

Overlooking the Rotterdam port, a breeze can be felt, intensifying into a strong wind. Generated by air curtains, *Commuter* (2024) by Katie Watchorn refers to constant movement and intercity living, typical of the Randstad experience. Often working in transitory spaces, the artist activates the “threshold” between inside and outside. An air curtain is a system typically used at the entrances of supermarkets to keep insects and dust out while regulating the air—warm in winter, cool in summer—in short, separating through what is formless.

The white noise produced by the machines has a meditative effect, permeating the rooms and studios of the building. Like mindfulness (the ever-productive person’s meditation), where the flow of noise (read: consciousness) pauses, the impact of the work becomes apparent in its absence. Click, click, click then off—until the motion sensor detects your body again, and the cycle repeats. Vertical columns of air fill Shimmer’s stairwells and the curves of the modernist building—oh, to undo, how lovely life could be.

Throughout the building, hidden behind Shimmer’s door, are thermoses—one a cast, three others ‘real,’ as real as an object can be when it keeps your drink warm for hours on end. These vessels mark the presence of people constantly on the move, those without time to pause for a coffee, who stretch a moment into an entire day. In this stretch, life becomes a series of in-between moments before being swept away by the wind. City living.

#### ABOUT THE ARTIST

Katie Watchorn makes sculpture. Key to the artist’s process is an exploration of the history and functions of objects and materials. By immersing herself in the full context of these items, Watchorn seeks to ‘unlock’ their hidden qualities, fostering a dialogue between the components that invites new sculptural possibilities. This process allows items to communicate with one another, opening up a fresh narrative that was previously concealed.

Her recent works reflect a personal tension between her rural roots and urban existence, particularly through the lens of travel and commuting. She conveys the movement of the individual through the use

*Commuter* (2024)  
by Katie Watchorn

Sunday 29 September 2024  
until February 2025

of motion-activated devices, the retrieval of typically hidden systems from public spaces, and the depiction of bodies in advertising.

Recent presentations include *Underbelly* at De Ateliers, Amsterdam, 2024; *Move-Set-Move* group show at The Complex, Dublin, 2023; *From Here to There*, three person show at The Douglas Hyde Gallery, Dublin 2021-2022; *Zero Grazing*, solo show at Studio Pavilion, Glasgow International, 2021. Her solo show *Dry* brimming will open in mother’s tankstation | Dublin in September 2024.

#### ABOUT THE BUILDING

The old RET building was designed in 1941 by the architects A. van der Steur, W.A.C. Herman de Groot and K.I. Ruige on behalf of the N.V. Handelscompagnie. Adrianus van der Steur (1893-1953) was city architect of the municipality of Rotterdam between 1931 and 1939. He designed, among other things, the Boijmans Van Beuningen Museum (1928-1935), the Maastunnel Complex (1935-1940) and the Eye Hospital (1941-1949). The building was completed in 1946 and expanded on the west side in 1953. The building was designed and built directly after the bombing of Rotterdam.

#### ARTWORK LIST

*Commuter* (2024) by Katie Watchorn

Two air curtains, arduino devices, approximately 7 minute program, pigmented jesmonite, thermal flasks, dimensions variable

Courtesy of the artist.

## ABOUT SHIMMER X AMARTE

Earlier this year, Shimmer x Amarte made a call for existing works that could be adapted for the stairwell leading up to our space. We encouraged artists to propose old ideas or existing works that could be modified for this project. By opening up Shimmer in this way, we continue to serve as a site of reflection for artists. Shimmer is proud to collaborate with x Amarte on this project.

X Amarte is a platform dedicated to supporting cultural organizations and institutions that focus on showcasing talented creators through various projects, open calls, and events.



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