



Frank van Hemert, *Contact Point*, 2014, oil on canvas, 235 x 130 cm

Frank van Hemert

Love and Madness

26 March – 26 June 2016

**MUSEUM
DE BUITEN
PLAATS**

Museum De Buitenplaats will organise an exhibition of Frank Van Hemert's work in spring 2016. Van Hemert has created a substantial body of work. Usually working in series, the artist addresses subjects that deal with the principles of life; birth - life - death. They also consider the transitional phases between these life stages and the loneliness these could lead to. For Van Hemert they undeniably form part of the cycle of life and are important themes informing his approach for his paintings. In his exhibitions, Van Hemert demonstrates all of this in varying compilations, often triptychs, but also in larger formations. Museum De Buitenplaats has chosen to present work from various series for this exhibition. The themes, such as death, consolation, hope, madness, redemption, loneliness and the cosmos are closely linked to weave the core of the work. Frank Van Hemert both paints and draws, however the main focus of this exhibition will be on his paintings.

Expression in colour and gesture characterise his paintings. They all bear the signature of Van Hemert's distinctively strong, painterly hand. Figurative elements such as sunflowers, dandelions, loose limbs and other abstracted figures provide the viewer with footholds on the path through Van Hemert's cosmos. The symbolism captured in the colours, the flowers and the titles act as a guide for the viewing.

Aspects of the work that contribute to Frank Van Hemert's work, proving an excellent fit with Museum De Buitenplaats's new policy. The connections with the world through natural elements, the language required for communication and understanding - which is often simultaneously insufficient - and the use of universally recognisable imagery and emotions make Frank Van Hemert's work unique and exciting. It evokes questions and touches the viewer to the heart; where the cycle of life and death meet.

Und die Frauen warten...

One example of such an impressive series of paintings is *Und die Frauen warten...* [And the women wait ...] Women awaiting the return of their men after war, with death walking hand in hand with hope. It dwells on the meaning of waiting: a temporary or permanent absence? This notion of waiting is a theme which connects women throughout the ages. In the *Und die*

Frauen warten... catalogue from 2003, Saskia Monshouwer referred to the classic mythology of Medea, and created a direct line through to World War II. When seeing these paintings, the silent marches in Buenos Aires in Argentina by the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, covered in white shawls awaiting the return of their sons, springs immediately to mind. Unfortunately the theme is also currently topical, with so many refugees today fleeing across borders.

The mothers or women are hardly represented in this imagery. Sunflowers depicted in flaming yellow are expressively rendered. The works articulate the emotion that the title and the theme evoke. The sunflowers symbolise the women in their various stances and moods or frames of mind; from broken and beaten to resilient, fiery and powerful. Sunflowers which turn with the sun, but also cover an entire hidden world. The sunflowers are a metaphor for hope and expectation, and they recur regularly in Van Hemert's



Frank van Hemert, *Und die Frauen warten...*, 2006, oil on canvas, 50 x 60 cm

work. In *Und die Frauen warten...*, there are distinct echoes of Van Gogh's sunflowers. The choice of yellow, the irregular forms, the structure and the emotions simply reinforce the analogy. It is difficult to extricate Van Gogh from his sunflowers in the public's perception, which places Van Hemert firmly in the painterly tradition. In this series Van Hemert however gives the sunflower a whole new identity, as he does in other series that have sunflowers as their central motif (for example *Healing me / Healing you*).
Hans Locher [emeritus professor and former Director Gemeentemuseum



Frank van Hemert, *Und die Frauen warten...*, oil on canvas, 2005/2006, 160 x 110 cm

The Hague] wrote the following about Van Hemert's way of working: "The artist at all times knows how to make the emotions tangible through the physical process of painting. The texture, handling of materials, colour, viewpoint and form give the work a certain feeling, energising the drama within the image."

Mind of Tibet

Although the act of painting is central to each series, Franz Kaiser wrote the following about the *Mind of Tibet* series: "For Van Hemert painting is also the moment to step outside the process and to halt time. In this sense, painting can be paralleled to praying, or perhaps in a more general sense, to meditation. For example, the colourful shrubs with flags and Mandalas in Van Hemert's *Mind of Tibet* series refer to Buddhist prayer flags. Each flag



Frank van Hemert, *Und die Frauen warten...*, oil on canvas, 2002, 150 x 140 cm

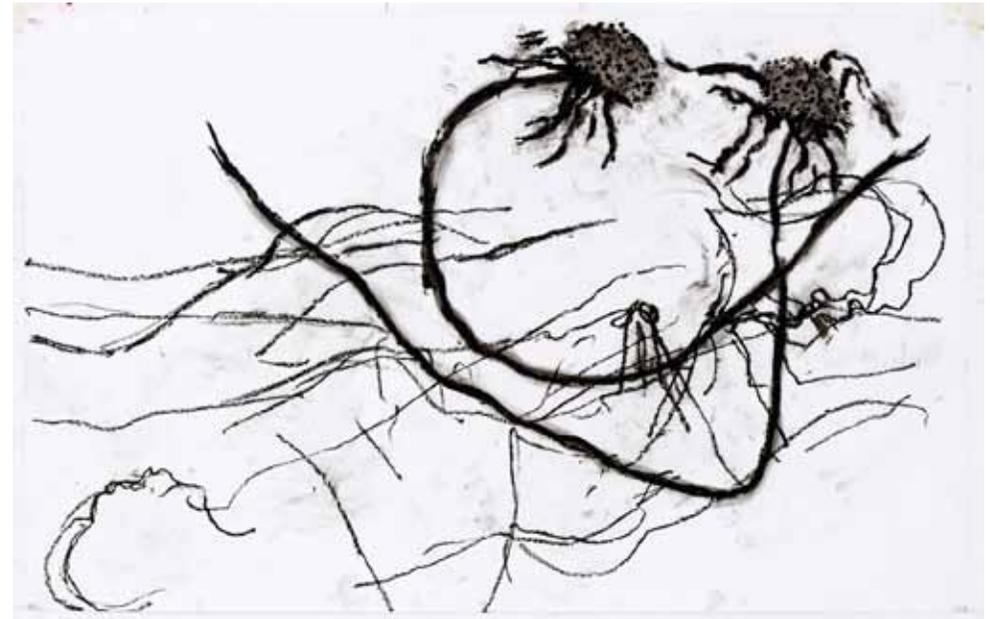
is a prayer and the Mandala a cosmic diagram that assists mediation and spiritual concentration.” In other words, the series is about prayer and consolation, as well as embracing the cosmos, mystical yearning and the quest for wisdom and freedom.

You / Me and Secret Survivors

The *You / Me* or *Secret Survivors* series are a metaphorical search for freedom. The common denominator for the series is Van Hemert’s use of both text and images in the drawing. And once again, particularly in *You / Me*, he introduces the flower motif as a vehicle for narrating a bigger picture than mere words can. Dandelions as a symbol for the cycle of life.



Frank van Hemert, *Secret Survivors*, oil on canvas, 1995, 216 x 162 cm



Frank van Hemert, *You/Me*, 1999, mixed media on paper, 95x 150 cm



Frank van Hemert, *Secret Survivors*, mixed media on canvas, 1993, 3 x 50 x 70 cm

Sketched in charcoal over stylised figures, they push their way to the foreground surface, layering the drawings with both form and meaning. The words sometimes assist understanding; sometimes calming but at other moments confused and explosive, as well as being wide open to interpretation. Where *You / Me* symbolises mortality, hope and the birth of new life, the *Secret Survivors* series skims the fringe; a logical consequence of which it references self harm and survival.

Hölderlintürme

Legs on a bed in an undefined space. The legs seem out of proportion and unusually long when compared to the mattress placed diagonally on the canvas and into which they disappear. This series is stressed with power and seems to erupt from the surface, given sustenance by the movements



Frank van Hemert, *Holderlintürme*, oil on canvas, 2008, 140 x 150 cm

with which the colours have been applied. The paintings confront the viewer with a variety of emotions; what are those legs doing there and why do they disappear into the mattress, or are they floating just above it? And what does the mattress symbolise? A mattress that sometimes appears smeared with blood and sometimes looks like a flowered sheet. The title not only refers to the poet Friedrich Hölderlin, who lived at the end of the eighteenth century, but also to the poems by Paul Celan, who talked about 'schwimmende Hölderlintürme', referencing madness and redemption.

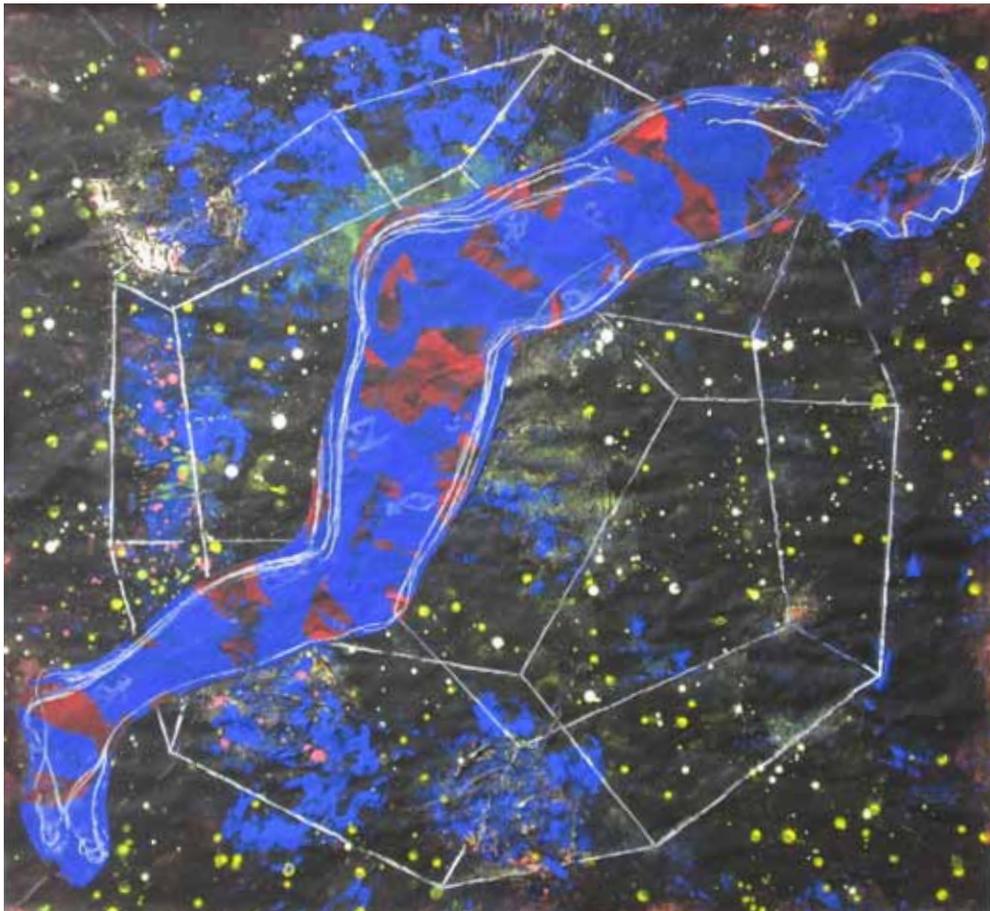
Loneliness seeking for connection

In all these series, the search for connection, for universal feelings that man as a species shares with each other is ever present. The spirit and the cosmos represent transcendence and weightlessness. It is the loneliness which



Frank van Hemert, *Holderlintürme*, oil on canvas, 2012, 140 x 150 cm

enhances the search and leads to the various phases in man, whether or not influenced by the external world. Loneliness is also an inherent characteristic of man; he is alone with himself and individually responsible for his personal actions. This is also the way things go for the artist. He can present the viewer with connection opportunities at various levels through his work and in an exhibition. Museum De Buitenplaats offers Frank Van Hemert an ideal platform to do just that.



Frank van Hemert, *The Madness of Language, the Language of Madness*, acrylic on paper, 2015, 142 x 155 cm

Exhibition organiser: Museum De Buitenplaats

Museum De Buitenplaats is a museum for the visual arts, which, with its exhibition and collection policy, focuses on figuration in its widest sense and context. The combination of exhibition pavilion, the reconstructed seventeenth century gardens and the monumental Nijssinghuis, decorated by 'Northern Realists', offers a unique complex in which all art forms are represented and presented to the public: visual arts, music and literature. The exhibition programme links all three fields.

A catalogue is published with this exhibition.

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Und die Frauen warten

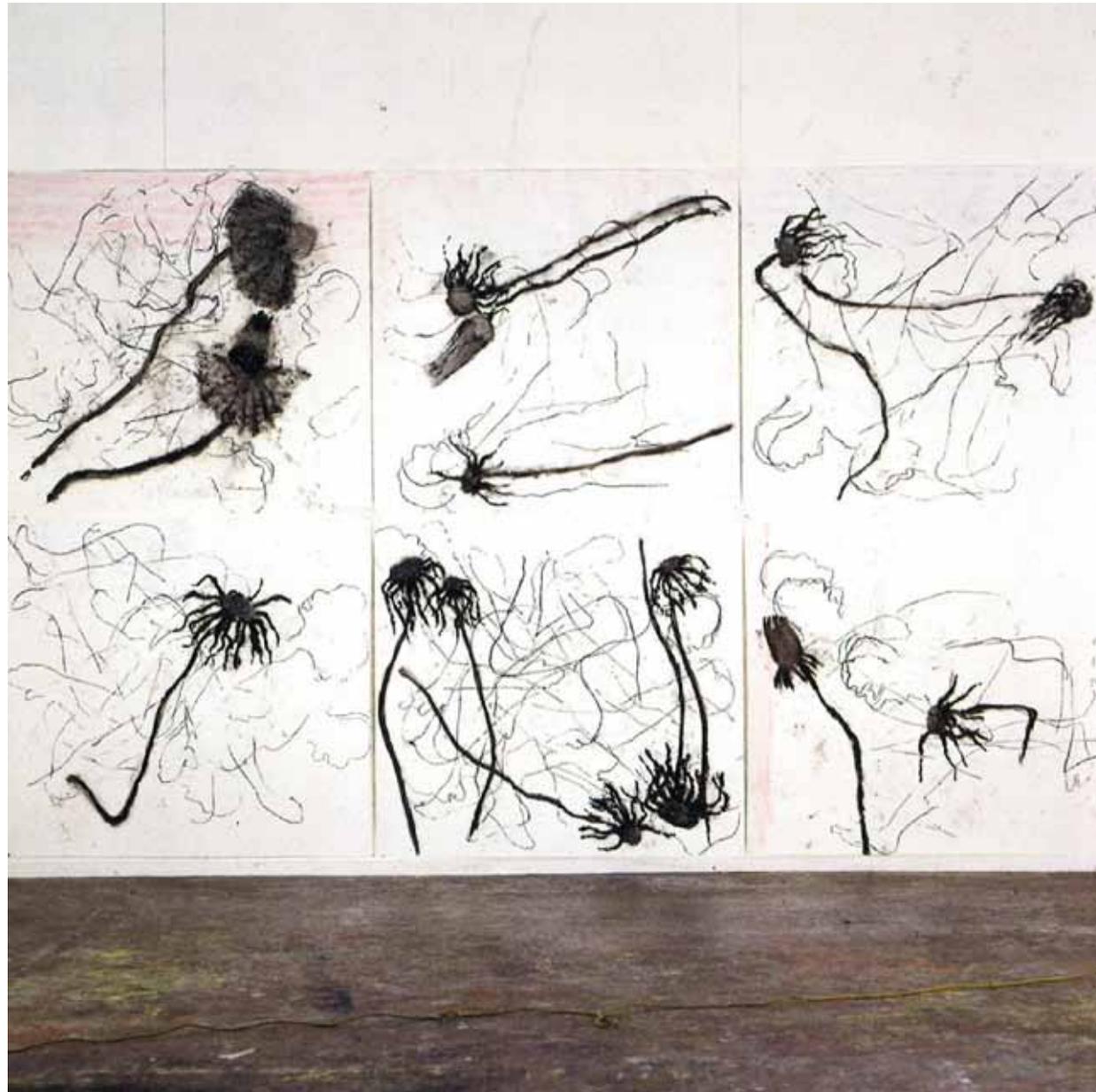


Frank van Hemert, *Und die Frauen warten...*, oil on canvas, 2005, 140 x 150 cm



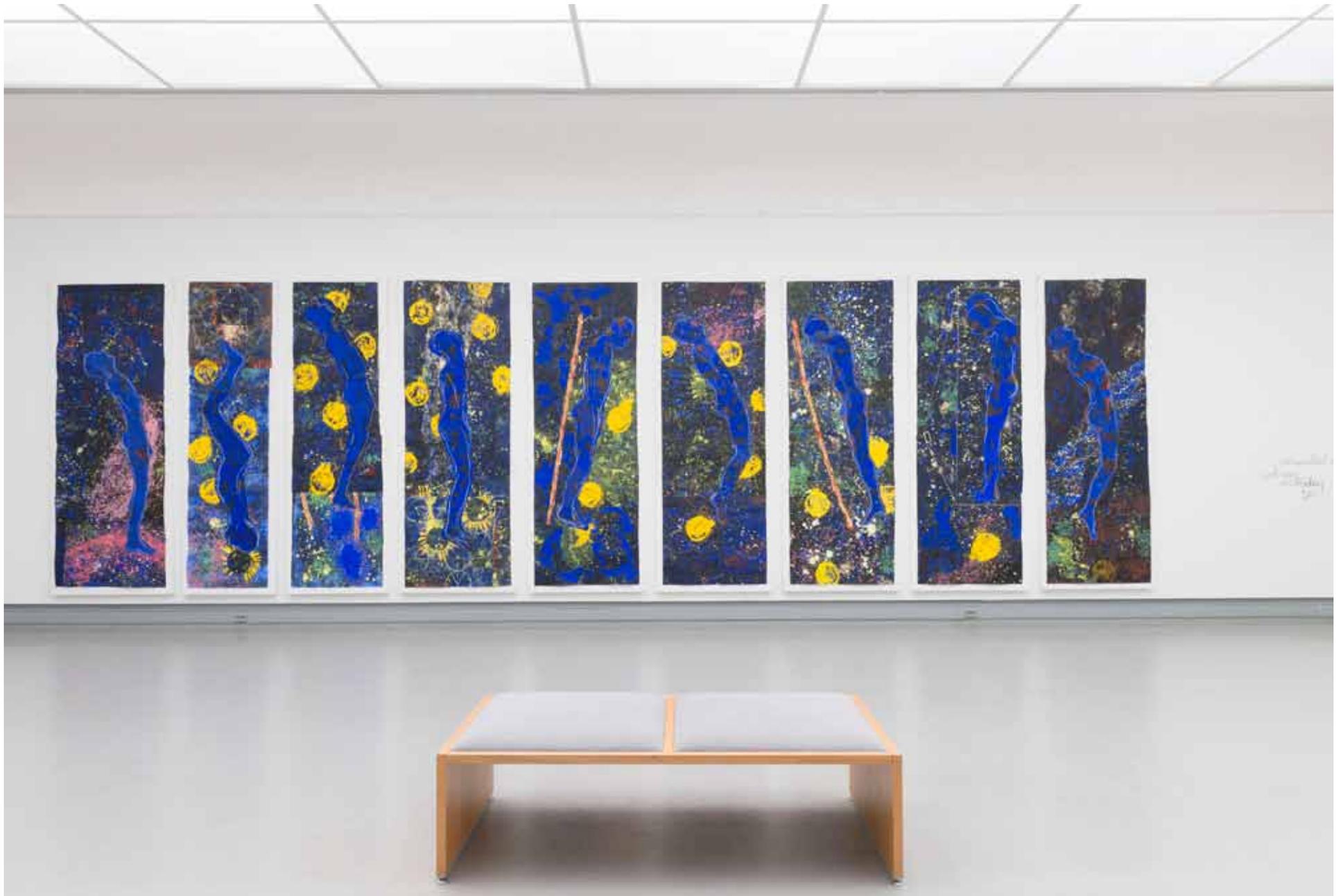
Frank van Hemert, *Und die Frauen warten...*, oil on canvas, 2006, 150 x 140 cm

You / Me



Frank van Hemert, *You / Me*, 1998, mixed media on paper, 6 x 142 x 155 cm

Loneliness in pursuit of Connection



Frank van Hemert, *Loneliness in pursuit of Connection*, acrylic on paper, 2014, 9x 267 x 1000 cm (Photo: Exhibition view in Museum Singer, Laren)

Icon



Frank van Hemert, *Icon*, oil on canvas, 2007, 2x 235 x 130 cm

South Africa Pieces



Frank van Hemert, *Song of Hope*, oil on canvas, 2015, 200 x 130 cm



Frank van Hemert, *The real song we sing about our lives*, oil on canvas, 2016, 200 x 155 cm