

Note (2)

*During an interview with a practicing believer in Antwerp, the question was shyly asked “and what is your religion? Or is that too personal a question?” It was as though they felt like they were peeking into someone’s bedroom. This gave me a strange, paradoxical feeling. The two extremes of intimacy and transparency often seem to coincide, I believe, and not so much from personal intention as from outside interference. This leads to the uncomfortable sensation of not being able to keep the outside world out. Distance is thereby erased and the outside becomes personal while the inside becomes impersonal. The theatre is inverted. In this context, is the perception of a religion even possible beyond the perception of its media value? Or for a person’s self-perception to differ from the way the self is presented?*

*The gaze is not authoritarian but devious; it seems to be trying to extract something. Both indoors and outdoors feel like a massive arena for exhibitionism, where everyone fights for their own uncertain identity while, when it comes to religion, that of the neighbour can only be tolerated by dismissing it as nonsense. (4) I ask myself where the space is for the hidden to be itself: places where identities are no one else’s business and cannot be appropriated by anyone but the owner and their imaginary other. What physical places could manifest these back-rooms of the mind? In what blind corner can people find shelter? At an exhibition in Tehran, I saw a painting that contained two images: the one that was visible concealed the “real” image behind hatches. This represents one way of evading censorship. Interestingly, the painting directly paralleled the actual space: the “official” exhibition was on display in the front room and the “real” exhibition in the back room. Hidden rooms are meaningful and have an impact on both a practical and a psychological level.*



**4.**  
**Donald Loose, “It takes two to tango”, in: Donald Loose an& Anton de Wit (eds.), Religie in het publieke domein. Fundament en Fundamentalisme, P. 10 (Damon, 2007)**