

The Crossing, 2012
Martijn in't Veld

You read it from top to bottom, the broad white lines on the street which lie there like blank lines in a book. A zebra crossing whose whiteness has long lost its purity, and which is being eaten from all sides by the surrounding black. It carries the traces of a life at ground level, worn out by car tires and stained by chewing gum. Like a drawing made by the soles of the city. Under the pale veil of the zebra crossing you can see the black asphalt. It has an open structure, which has been roughly and firmly applied. A microcosm of ash; dark and soft illuminated spots which alternate in the hard light. A mass of silhouettes, which, if regarded individually, all look like shrivelled and burnt people. Especially at the bottom, along the curb, you can clearly distinguish every detail. Gleaming and angular black, agglomerated like boiled liquorice. This is how the asphalt has been drawn, the zero degree of the drawing from which all the gradations of reality come into being. The curb with its crumbled edge, the gutter where the stones are mud coated and the black tar of tread cigarettes which seamlessly dissolves into the charcoal asphalt. Some parts of the drawing are very detailed. A piece of chewing gum lying in the gutter for example is drawn very precisely and looks like a minuscule set of brains, while other parts are only roughly sketched out or even left out completely like blind spots on the retina.

Sometimes you see people pass by, they walk up or down the crossing. High heels that sound like women talking, heavy tired working boots or the feathered feet of children. Then nothing for a moment, a valley of silence before the traffic comes alive again. You look at the passing cars and you follow them from left to right, like words which are heading for the end of a sentence. You repeatedly try and look at yourself in the reflection of the polished cars. Sometimes this works and you see yourself standing, mirrored for a moment in the shiny paint, until it disappears again. This is how you see yourself, superficial and fragmented, distorted and disfigured. Appearing and disappearing, your image transforming every time, as if you are reading the same sentence over and over and its content keeps changing.