can become transparent. When it is becoming a part of you the element of confrontation dissolves. From that moment it might function as something sublime. Not sublime in the classical, aesthetic sense, but in the sense of facing the unknown. It can replace aversion with a more contemplative state. I wish to go beyond the fear of instinct and intuition. I want my approach to be 'horrible' directness with a contemplative feeling. Then the image can unfold itself to the viewer."

Sabatini building

3rd floor, room 301-308



Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofía

Sabatini Building

Santa Isabel, 52

Nouvel Building

Ronda de Atocha

(Plaza del Emperador Carlos V)

28012 Madrid

Tel.: (34) 91 774 10 00

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complete Museum visit,

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visit to Collection 1 and a

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