TESSEL VAN DER PUTTE

Weaving together feminine experiences, ecology & spirituality to connect deeper with nature. Inspired by water.
Through painting, nature installations, and video projections, I weave the feminine perspective with ecology and spirituality to create a deeper connection with nature. I paint, write, and conduct academic research from an eco-feminist lens on themes such as change, vulnerability, spirituality, and bodily autonomy. In my paintings, I particularly highlight the female body as wild, natural bodies of water—identifying with, among others, Dutch coastlines and rivers—interwoven as one entity. Inspired in part by Bruno Latour's Gaia theory and my previous work and studies on Indigenous cosmologies, I aim to contribute to the shift away from rigid perspectives with my art and to challenge people to think more eco-centrically and mindfully. Through abstraction, inspired by the flow and distortion of water, I bring these dimensions together: form and space are inseparable and seamlessly merge into one another. The composition and imagery of the works emphasize contrasting feminine elements of softness and strength, while Cubist elements in my style also underscore the human deconstructive use of nature. At the same time, I aim to convey a holistic, calming atmosphere with my works, making my exhibitions suitable for interactive programs such as meditation and yoga sessions, which I have previously organized during recent exhibitions ('Body Currents' & 'Root to Rise'). My work is strongly influenced and inspired by my academic background in human rights, particularly by my (published) research on women's emancipation in the context of climate change and rising sea levels. In addition to my art practice, I have also worked in the humanitarian sector (International Committee of the Red Cross in Geneva) and gained experience in conservation projects centered on Indigenous cultures and the role of women. I see my artistry not just as confined to the canvas but as intersectional and introspective work, in which aim to bridge scientific and socio-politically engaged issues that need new illumination in today's world, through the language of art. A language that speaks not only to the mind but connects us with our heart.

WEBSITES

www.tesselvanderputte.com

SOCIAL MEDIA

www.instagram.com/tesselvanderputte/

EDUCATION

2007 - 2013 Kunstzinnige vormgeving, Kunstgeschiedenis Erasmus College diploma

2007 - 2013 Textielbewerking & Fashion design CKC Zoetermeer

2007 - 2013 Fashion Design Erasmus College

EXHIBITIONS

2025 (Re)Turning Cycles See Lab Den Haag, Netherlands ‘Re(Turning) Cycles’ explored how the female gaze can inspire our relationship with the natural world and offer a new understanding of our relatability to it. Playing with non-linear perspectives, the exhibition looks at how “the feminine”—that which is always creating and transforming—is an embodied experience by both humans and landscape. Visitors were invited to interact with the artworks, and with white gloves, "turn" the circular artworks. www.instagram.com/p/DIazodSoUQe/?hl=nl Solo

2024 'Body Currents' GAEA Studio, De Achtertuin Rotterdam, Netherlands This solo show celebrated the female form and her relationship to water, while simultaneously aiming to blur—and question—the boundary between relatable human bodies and the abstract entity of water. As such, this project drew parallels between women’s bodies and natural bodies from eco-feminist perspectives. It also raised awareness about the struggles for rights and recognition faced by both, offering new perspectives on reshaping our relationship with our surroundings. Through 21 artworks on display, water video

PROJECTS

2025 (Re)Turning Cycles See Lab, Den Haag Den Haag, Netherlands www.instagram.com/p/DJWWdTyo4fj/?hl=nl A series of circular, rotating artworks, made of acrylic on canvases and wood, playing with non-linear perspectives, the exhibition looks at how “the feminine”—that which is always creating and transforming—is an embodied experience by both humans and landscape. These artworks are interactive, and require the viewer (with white museum gloves) to rotate and touch the artwork, like a meditation wheel.

2024 Artost introduction: Tessel van der Putte diverse media Den Haag, Netherlands www.instagram.com/p/C5Ivj-0IxxE/ This project was a collaboration with Sowsu and Kreek Water Media, and producer Bruno Aguilar Inzunza. It resulted in a creative video and an introduction to my art and philosophy.

2016 Het lichaam LUC Den Haag Den Haag, Netherlands

2015 Mentale gezondheid LUC Den Haag Den Haag, Netherlands

2014 Vrouwenrechten LUC Den Haag Den Haag, Netherlands

2013 Vluchtelingen LUC Den Haag Den Haag, Netherlands

projections, and a nature installation where local herbs, water plants, moss, and ferns were incorporated into the artwork, visitors were encouraged to reflect on how the element of water and its currents resonate within our own lives and bodies. In response to the challenges of climate change and our interconnected relationship with water, the exhibition engaged with diverse perspectives on the feminine in relation to water from social, spiritual, and environmental angles, aiming to reimagine our connection with the natural world and the Dutch water landscape as intertwined and interdependent. By creating empathy and relatability through the lens of the female body, rather than control and subjugation, this body of work aimed to bring viewers intimately close to recognizing nature and water as integral parts of ourselves as well. The exhibition program included an interactive weekend where yoga and mindfulness teacher Marjolein Rikkelman hosted sessions for visitors, inspired by water and the artworks.
www.tesselvanderputte.com/body-currents-exhibition
Solo

2024 'Root to Rise' Toqueur Gallery Westergas, Amsterdam, Netherlands e solotentoonstelling 'Root to Rise' bevatte 16 kunstwerken in verschillende tinten en verkende thema's van veerkracht en de diepe verbinding tussen de natuur en het vrouwelijke perspectief. Dit werd gedaan door figuratieve afbeeldingen van menselijke lichamen te juxtaponeren met abstracte representaties van natuurlijke elementen, met name bomen, om het belang van het koesteren en beschermen van beide te benadrukken. Een onderdeel van de tentoonstelling was de 'Vulva Series' (een doorlopend project sinds 2022), waarin kleurrijke, abstracte schilderijen de delen van het vrouwelijk lichaam vieren die vaak verborgen of omhuld zijn door gevoelens van schaamte en vervreemding voor velen... Door verbindingen te leggen tussen natuurlijke elementen zoals bloemen, oesters, zaden, aarde en rivierbeddingen, vieren de kunstwerken aspecten van het vrouwelijk lichaam die vaak verborgen zijn. De tentoonstelling wilde de kijkers uitnodigen om gevoelens van rigiditeit en afscheiding te overstijgen. Met een verwijzing naar mindfulness- en yogapraktijken vroeg de expositie de kijkers om eerst te 'wortelen' voordat ze 'oprijzen'.
www.tesselvanderputte.com/root-to-rise-exhibition
Solo

2022 'The Vulva Series' A'DAM Tower Amsterdam, Netherlands During this solo show consisting of nine artworks, I had the opportunity to exhibit the Vulva Series in the A'DAM Tower of Amsterdam during the winter of 2022-2023, in collaboration with Umaversity Amsterdam. The project celebrated women's bodily autonomy and offered colorful, abstract, and celebratory interpretations of a deeply significant part of our bodies and beings: the vulva. The paintings depicted vulvas as oysters, flowers, underwater sandy landscapes, seeds, and soil, drawing parallels between the natural landscape and the human body through an eco-feminist lens. Inspired by artists like Georgia O'Keeffe and Judy Chicago, and the fight for women's rights, I sought to initiate a sensitive yet crucial discussion about our connection to our bodies and bodily autonomy. In many cultures, including my own, parts of the female body are considered shameful and are hidden away. Medical research related to wombs, menstruation, and pleasure is under-represented and still considered taboo. Shame is prevalent in many women from adolescence to old

-- Women and Water
www.tesselvanderputte.com/post/wold-wildlife-day

-- Vulva Series: An eco-feminist body of work
www.tesselvanderputte.com/vulva-series

-- Arbol Adentro (tree witihin)
www.tesselvanderputte.com/arbol-adentro

age. The female body and the vulva deserve more than this: they are the gateway to life, the place from which all humans come. And that is what this show portrayed.
Solo

2022 Show: 'Color', Series: 'Women and Water' KunstHub Bink Elburg, Netherlands My contribution consisted of four large acrylic paintings on canvas celebrating the relationship between women and water. The theme of the group show was 'color,' and my approach explored the color of water, the color of this relationship, and the color of our Dutch, watery landscape, which felt both personal and insightful for this topic. www.tesselvanderputte.com/post/women-and-water
Group

COMMISSIONS

2024 Garden of memories 1x particulier Huntington Beach, LA, United States

2024 Reverdecer 1x particulier Rotterdam, Netherlands finished

2023 Zondag Ochtend Den Haag, Netherlands finished

2022 Holy Mary Genève, Switzerland finished

2022 Capillary Waves 1x particulier Amsterdam, Netherlands finished

2021 Three Suns 1x particulier Parijs, France finished

2020 Ouroboros 1x particulier Genève, Switzerland finished

PUBLICATIONS

2025 Environmental displacement and human migration in the most vulnerable nations Book Edward Elgar Publishing United States www.e-elgar.com/shop/gbp/pathways-to-sustainable-development-9781035356331.html?srsltid=AfmBOoroXXI-AAdR36wlXz1azPy7xOkCFhHxbVe4TZOiOh8tApdIp_ND

2021 Small Islands and Climate Change' in the book Fulfilling The Sustainable Development Goals Book Taylor and Francis Taylor & Francis, Routledge www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781003144274/climate-change-small-islands-tessel-van-der-putte
This chapter that I wrote for the book " Fulfilling the Sustainable Development Goals" (a publication with former UN and IUCN diplomats), focuses on Small Island Developing States in the Pacific and the challenges they face in times of sea-level rise. It looks, in particular, into the impacts of vulnerable or "over-looked" communities with specific needs towards the water, within a non-Western context. This included Indigenous communities and their right self-determination, and the risk to increased gender inequality and the important role of women in sustainability leadership.

REVIEWS

2024 Bel date met een kunstenaar Blog/Vlog TittyMag Netherlands thetittymag.com/kunst-is-een-manier-om-de-wereld-beter-te-begrijpen/ "We praten over ecofeminisme, muziek tijdens het creatieproces, en meer."

2024 An Eco-Feminist interpretation of the nexus between the natural and the human Magazine ALMA Magazine Amsterdam, Netherlands www.almamagazines.com/almaxfeatures/reuniting-with-nature-in-tessel-van-der-puttes-root-to-rise/
"Throughout the ages, humanity has looked to the cosmos for guidance, intricately weaving the natural world into the fabric of daily life. Elements like trees, with their life-sustaining presence from sapling to ancient grove, have played a pivotal role in this connection. Tessel van der Putte's recent exhibition, Root to Rise, eloquently explores our deep relationship with nature through an eco-feminist lens. She draws on the profound symbolism of growth and resilience, mirroring life's journey from its hidden beginnings beneath the soil to its ascension

AWARDS AND GRANTS

2025 Funding voor solo expositie: '(Re)Turning Cycles' (sinds 2004) Stroom, Den Haag Den Haag, Netherlands Solo exhibition '(Re)Turning Cycles: Reimagining femininity at the heart of environmental consciousness' near the dunes about the female body and her emotional, inner landscapes, our relationship with water, and the interlinkages between spirituality and ecology.

into the light. For example in the “Vulva Series” one sees a particularly striking and bold artistic statement that aligns the often-hidden, stigmatized aspects of the female form with the unseen roots of plants. Van der Putte suggests that just as roots anchor and nourish what grows above, the overlooked parts of our being are essential to our vitality and growth. Inspired by the surrealist visions of Remedios Varo and the transformative sculptures of Wangechi Mutu, van der Putte’s art not only pays homage to these pioneering figures but also forges a path towards a more harmonious and sustainable relationship with our environment and with each other. Her work is a call to see beyond the surface, to understand the deep connections we share with the natural world, and to cultivate reverence for these relationships."

2024 Tessel studied human rights but became an artist: 'I see the power of art as a means for social change' Magazine BEDROCK Netherlands www.bedrock.nl/tessel-beeldend-kunstenaar/ "Het is nooit te laat om opnieuw beginnen; een nieuwe carrière, relatie of zelfs een compleet ander leven. In deze serie spreken we inspirerende vrouwen die het roer helemaal omgooiden. Tessel van der Putte is beeldend kunstenaar, maar haar achtergrond ligt oorspronkelijk in de humanitaire sector."

2024 Interview met Haagse kunstenares Tessel van der Putte Radio Den Haag FM Den Haag, Netherlands www.instagram.com/p/C551TB0I7Y_/?img_index=1

2023 "Women’s Connection to Water, Reimagining Worlds, and Mindfulness" conversation with Tessel van der Putte Radio Terra Stories Podcast smartlink.ausha.co/terra-stories/7-women-s-connection-to-nature-reimagining-worlds-and-mindfulness-conversation-with-tessel-van-der-putte "Tessel is a Dutch artist, who was lulled by the sound of rivers, waterfalls and waves, who developed an admiration for the natural world, its shapes, colors, and secrets. The secrets that fascinated her as a child, watching time go by through the movements of water, and that she began to unravel as she grew older, after numerous dips in the cold Swiss rivers. Why did it help her to clear her mind, think, and feel at home? Why is water an essential resource, both scientifically and spiritually? She continued to explore these secrets through some research and visiting different communities around the world - gaining insights about the different ways in which people connect to water. And above all, transcribing them, through her art, where the "feminine" has a special place within this resource."

2022 Art, Telling Stories About Wilderness WILD Foundation wild.org/blog/art-telling-stories-about-wilderness/ "At WILD, we love stories and especially when they are about wilderness. Therefore, we went knocking on the door of Tessel van der Putte, who opened up to us about her colorful universe, inspired by nature. We plunged headfirst into inspiring stories traveling through the worlds of mindfulness, femininity, water, climate change, and hope. Tessel is a Dutch artist who specializes in telling stories of mindfulness and femininity through the medium of paint. In all her art, she works with abstraction of form, influenced by cubism and symbolism. She is also an academically schooled writer and researcher, with a special interest in human rights, feminism, and the impacts of climate change on small island nations. Dive into this ode to natural elements, our connection to them, and the solutions to face the

climate and biodiversity crisis through this Q&A with Tessel van der Putte."

SECONDARY ART-RELATED ACTIVITIES

2021 - 2024 Researcher On-going

(Re)Turing Cycles | Tessel van der Putte, 2025

Artistic short video for the exhibition '(Re)Turing Cycles', 2025



(Re)Turning Cycles - Solo Show at See Lab, 2025



(Re)Turning Cycles, 2025



Atmospheric photo from the (Re)Turning Cycles exhibition, 2025



'A Very Female Sea', 2025
Acrylic on rotating canvas and wood structure, 180ø cm



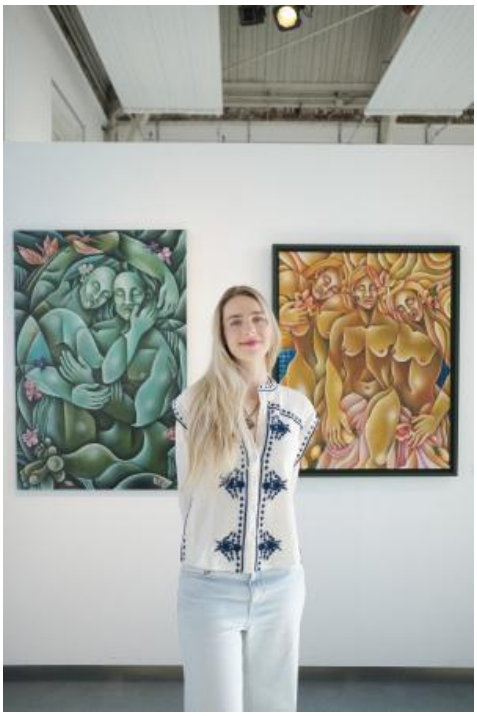
(Re)Turning Cycles, 2025



'Meditations IV', 2025
Acryl on canvas en hout, 80ø cm



'Shedding Skin' interactive artwork, 2025
Acrylic on canvas and wood, 40ø cm



, 2025
Acrylic on canvas, The Garden (90x120cm) and Mediterranean (80x100cm).