



*“Without a good idea
you’re nowhere...”*

But fish on a paper didn't take it quite far enough. *“I wanted to make things that look very realistic, without being able to truly be so. I'm constantly looking for a possible next step. Looking for variations to my subject matter. One work leads me to the next. The first mutated fish I made weren't that obviously different. A fish eye made out of a beer bottle cap, a bike valve on a mackerel and very subtle a finger in the mouth of a salmon. I keep my eyes open and then slowly things develop during the process.”* Zwaan tells us.

This is precisely how a fish bone was created, when a mould of a fish head and a raw chicken bone were lying next to each other and Zwaan discovered they looked good together. *“Only by looking at the piece one gets a bad taste in their mouth. But my work is mostly about the combination of different structures and substances, and the illusion of this combination. This subject repeats itself within all my work. I try to make each piece as convincing as possible by using many different materials, such as silicon rubbers, polystyrene, polyurethane, acrylics, human hair and odd bits taken off daily utensils.”*

QUALITY

Surprisingly enough Zwaans fish kept on taking on an increasing human form. *“Changeability is definitely a central point within my work, the human need to control everything is something that is programmed into our brains. We are constantly striving for a perfect world, yet we all know this will never be achieved. I'm not focused on telling a message, but I do hope that people will be so gripped by my images I thereby make them develop their own ideas on the subject. Personally I am left in awe and wonderment, when I see all the things that are possible these days. I don't want some perfect clone of myself to be walking around,*

but I do want diseases to be cured so I can keep my loved ones close to me for longer. It is because of this that I would not want the research and development of genetic manipulation to stop.” Zwaan tells us. *“I guess, you could say that this is the duality that I wish to present.”*

INTENSE

Zwaans work is not easy to produce. To begin with there must be the idea. *“Without a good idea you're nowhere, but ultimately it's about the implementation of the work. My work is definitely hard to make, it's a long process. First I make an original from plasticine - I sometimes use casts of fish parts or fingers in this process. In this manner I can control the shape of the work completely, with every mutation or skin structure, multi-functional right where I want them to be. The second step is making the mould. These moulds consist of different colours of silicon rubbers, which I use to build up the skin in different layers. After that, it is time to perfect the piece. In this stage I paint, place stiff made fake eyes and use real human hair to add to the finish of my work.”* Zwaan is a perfectionist. Every singular hair is put onto the silicone skin using miniscule tools with complete precision. These tools and many more are to be found in his The Hague work place on the Looierstraat. How long it takes to finish one of Zwaans pieces is hard to pin point. *“I usually work on more than one piece at a time.”* His biggest project to date is a fish that is 1.85 meters in length. This project took him over three months to make. It is now an eye catching work of art that decorates the wall of a private art collector.

CHAINSAW

Zwaan is not done with his fish just yet. *“I am not planning to stop my fish works already, but I did start creating other things apart from fish. Also I do still busy myself with humanisation within my work. For instance I have modified an apple and an electricity outlet from silicon human skin. Why an outlet? It is a contact point. Just take a look at Frankenstein. Electricity plays a big role in the creation of life.”* When asked what he would like to develop next, he answers simply that he would like to make bigger objects. Presently he is busy making a fish with a chainsaw. This work will be approximately 2 meters long and uses a real chainsaw. There is one drawing of this piece on the wall of his work place, and an example model in small on his workbench. But this is still too small for Zwaan, his ambition wills him to create larger pieces. *“My dream is to be able to make a piece that is 5 meters or longer in size.”* This is a dream that might well become a reality soon, if an assignment from the business world pulls through. •

Zwaans work is often viewable at expositions. He works together with Contempo Gallery in Eindhoven and Rotterdam. His work exposed on ART Amsterdam attracted a lot of attention of the Code Museum in Apeldoorn, where he participated in an exhibition named “The character of the beast”.