

GALLERIACONTINUA

SAN GIMIGNANO **BEIJING** LES MOULINS

常青画廊 / 北京

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HANS OP DE BEECK

The night time drawings

GALLERIA CONTINUA / BEIJING, 13th September – 23rd November, 2014

Galleria Continua is honoured to host in its Beijing space, the new solo exhibition by Hans Op de Beeck, the worldwide famous Belgian artist.

Hans Op de Beeck (B) produces large installations, sculptures, films, drawings, paintings, photographs and texts. His work is a reflection on our complex society and the universal questions of meaning and mortality that resonate within it. He regards man as a being who stages the world around him in a tragic-comic way. Above all, Op de Beeck is keen to stimulate the viewers' senses, and invite them to really experience the image. He seeks to create a form of visual fiction that delivers a moment of wonder, silence and introspection.

For 'The night time drawings', Op de Beeck's second solo exhibition in Galleria Continua in Beijing, he realised a new series of large watercolours, sculptures, an animated film and photographic works.

The title 'The night time drawings' refers firstly to the new watercolours, which can be described as 'filmic' in terms of their framing and lighting. These black-and-white images breathe a dark atmosphere which is

not dissimilar from film noir. In the gallery the watercolours are presented in a kind of staged print room. Op de Beeck created all the watercolours at night, alone in his studio, after everybody had left the building. The nocturnal setting and the solitary nature of the painting process are palpable in the images. They show the viewer fictitious scenes in which the postmodern metropolitan environment, the mysterious landscape and anonymous characters hint at possible stories.

The new animated film 'Night time', which is projected in a separate room, shows a world that fully complements the watercolours. The film is a rhythmical sequence in which scenes are drawn and undrawn, backed by a soundtrack created especially for the film.

'Gestures' is a series of plaster wall sculptures, which each showing one or two life-size, anonymous arms performing a simple action. Op de Beeck is a great believer in the power of the small gesture: a hand offering a few blackberries, a hand pressing down gently on your shoulder at the right moment, two hands lovingly holding something fragile, a hand calmly writing ... Each movement implies a much bigger story than one might expect. Small gestures are distinctly unspectacular, but precisely because of this they bring something as fundamental as

poetry and solace into our daily contact with one another.

The sculptures 'Pond' and 'Guitar' turn away from the subject matter of 'Gestures'. 'Pond' is a quiet pond with waterlily leaves made of plaster and flowers of mouth-blown glass sitting on top of a black water surface. The work is suffused with the mysterious atmosphere of the watercolours. 'Guitar' consists of a solid plaster interpretation of the instrument, as well as an equally fragile plaster chair surrounded by a whole raft of everyday objects made of plaster such as empty beer cans, mobile phones, pizza boxes, etc. The idea behind this petrified scene with a muted guitar is *saudade*: the melancholy of a suspended life, a barren, abandoned world as we find it in the middle of the night after a party.

Finally, the exhibition features new photographic works. One, a black-and-white photograph called 'Vanitas (variation)', depicts a large, staged still life with objects brought together through free association. These objects were produced on different scales, which has resulted in a surreal world in the photograph. Alongside several unexpected items, the work also boasts classic vanitas objects including a human skull, candelabras, empty glasses, open books and snails.

The other new photographs, 'Staged Interior (lounge)' and 'Staged Exterior (forest)', are large colour photographs in which a misty, alien-looking jungle and a kind of obscure lounge interior were staged on a reduced scale. There is no attempt in either of the two photographs to try and hide the scaled staging; the spotlights and tripods are visible in both as they would be on a film set. Because of this the photographs are reminiscent of pictorial painting. At all times the viewer is aware that the image is constructed, that it is no more than a thin layer of paint, but if he accepts this illusion as 'true', it becomes a door to a profound, authentic experience.

Hans Op de Beeck was born in Turnhout in 1969. He lives and works in Brussels and Gooik, Belgium. Op de Beeck has shown his work extensively in solo and group exhibitions around the world.

He had substantial institutional solo shows at the GEM Museum of Contemporary Art of The Hague, The Hague, NL (2004); MUHKA Museum of Contemporary Art, Antwerp, B (2006); Centraal Museum, Utrecht, NL (2007); the Smithsonian's Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington DC, US (2010); Kunstmuseum Thun, CH (2010); Centro de Arte Caja de Burgos, Burgos, ES (2010); Butler Gallery, Kilkenny, IRL (2012); Kunstverein Hannover, D (2012); Tampa Museum of Art, Tampa, US (2013); the Harn Museum of Art, Gainesville, FL, USA (2013); FRAC Paca, Marseille, F (2013); MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge, Boston MA, US (2014); MOCA Cleveland, OH, US (2014); Sammlung Goetz, Munich, D (2014), ...

Op de Beeck participated in numerous group shows at institutions such as The Reina Sofia, Madrid, ES; the Scottsdale Museum of Contemporary Art, AZ, US; the Towada Art Center, Towada, JP; ZKM, Karlsruhe, DE; MACRO, Rome, IT; the Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, GB; PS1, New York, NY, US; Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Pompidou, Paris, FR; Wallraf-Richartz Museum, Köln, DE; Hangar Bicocca, Milano, IT; the Hara Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo, JP; 21C Museum, Louisville, Kentucky, US; The Drawing Center, New York, NY, US; Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, AT; Shanghai Art Museum, Shanghai, CN; MAMBA, Buenos Aires, AR; Haus der Kunst, Munich, DE; Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna, Bologna, IT; Kunstmuseum Bonn, Bonn DE, ...

His work was invited for the Venice Biennale, Venice, IT; the Shanghai Biennale, Shanghai, CN; the Aichi Triennale, Aichi, JP; the Singapore Biennale, Singapore, SG; Art Summer University, Tate Modern, London, GB; the Kochi-Muziris Biennale, IN, and many other art events.

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