## NRC Handelsblad, August 20<sup>th</sup> 2020, Joyce Roodnat

A real idyll calls for the ax

If an idyll remains intact, it is not an idyll, Joyce Roodnat knows. She sees this confirmed in a theater performance in a park and with a golden cherry with a special filling.

And hop, there is all of a sudden that nice theater, which looks nothing like, bursts the codes and does not adhere to the way we do it.

The hall is a serene park with blooming cherry trees, crunching gravel paths and a fountain that occasionally splashes to promote pee. The audience is seated on benches spread across the grass. This is Mephisto Park, the battleground of Kim Karssen and Florian Myer, who together create a strangling variation on Wedekind's classic Frühlings Erwachen (1891). Go see it, smell the ground and experience the effervescent sexual feelings and raw violence of a girl and a boy with doll faces - his is vain and curious, hers is scornful as Villanelle from the TV series Killing Eve (great murder series, he is on NPO Start).

They speak with stately words. Words are a smoke screen, words can be twisted. Events not. What happens, happens and you do it with that. They fight with each other, viciously and without reservation, stuffing dirt into each other's mouths. Because it turns them on, but also in response to his violence in her big white underwear. And that beautiful park where we are all stuck together? That goes to pieces. Every idyll has to be thrown at it. If he stays whole, it was not an idyll, he was insignificant well-being.

I see the piece and it reminds me of a golden cherry all the time. I saw it earlier this day in an exhibition that I don't visit because I want to see it but because I want to run away from myself - at the Amsterdam cemetery De Nieuwe Ooster, where I am laying flowers on the grave of my oudste girlfriend, it is her birthday. She's been dead for almost five years now and I can't get used to it. I take refuge in the modest museum in a corner of the cemetery. It is called Tot Zover and makes exhibitions about death and sorrow

Tricky, but it succeeds wonderfully in not exploiting the mourning with some of the audience comes here.

Now there are the installations of Roos van Geffen. They are about the death of her father, or no, not about his death but about her goodbye to him. The cherry is hers too, it is made of gold, except for its withered stalk. That's real, it keeps a little plug in place. The work is called "A sweet death". Van Geffen filled this golden cherry with the amygdalin from the core of eight cherry stones, good for a lethal dose of cyanide in the human stomach, in which gold dissolves. In other words, if you eat this cherry, you die and the gold disappears.

The golden cherry is an idyll. Love, friendship, beauty, they end. The rot is in it, including grief and death. But the cherry is beautiful, it shines. That remains.

