



# The Measurement of Presence

Iris Kensmil and Remy Jungerman

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- A sensitive and critical stance towards abstraction in the Dutch Pavilion at the Venice Biennale 2019

For the Venice Biennale 2019, Benno Tempel, director of the Gemeentemuseum Den Haag curated the exhibition *The Measurement of Presence*, in which he combines installations by Remy Jungerman with wall paintings and paintings by Iris Kensmil. *The Measurement of Presence* is a transnational presentation that explores traditions and the past, bringing them into contact with the present. Jungerman and Kensmil gather influences from different backgrounds. Remy Jungerman is interested in the path travelled by patterns. In his work he combines motifs from Africa, Maroon culture, and twentieth-century modernism. Iris Kensmil invites us to expand our consciousness on utopian twentieth-century avant-garde and introduces us to Black female activists and artists who have been neglected for too long. This sensitive and critical stance towards abstraction and modernism is what connects the work of Jungerman and Kensmil. In their work they combine the inspiration they draw from twentieth-century utopian abstract art – in particular Mondrian and De Stijl, the Russian avant-garde and Stanley Brouwn – with elements of other traditions and positions. In so doing, they size up the world. They explore how the presence and visibility of spirit and history are necessary to exist. The exhibition also interacts with the architecture of the pavilion, designed by Rietveld. The book is published on the occasion of *The Measurement of Presence*. The Venice Biennale 2019 takes place from 11 May until 24 November.

**Benno Tempel** is director of Gemeentemuseum Den Haag.