

PAN

AMSTERDAM

GALERIE FONTANA



Glance #2

2026, Archival Print - Framed with art glass, 84 x 60 cm, edition: 12

Until the mid-1990s, Van Empel created his photographic assemblages using traditional collaging techniques of cutting pasting and retouching. In 1995 Van Empel switched to a digital process, using a computer to create his conceptual photographs. Using a vast stock of digital photo's to create his photographs, Van Empel changed the face of digital fine-art photography. On the basis of this art-historical reference, Van Empel created a new genre within photography – without a ready-to-wear label. The artist himself speaks of the 'construction of a photographic image, or photo objects'. Although he does make use of pure photomontage – he never applies so-called morphing techniques – in his final image he strives for a naturalism and realism as opposed to a surrealist approach. The artificiality is visible but the final image is a convincing, autonomous reality. Although produced digitally, Van Empel's images are unique, each being built up of different combinations of photo's. He uses photography as an independent form of depiction. Though digitally produced, the camera and photography remain at the heart of his practice. Every image consists of photographs taken by himself, which are then digitally assembled on the computer. The camera provides the building blocks of his compositions. Van Empel's works are constructed down to the minutest of details, in which he considers the exact placement of every element, giving his images a sense of idealized perfection. Though created in the digital age using the most up-to-date techniques, Van Empel's work defies temporal structures and instead represent universal themes.