





Madé van Krimpen presents Solo Iris Kensmil

## Iris Kensmil

The Amsterdam-based artist Iris Kensmil from Surinamese background, born in 1970, depicts Black people and their history from a feminist and empowering point of view. Through the language of art in the form of paintings, installations and drawings, she aims to create recognition for Black writers, musicians, and activists. Kensmil presents them as individuals, as the active intellectuals they are. This way, she breaks away from tradition with how Black people, especially women, have been presented in past paintings.

Kensmil's artistic journey has been marked by achievements like the Venice Biennale in 2019 where she represented the Netherlands. Kensmil's work is featured in renowned institutions like Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, and has been part of various exhibitions worldwide, addressing important themes such as Black identity, community, and historical revision.

## Education

Kensmil studied Fine Arts at the Minerva Academy in Groningen (1992–1996). From 2014 till 2018, she was a member of the Jury for the Dutch Royal Award for Modern Painting.

## Selected exhibitions

2023 'Tomorrow is a Different Day, Collection 1980-nu Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, NL

2021 'Some of My Souls', Art Institute Melly, Rotterdam, NL

2020 'Something Still Comes Back', Matthew Brown Los Angeles; Women Make History, US

2019 'Feminism in the Age of Transnationalism', The Haifa Museum of Art, ISR

2019 'Blues Before Sunrise', Museum Kranenburgh, Bergen, NL

2019 'The New Utopia Begins Here'#2, Dutch Pavilion, Venice Biennial, IT

2014 'Shifting Colours', met Willem de Rooij, Tropenmuseum Amsterdam, NL



Iris Kensmil

Lezende, 2020  
100 x 130 cm  
oil on canvas

€16.500,-

Lezende

“Lezende” is a painting that takes inspiration from the installation “Study in Black Modernity” created for the Van Abbemuseum. Central to the installation were carefully selected books exploring the theme of Black Modernity. Among the intriguing displays were charcoal drawings, including one depicting a woman engrossed in reading. The painting “Lezende” draws inspiration from this specific charcoal artwork.



Iris Kensmil

### Dungeon and Gate

In 2012-2013, Iris kensmil participated in an artist exchange program of Nubuku Foundation Accra, Ghana and Stedelijk Museum Bureau Amsterdam, the Netherlands. “During my stay in Ghana I visited also a series of slave-castles. It made a great impression on me. At that time I made works on other aspects of this journey. In 2020 I felt strong enough to paint this history too, inspired by my own photographs.”

Dungeon depicts the dungeon in which male slaves were held in Cape Coast Castle. The painting Gate represents the exit to the ships from the Elmina castle in Elmina, Ghana. Through these paintings, Kensmil aims to evoke a collective memory of these spaces, intertwined with their enduring architectural presence.

Dungeon, 2020

120 x 165 cm

oil on canvas

€18.500,-



Iris Kensmil

Gate, 2020  
120 x 75 cm  
oil on canvas

€12.600,-



Iris Kensmil

We the People Who Are Darker  
Than Blue

Iris Kensmil's ongoing series We the People Who Are Darker Than Blue honours Black musicians. "The title comes from a song by Curtis Mayfield as this work is a homage to Black Soul, Blues and Reggae musicians and their vinyl records. Blues, soul and reggae are entertainment. However, as a Black person, you can also hear back the experience of your world in these genres. My father used to play a lot of soul music at home, and such music has remained important to me. Each of the singers included has in some way or another performed a protest song."

From the series:

"We the people who are darker than blue"

Marcia Griffiths, 2015

70 x 50 cm

ink pastel on paper

€3.200,-



Iris Kensmil

From the series:  
“We the people who are darker than  
blue”

Nina Simone, 2011  
70 x 50 cm  
ink pastel on paper

€3.200,-



**Iris Kensmil**

**From the series:  
“We the people who are darker than  
blue”**

**Solange, 2021  
70 x 50 cm  
ink pastel on paper**

**€3.200,-**





Iris Kensmil

From the series:  
“We the people who are darker than  
blue”

Sam Cook, 2015  
70 x 50 cm  
ink pastel on paper

€3.200,-



Iris Kensmil

From the series:  
“We the people who are darker than  
blue”

Alton Ellis, 2011  
70 x 50 cm  
ink pastel on paper

€3.200,-



**Iris Kensmil**

**From the series:  
“We the people who are darker than  
blue”**

**Sandra Puma Jones , 2011  
(black uhuru)**

**70 x 50 cm  
ink pastel on paper**

**€3.200,-**



Iris Kensmil

From the series:  
“We the people who are darker than  
blue”

Marvin Gaye, 2011  
70 x 50 cm  
ink pastel on paper

€3.200,-



Iris Kensmil

From the series:  
“We the people who are darker than  
blue”

D'Angelo, 2011  
70 x 50 cm  
ink pastel on paper

€3.200,-

# Madé

# van Krimpen

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