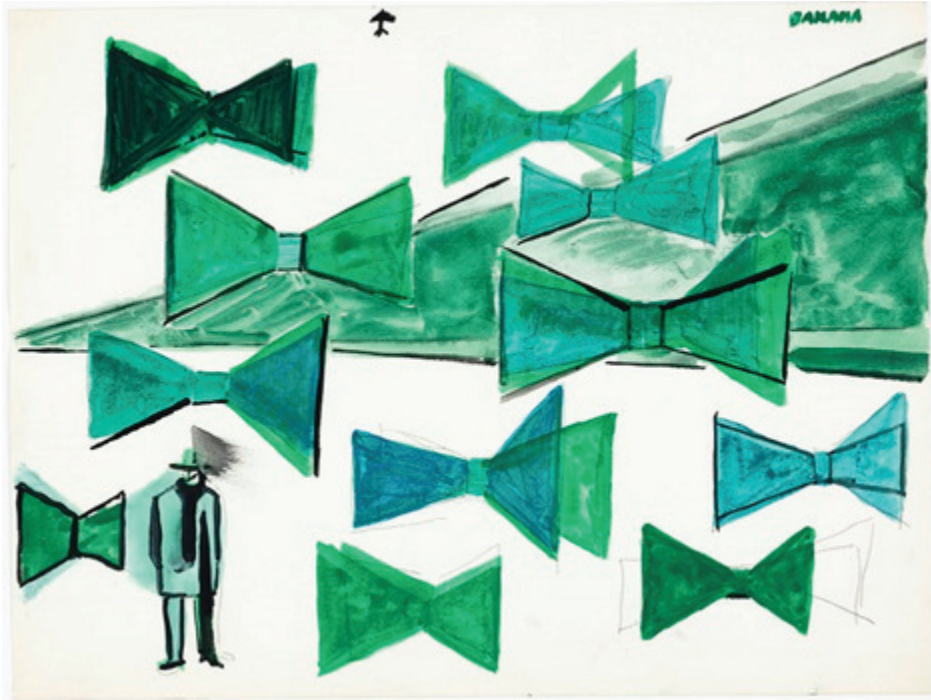


# METRO PICTURES

Jovanovic, Rozalia. "30 Years Later, Metro Pictures Puts René Daniëls Back on the Market," *Artnet.com* (March 28, 2014).

**artnet**



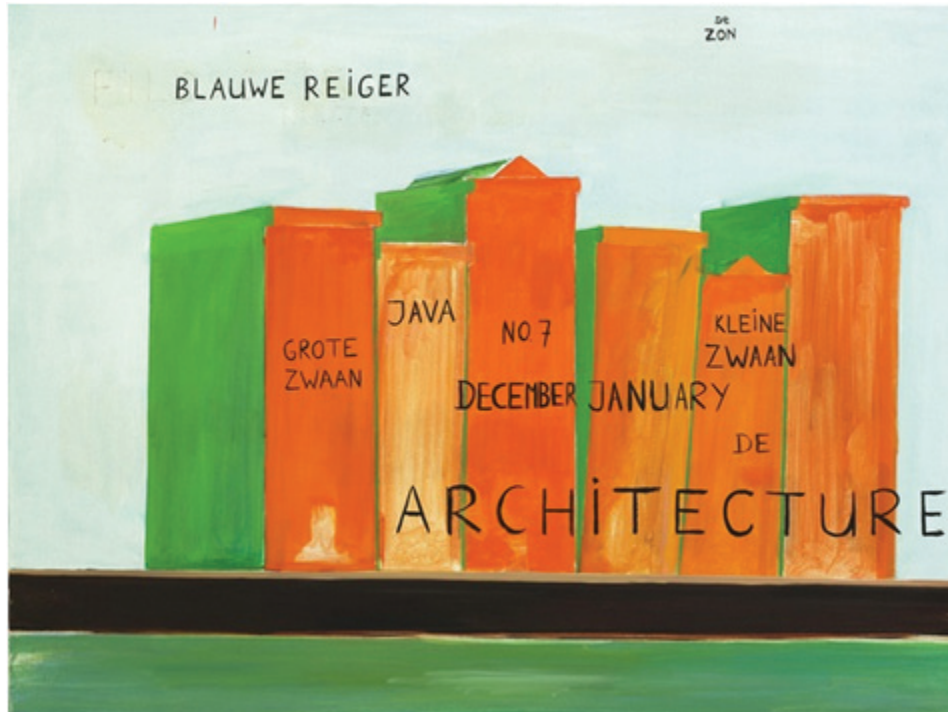
René Daniëls, *Untitled (Panama) (RD-T318)* (1987). Courtesy Metro Pictures.

In the mid-1980s, young Dutch painter René Daniëls, who with his unibrow and unkempt hair bore a striking resemblance to Sid Vicious, was on the rise. So much so that the artist, who coupled expressionist brushstrokes with a punchy palette and sketchy punk-inflected graphics inspired as much by the music of the Sex Pistols as by the enigmatic color-washed canvases of Sigmar Polke, was referred to by critics as the "Top Young Dutchman." He was sought after by galleries across Europe and had shows at Galerie Rudolf Zwirner in Cologne, Galerie Paul Andriess in Amsterdam, and Galerie Joost Declercq in Ghent. He had also been in exhibitions at the Kunsthalle Bern, the Stedelijk Museum, and Documenta. In 1984, New York's Metro Pictures gallery presented his first US solo exhibition with a second show in 1985. In 1987, at the age of 37, the artist suffered a brain aneurysm. Unable to produce new work, gallery shows all but stopped and Metro Pictures ceased representing him. Outside of the secondary market, it was virtually impossible to get your hands on anything by Daniëls.

"He didn't disappear exactly," Helene Winer, co-founder of Metro Pictures, told artnet News during a phone call. "But literally no work was accessible. We thought it was a mistake that his work was only known well in the Netherlands, to Dutch collectors. It only changed hands at Christie's and Sotheby's in Amsterdam."

Now, thirty years after that first show, and after coming upon a trove of works by Daniëls that had been in storage, Metro Pictures has resumed its representation of the artist and mounted its first selling exhibition in three decades, "René Daniëls." The show, which runs through March 29, and features paintings, drawings, and watercolors created between 1977 and 1987, is a special treat, not in the least because it is one of the few painting shows you're likely to see at the gallery (which has long been associated with artists in the Pictures Generation and their successors).

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René Daniëls, Kades-Kaden (RD-S044), 1987

Winer got word about the works last summer from Marleen Gijsen—Daniëls’s former girlfriend who is now his legal guardian and runs the René Daniëls Foundation—who had a trove of Daniëls works that had been stored at the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven. The cache included some 800 drawings and over 90 paintings that were in Daniëls’s studio—many of which were unfinished. The works were placed at the museum by the Daniëls Foundation; they were recorded and preserved by the Van Abbemuseum, which does not, however, collect Daniëls’s work.

Since Daniëls’s aneurysm, some of the work has been displayed, including an exhibition at the Van Abbemuseum in 1998, and another in 2011–2012 organized by the Museo Reina Sofia and Van Abbemuseum. In 2000, Metro Pictures presented an exhibition of Daniëls’s work, but this was, according to Winer, a tribute to the artist. No works were for sale. Now, with the current show, works are, once again, available for purchase.

With their ambiguous narratives and coarse, expressionistic style that blends abstract and representational imagery, his paintings feel strikingly at home amongst contemporary artists like Raymond Pettibon and Marcel Dzama. Daniëls’s work would feel as appropriate on the cover of a rock album as it would hanging on the walls of a Chelsea gallery.

There are about a dozen paintings and some 20 drawings and watercolors. The exhibition covers works from Daniëls’s trademark “bowtie” series—which, looked at one way, are also depictions of gallery spaces—to small drawings that display the humor and essence of his larger pieces. While the drawings are available from \$12,000, watercolors can be up to \$45,000. The paintings, a couple of which are just under \$500,000, will take you into a higher price range. “That reflects what an established market there is [for his work],” said Winer, who says the gallery has sold a substantial amount of the work already and has more on consignment. Daniëls’s record at auction is \$266,611 for an oil painting in the family of his “bow-tie” works, which sold at Christie’s Amsterdam in 2009.

Reminiscing about the early shows of his work in the mid-80s, Winer says: “We sold very few things.” But she notes that the market has changed dramatically since then, and people didn’t have the same kind of zeal for young artists as they do now. Though she avers that, three decades ago, Daniëls was being shown along with Cindy Sherman and Robert Longo at major exhibitions like Documenta and Zeitgeist, at that time museums weren’t interested in collecting his work. “None of those artists were being actively purchased by museums,” Winer said. But now, she says, museums are showing interest in his work.



René Daniëls, Untitled (architectuur) (RD-T334), ca. 1987

Though Daniëls “can’t discuss the pros and cons or weigh the value of things,” according to Winer, he enjoys showing his work and traveling for his shows, and had voiced his desire that the work in storage be sold.

If you miss the current exhibition, you can be sure this won’t be the last you’ll be seeing of Daniëls. At Frieze Masters, they’ll team up with Galerie Gisela Capitain to present a two-person show with Daniëls and Martin Kippenberger—who happens to be the only other painter that Metro Pictures showed in the 80s. And Metro Pictures will be bringing his work to Art Basel, the first time this work will be available in Europe.

It’s unclear what kind of work Daniëls would have gone on to produce had he not been inflicted from such a young age, but his place in the universe of significant artists has, over time, been sealed. “He may be ahead of where he was in the 80s in terms of status and reputation,” said Winer, “but now it’s very clear what his importance was. At any given time, at the exact moment the artist is doing their work when they’re young, nobody knows. They may like it or think it’s very good, but they don’t know what real influence or importance it might eventually have.”