

Parool, June 4th 2020, Maarten Moll : (...) Now we can again focus on beautiful exhibitions, which reflect on matters related to death. ” For example Eat Love Die by Roos van Geffen (1975). This is a retrospective of old and new work about farewell, desire and transience. There is new work in the main hall of the museum; an installation with photo books, Media Vita (2019). (...) “When her father died, he left a large collection of photo books. A selection of these, 76 books, has been deposited here. Intriguing, because you would think this work is about her father. About his taste, his passion for collecting. But because of the choices she has made, it naturally also tells a lot about her. ” It is a beautiful, meandering route that Van Geffen has set out. The stored books of great photographers tell about the life cycle, from birth - we see, for example, the pregnant photographer Annie Leibovitz - to the inevitable death. In the background we hear statements by the photographers from the books. It is a look back and a look ahead at the same time. Multi-layered, and very recognizable.

Hands To Sluiter, the hand, after the face, characterizes man. “From the sixteenth century, hands played an increasingly important role in portraiture. With Rembrandt, the hands often receive more light than the face. That is more exciting, fascinating. The videos of her father's hand are a reference to that tradition. ” Just as the photo portraits in the series Onfocused Days (2018) are a reference to the painter Matthijs Maris (1838-1917). Portraits in which we do not actually recognize a portrait. What do they display? Transience? That you may never know someone completely? A mirror that confronts you and your mortality? These are questions that play a role in Van Geffen's work. Also striking are the photos in the hallway that are part of the series Sporen (2017-2019), taken during the illness process of Van Geffen's father. We see a comb, a shirt collar, a pillow on which perhaps a head has rested for the last time, a hand passing through the hair. These are moving details that indirectly tell us more about the one who is no longer there. A bar of soap formed by his hands. We often overlook it. Again that layering.

In the last space is the work to which the exhibition owes its name: the triptych Eat Love Die. A photo of eight cherries, a video in which the artist eats the cherries. She spits out the stone and then takes the stem in the mouth of which she turns an eight with her tongue; the lemniscate sign that stands for infinity. Finally, she shows us the eight framed stems. With this sensual work she suggests an optimistic image that should form a counterpart to death. But is that also true when you know that there is a poisonous substance in the kernel of a cherry, and that the poisonous substance is deadly?

Intimidating In the last room we see a video of people nodding nods (which we saw earlier in two videos about depicting emotions). It is an unexpectedly intimidating, judgmental and judgmental work. As if they say: yes, you have understood correctly, you are also mortal.

Roos van Geffen: Eat Love Die, until 30-8 in Museum Tot Zover.