

## DOUBLE TOUCH

*Lynn Berger*

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A young man and a piano salesman are seated at opposite ends of a large wooden table. Two white coffee cups sit small and lonely on the polished tabletop. The men converse, politely, about the Steinway D; the young man inquires after its price.

Upon hearing the reply: "one hundred nineteen thousand dollars," he falls silent for a moment. Then: "I see. And do you guys have some kind of installment plan for that?" The scene is part of *Nummer Zes: Steinway Grand Piano*, a 2006 video by Dutch artist Guido van der Werve. It's currently on view in "Double Dutch," a group show at the Hudson Valley Center for Contemporary Art in Peekskill, New York. The show features sixteen artists — all of whom either are Dutch, or have spent significant amounts of time in the Netherlands — and is meant to convey the "Dutch soul" shared by artists as diverse as Guido van der Werve, Erik van Lieshout and Martha Colburn.



GUIDO VAN DER WERVE, *Nummer Zes: Steinway Grand Piano*, 2006. DVD, 17 mins. Courtesy the artist.

Exactly how one recognizes this soul isn't always evident. To be sure, some of the artists address architecture in their work, including Fendry Ekel and Rob Voerman; while Daan Padmos's sculpture at the Hudson riverbank references the Netherlands's experience of being a country partly below sea level. But other artists are less obviously shaped by, or engaging with, the peculiarities of their Dutch environs. Nevertheless, "Double Dutch" does present a coherent picture of a generation of experimental artists that is largely new to the American scene. This picture is playful and dreamy (take the mildly erotic textile paintings by Lara Schnitger) but critical too (Schnitger's work is also a commentary on women as lust objects.) While the extent to which this relates to de Stijl or the flatness of the Dutch

landscape is debatable, the show is still a surprising, well thought-out presentation of what contemporary Dutch art is up to today.



ERIK VAN LIESHOUT, *Sex is Sentimental*, 2008. DVD, 21 mins.  
Courtesy the artist and Maccarone Inc., New York.