

Hotel Corona

Resilience Acquisitions by the Flemish Community 7.May.2023 – 5.Nov.2023

Elke Andreas Boon

Freedom Costs Money – Money Costs Freedom, 2019, silk, cotton, wood, 80 x 44 x 34 cm On long-term loan from the Flemish Community Collection

Since 1996, Elke Andreas Boon has been working on a personal oeuvre using film and photography as her artistic point. Over the years, she has broadened her artistic arsenal to include drawings, sculptures, installations and music – the latter activity under the pseudonym Matti Le Dee. As an artist, Boon questions what makes people human and the tension that is created between responding to and avoiding social expectations. She often reflects on gender, relations and family ties in her oeuvre; empathy for the fragility of often younger girls and adolescents is a common thread in her work. She translates this constant reflection on the human condition into a diverse body of work that give shape to our dreams, fears and desires. This is also true of her textile work in which the artist addresses the tense relationship between freedom and financial resources.

Polien Boons

Untitled, 2017, mixed media, variable dimensions

On long-term loan from the Flemish Community Collection

Polien Boons (b. 1991, Breda) explores the tension between natural, organic elements and rational, man-made structures. In her drawings and collages, she originally worked around the grid structure as a guiding principle. Lately, she has increasingly been seeking out the contrast between organic and industrial materials. Amongst other things, she works with copper, both as a support for her collages, which stem from etchings, and for an installation in which she explores the material's intrinsic properties. *Untitled* (2017), for example, consists of a large copper plate resting against a wall. It is faced by a machine that blows bubbles, which burst against the plate. The installation plays on the contrast between the solid copper plate and the ephemeral bubbles that, over time, will oxidise the metal.

Dries Boutsen

Untitled, 2015

mixed media

On long-term loan from the Flemish Community Collection

Dries Boutsen's (b. 1993, Hasselt) artistic practice mainly revolves around collages and sculpture. Boutsen creates his collages using paper and other everyday waste material that he collects. Older works can even serve as components for new creations. He deliberately leaves visible traces of wear and tear in the pieces, as a way of alluding both to himself and to the former owners of the materials used. The artist works on these collages for several years, meaning that their visual appearance is constantly changing. These works do not have a strict hanging direction as a result; it is not the artist but the person responsible for the installations who determines the ultimate orientation of these artworks. Along the way, the tactile collages evolved into three-dimensional objects fashioned from robust materials such as wood and metal. For these sculptures too, there is no specific presentation direction. Patina – for example oxidation – once again plays an important role in evoking the history of the materials used and the process behind the making of the artwork.

Fred Vervoets

Kerstmis, 2020, mixed media on canvas, 147 x 207 cm On long-term loan from the Flemish Community Collection

Fred Vervoets (b. 1942, Burcht) occupies a distinct place in the Belgian art world. Oblivious to all trends, he has continued – like a lone wolf – to paint in his characteristic style. It is expressionistic, exuberant and betrays certain Cobra influences. Although his work was not always consistent with the prevailing mood of the era, as a painter/teacher he was a major influence on many artists, including Vincent Geyskens, Tom Liekens, Koen van den Broek, Kati Heck, Vaast Colson and Dennis Tyfus. By means of horror vacui, as well as the range of art historical references, Vervoets' caricatural visual language and swirling, almost psychedelic richness of detail evokes similarities with art brut and the world of comics. Vervoets is a born storyteller who also makes drawings, paintings and etchings. His oeuvre has a markedly narrative and autobiographical slant, for which he draws on both memories and scenes from everyday life. This is also true of *Christmas* (2020). In this work, the artist depicts himself spending Christmas alone during the corona virus pandemic lockdown, surrounded by his paintings.

Ricardo Brey

Saturno devorando a uno de sus hijos, 2012, mixed media, various sizes. On long-term loan from the Flemish Community Collection

Ghent-based artist Ricardo Brey (b. 1955, Havana), who was born in Cuba, has been working for several decades on a layered and varied oeuvre that offers a poetic and metaphysical reflection on our existence. Drawing on his mixed background, he combines a range of literary and scientific sources from Western thought and Afro-Cuban culture with more topical socio-economic references. He does this in a unique visual language for which he uses cheap or found materials as well as precious ones.

This is also the case with the installation *Saturno devorando a uno de sus hijos* (2012). The work consists of a constellation of interlinked celestial bodies in the form of spheres or hemispheres, executed in the widest range of materials. Certain spheres are made of lead – a material which in antiquity was associated with melancholy and the god Saturn – while for others he used an ostrich egg or an old football. The title of the work is a nod to Goya's *Saturn Devouring His Son* (1823). But it can equally be interpreted as a metaphor for the suffocating regime in Cuba, which the artist fled and, by extension, all forms of abuse of power.

Luc Deleu

Red and Blue Barricade, Barricade #5, 2016, digital drawing, ed.1/3, 63 x 100 cm On long-term loan from the Flemish Community Collection

For architect, urban planner and artist Luc Deleu (b. 1944, Duffel), architecture is a form of visual, sculptural and political thinking about the relationship between public and private space. He explores these themes through his research bureau T.O.P. office, founded in 1970, and in his artistic activities. The same is true of his installation *Red and Blue Barricade* (2017), a design drawing for which can be seen here. The work is inspired by Eugène Delacroix's famous painting *Liberty Leading the People* (1830), which depicts Marianne, the embodiment of France, commanding the revolutionaries. It prompted Deleu to ask questions such as 'what makes a barricade a barricade?' He originally began making barricades with rick, books and furniture. Eventually, his eye fell upon Gerrit Rietveld's Red and Blue Chair. It is an iconic piece that is also easy to produce. Although conceived as 'design for the people', it eventually became a priceless collector's item. The hollowed-out revolutionary potential of this piece of furniture is reinstated in the barricade arrangement of 29 stacked chairs.

Manu Engelen

Foggy, 2015-2018

mixed media on canvas

on loan from Collection Flemish Community

Manu Engelen (b. 1984, Leuven) graduated in 2010 with a Master's in Painting from the PXL-MAD School of Arts, Hasselt. In recent years, he has made abstract compositions that are based on specific objects or real physical phenomena. *Foggy* (2015-2018), for example, might allude to certain atmospheric effects caused by mist, such as blurred vision, softer light and diffuse colours. In terms of painting technique, Engelen achieves this result by using a range of materials, including charcoal and spray paint, to create a somewhat tremulous image with flowing transitions between the different shades. The artist is also interested in the different manifestations of energy. Engelen evokes this hard-to-visualise concept by deploying dynamic brushstrokes and withholding figuration. From an art historical point of view, Engelen appears to be expanding on aspects of the oeuvres of Barnett Newman, Mark Rothko and Jef Verheyen. In addition, connections can be made with the work of contemporary artists such as Sterling Ruby's 'spray paintings' and Pieter Vermeersch's *dégradé* paintings.

Pélagie Gbaguidi

Care, 2020, ed. 1/5

pencil, pastel and wool on paper

On long-term loan from the Flemish Community Collection

The work of Pélagie Gbaguidi (b. 1965, Dakar) focuses on colonial and post-colonial history. She describes herself as a contemporary 'griot'. Traditionally this term alludes to a West-African storyteller who preserves oral histories and cultural traditions. She herself defines her role as a mediator between individual memories and the historical past. Gbaguidi's work often alludes to the overlooked stories which so-called official historiography tries to rid of simplifications, archetypes and even lies. The artist is active in diverse media, including painting, drawing, performance and installation.

The five drawings are part of a larger series with the overarching title *Care* (2020). Gbaguidi created the entire series on paper removed from the archive of the Royal Museum for Central Africa in Tervuren. More specifically, the works are made on pages of an encyclopaedia about the flora in the Congolese province of Katanga. The museum wished to dispose of the book. Gbaguidi recontextualises these apparently superfluous archive pieces by using them as the support for spontaneous, expressive and colourful drawings, made with dry pastel and pencil. With *Care*, Gbaguidi updates the debate around Belgium's colonial past and subtly reveals the unequal balance of power that went hand in hand with this. For example it is clear that at the time, the botanical research in Congo was intended to increase Belgium's knowledge and not that of the local population.

Maud Gourdon

ABC DNA, 2019

mixed media

On long-term loan from the Flemish Community Collection

Maud Gourdon (b. 1991, Beauvais) makes installations based on a range of media such as publications, texts, drawings and sculptures. Her practice explores possible points of contact with history and old traditions by means of intimate stories and trusted objects. Language and coincidence play a leading role in Gourdon's artistic process. Slips of the tongue and homophones – words that sound the same but have different meanings and spellings – are important components of the narratives in her work. *ABC DNA* (2019) is part of the installation *A Flower is Speaking to a Dog*, based on the eponymous publication in which Gourdon explores DNA as a building block of DNA strands. For this, the artist replaced parts of random DNA language with basic English words such as 'dog', 'flower' or 'mother'. Along the way, a storyline or score was created for two characters, 'dog' and 'flower', which later followed the structure of human hereditary material. *ABC DNA* consists of 43 slides and an equal number of brass rings that hang on the wall as a chain. Formally the work recalls the different links that together form the structure of a DNA strand. The slides hang in a specific order and tell a story about the creation of the universe, freely inspired by various creation myths.

Hamza Halloubi

Walking and Talking, 2018-2019, video, 6'21"

On long-term loan from the Flemish Community Collection

The Moroccan artist Hamza Halloubi (b. 1982, Tanger) makes films that often take the form of letters or monologues in which he addresses himself to the viewer or a specific character. In his poetic video poems, he combines personal contemplations with the broader historical context. He works around themes such as memory, colonialism, alienation and migration. In addition, he regularly opts for a striking camera angle or technique. That is also the case in *Walking and Talking* (2018-2019), a film that is projected on a circular screen. In this video, which is set in a museum, a female artist of African origin – the narrator – addresses a certain Youssef. She confesses that – just like him – she feels excluded from Western museums despite their so-called aspirations to universality. Personal experiences are translated into a film that combines poetry and experimentation, making this a characteristic work in Halloubi's practice.

Joke Hansen

Between Canyons and Deserts, 2021, oil on paper, variable dimensions On long-term loan from the Flemish Community Collection

Shank, 2021, oil on paper, 75 x 60 cm

On long-term loan from the Flemish Community Collection

Tennis for Two, 2021, oil on paper, 150 x 100 cm

Joke Hansen's (b. 1979, Bilzen) work is akin to a compendium of questions about how and what to paint. As in an endless exercise, Hansen circles her work around the making of paintings, collages and sculptures, with unfolds as the unmistakable axis from which her visual work unfolds. By testing the limits of the medium in terms of form and support as well as paint skin, her works sometimes present themselves as caricatures or 'inside jokes'. Around five years ago, this radical pushing of painting on canvas led to Hansen's first 'cut outs' and 'shaped canvases'. Her practice subsequently developed into a permanent and almost obsessive attempt to break out of the traditional canvas, a constant discussion with and manipulation of the classic canvas or panel in its closed form: rectangle, square, circle, oval. More than once, 'a road to be travelled' (as in a computer game) is also the subject of a painting: a tubular structure, u-shaped pipes, technical environments, an exhaust pipe discharging into a cloud that seems to have become an onomatopoeia for 'exit'. Works such as *Tennis for Two* (2021), *Shank* (2021) and *Lola* (2021) are fine examples.

Emilio López-Mencheró

Trying to Be, 2000-2021, photo on aluminium, edition of 5 copies On long-term loan from the Flemish Community Collection

Trying to be Róse Frida

Trying to be Roberto Sélavy Trying to be Jérôme

The Spanish-Belgian artist Emilio López-Mencheró (b. 1960, Mol) explores the notion of identity and the artist's place in society. He often departs from well-known figures from literature, music, film and politics, whom he focuses on the microscope and analyses. For the series *Trying to be...* he disguises himself as a number of notable figures from (art) history and our collective memory: from Frida Kahlo, Pablo Picasso and Fernand Léger to Che Guevara, Yasser Arafat and Pablo Escobar. By always imitating these personalities in their characteristic poses and accompanying clothing, he deconstructs a number of mythical figures and examines what makes a person iconic. In this way, through assuming the role of other characters, he also thematises the idea of an altered perspective and worldview.

Kurt Ryslavý

Facture décorative (Vlaamse Overheid), 2008-2009, oil on canvas, 80 x 100 cm

Flagge – Facture décorative (Vlaamse Overheid), 2019, print on synthetic textile, ed. 2/3, 201 x 247 cm

On long-term loan from the Flemish Community Collection

Austrian-born, Brussels-based Kurt Ryslavý (b. 1961, Graz) describes himself as a conceptual artist, poet and wine merchant. The latter job in particular – from which he earns his living – occupies an important place in his practice. He thematises his activities as a wine merchant in his work. For instance, on his day off – Sunday – he makes 'factures décoratives' [decorative invoices] using thick layers of paint and deliberately expressionistic handwriting. Addressed to his customers, they include his VAT number, bank account details and the number and type of bottles of wine delivered. With a self-deprecating sense of humour, as seen in this invoice addressed to the Flemish Government, Ryslavý tackles the relationship between his primary and secondary professions, and between being a Sunday painter and professional artist. An alternative version of this work takes the form of a flag. It is currently flying from the rooftop of S.M.A.K.

Elly Stof

Freud's Sofa, 2007-2012, charcoal, enamel paint and oil on paper, 230 x 336 cm On long-term loan from the Flemish Community Collection

Dutch artist Elly Stof (b. 1961, The Hague), who is based in Brussels, uses drawing and painting to explore the deepest caverns of the human soul. She depicts dreams, impulses and hallucinations in a unique style that shares similarities with the work of Goya, Ensor, Symbolism and the theories of Sigmund Freud. In her work – for which she uses charcoal, graphite, chalk, ink, pastel, oil and enamel paint – she effortlessly alternates small, intimate formats with monumental volumes of some two or three metres. This is also the case with *Freud's Sofa* (2007-2012), in which she depicts the psychoanalyst's famous couch in her characteristic, subdued colour palette and with a striking texture.

Guy Van Bossche

Curtain, 2021, oil on canvas, 180 x 120 cm

On long-term loan from the Flemish Community Collection

Guy Van Bossche (b. 1952, Antwerp) typically paints in an unemotional style and subdued colour palette, often drawing on existing visual imagery. The influence of photography is clear from the framing and cropping of numerous compositions. For example, he sometimes reveals details of something familiar (such as an interior) but uses an unusual framing device, thus provoking alienation and occasionally even uneasiness. This is also the case with *Curtain* (2021), in which a spot on a pink curtain reflects an obscure light source. The painting is also expressive of absence, therefore, which is another characteristic of Van Bossche's oeuvre. In recent years, the curtain has been a recurrent motif in his work. In this painting, it specifically refers to the ventriloquist, another theme to which he repeatedly returns. Here, Van Bossche hides the ventriloquist behind a curtain, thereby alluding to the way in which freedom of expression (primarily within journalism, but by extension for us all) is increasingly threatened.

Koen van den Broek

Torque #63, 2013, oil on canvas, 165 x 110 cm

On long-term loan from the Flemish Community Collection

The painterly practice of Koen van den Broek (b. 1973, Bree) is heavily influenced by film and photography. His paintings are based on his own photographs of spatial elements and markings in the (metropolitan) landscape: from coloured curbs or cracks in the road surface to shadows cast by lampposts. Van den Broek purifies his work. He seeks out the tension between figuration and abstraction, but also between traditions within European painting, as represented by Henri Matisse, amongst others, and American painting, as exemplified by Barnett Newman, Clyfford Still, and Robert Mangold, amongst others. His painting is a search for the essence. We also see this in the extensive *Torques* series, which was created between 2011 and 2013. For *Torque #63* (2013), Van den Broek borrows elements from earlier paintings, the characteristic borders, or curbs, and places them on the image of a torque. The torque refers to the technique of a clutch or a power source that can drive something, both technically and figuratively, and at the same time form a tipping point. Sampling, the layering of different images, is one of the guiding principles within the *Torques* series. Van den Broek continued to work on this idea in several architectural interventions that arose from the series, such as the facades of De Garage and the AZ Sint-Maarten, both in Mechelen.

Patrick Vanden Eynde

Particles, 2019

mixed media

On long-term loan from the Flemish Community Collection

Patrick Vanden Eynde (b. 1964, Ninove) is a Belgian painter with a coherent but stylistically diverse oeuvre. In 2019, under the title *Cold Fusion*, he exhibited a new series of works in which he cold fused sculptural objects with large, figurative paintings. In this series, Vanden Eynde uses film strategies to enhance the visual experience of his work. The artist drew inspiration from *THX1138* (1971), more specifically, from the director of *Star Wars*, George Lucas. More specifically, he became fascinated by the iconic final scene in which the main character, who escapes from a dystopian world, seems to merge with the huge setting sun in the background. *Particles* (2019) is part of the *Cold Fusion* series and comprises three elements: a large canvas painted with oil paint, a silver-coloured ring made of polyurethane, and a staff made of honeycomb greyish celestial bodies floating in a void and serves as the backdrop to the gleaming sculptures that recall science fiction artefacts. With this, the artist calls into question the evolving status of painting. The fact is that in classical art, painting was valued more highly than sculpture; whilst during the heyday of the film industry, painters chiefly contributed to the creation of sets.

Liliane Vertessen

Milieu Corona – On Bed (One & Two) – In Bed, 1994, mixed media, various sizes. On long-term loan from the Flemish Community Collection

Liliane Vertessen (b. 1952, Leopoldsburg) attracted attention from the mid/late 1970s when her staged self-portraits, for which she assumes the roles of various fictional characters. Usually scantily clad and in a defiant pose, she plays different types of women (vamp, Lolita, diva, dominatrix, etc.) as these are propagated by the film and advertising world. Her photos do not convey a sense of victimhood, but rather empowerment and self-awareness. The images are combined with bright neon lights and sensual accessories such as glitter, plush, sequins and feathers. Fortified by the effect of neon and mirrors, Vertessen conjures up the phantasmagoria of strip clubs and brothels, where her gaze crosses that of the viewer in an endless vortex of seduction and desire, exhibitionism and voyeurism. Sometimes Vertessen also sets her photographs within larger spatial installations as in the work *Hotel Corona – On Bed (One & Two)* (1994) from which the exhibition takes its title.

Read more about the other resilience acquisitions

Nico Dockx

Retreat/No Retreat, 2018

Mixed media, 15 x 175 x 7 cm (neon lighting), 10 x 15 cm (postcard) On long-term loan from the Flemish Community Collection

Nico Dockx (b. 1974, Ekeren) is a Belgian artist, curator, publicist, graphic designer and researcher with a fundamental interest in archives. His diverse artistic interventions – which include publications, texts, experimental music, sculptures, installations, performances and conversations – almost always arise in close collaboration with other artists. The relationship between perception and memory is a recurrent subject. *Retreat/No Retreat* consists of neon lights in the words of the title and a postcard stamped with the same words. Dockx made the stamp in 2012 during a retreat to Banff National Park, Canada, as part of a Documenta 13 satellite project. From this remote location, he sent several *Retreat/No Retreat* postcards to his friends. Through this action, he criticised the Documenta project by stating that a true retreat is impossible under such 'artificial' conditions. Dockx produced the neon work later, in 2018. When the Flemish Community acquired this work for S.M.A.K. in 2021, it was accompanied by a new postcard sent from the municipality of Pepinster in Wallonia, which was dramatically hit by floods that same year. Through this card, Dockx subtly critiques the work's acquisition status whilst reaffirming that true seclusion is impossible: you always have to find the balance between *retreat* (the individual) and *no retreat* (the individual's place in the world).

Alexis Gautier

MacGuffin Series, Anupam/Shi Jian Workshop/GE554, 2021 mixed media

201 x 86 x 0.8 cm

MacGuffin Series: Alexis/Jinsheng /655, 2021 mixed media

201 x 91 x 0.8 cm

MacGuffin Series: Shen/Peiylintang /#5109, 2021 mixed media

196.5 x 68 x 0.6cm

On long-term loan from the Flemish Community Collection

Alexis Gautier (b.1990) is a French artist who lives and works in Brussels and Brittany. He often produces his work in dialogue with others. In his collaborative artistic practice, he trades the traditional notion of the artist as an individual genius for shared authorship, with cultural transactions forming the basis for new narratives. The resulting stories are elaborated in a variety of media, including sculptures, textiles, videos and drawings. For the works in the *MacGuffin Series*, Gautier asked several people to write a text about a door that was important to them. Working with the Chinese ceramicist Fang Yaqi, the artist interpreted the descriptions and turned them into a series of porcelain panels. Although they still resemble doors, Gautier deliberately leaves their status open. For him, they can be autonomous sculptures, elements of a scenography or even supports for other artworks. The title of this series therefore refers, not coincidentally, to the term 'MacGuffin'. In the film world, this signifies a plot device that serves as a trigger for the narrative action but is otherwise ill-defined.

Mekhitar Garabedian

fig. a, a commie alphabet (ayppenkeem), 2009-2017

pencil and ink on paper, entire installation 29,7 x 495 cm On long-term loan from the Flemish Community Collection

Mekhitar Garabedian (b. 1977) is a Belgian-Syrian artist with Armenian roots. He works on a diverse but coherent oeuvre that includes drawings, text, installations, photographs, sculptures, sound works and neon. His work alludes to the language, culture and history of Armenia, the country his grandparents fled in 1915 to escape the genocide. Language, identity, memory and origin are also key words in his practice. The series *fig. a, a commie alphabet (ayppenkeem)* (2009-2017) comprises a succession of lists penned by the artist with letters and words in Armenian. By capturing this moment of learning, he refers to the loss of his mother tongue, an experience familiar to many migrants – and especially the Armenians of the diaspora. Garabedian also frequently works with references and quotes from writers and other artists, such as Félix González-Torres or Marcel Broodthaers. The latter, in particular, is an important point of reference in his work, to whom he also nods with the title of this series.

Wannes Lecompte

Chancard Bonnard, 2021

Oil on canvas

On long-term loan from the Flemish Community Collection

Wannes Lecompte (b.1979, Etterbeek) contemplates the medium of painting in his work. He asks himself what makes a painting a painting. He deconstructs the discipline to its essence: a game of form, colour and texture. This often leads him to paint details that are already present in the canvas. If the stretched material has an uneven texture, for example, he emphasises this with paint. The artist 'applies' paint more than he 'paints', therefore. For him, the painting-to-be is already present, in a sense, within the canvas – just as Michelangelo's sculptures were part of the marble and only needed to be carved out by the artist. Besides colour and texture, rhythm is also important in Lecompte's work. He is not only a visual artist but also a musician. He often looks for the similarities between the two disciplines in his artist publications, videos, concerts and performances. His guiding principles are *free jazz* and *improvisation*. He often uses puns in the titles of his paintings, as in *Chancard Bonnard* (Lucky Bonnard). Lecompte also translated his research into the frescoes he completed for an exhibition at CC Strombeek, which he made using ancient techniques, and a permanent commission from the municipality of Sint-Agatha-Berchem.

William Ludwig Lutgens

That Clinking Clanking Clunking, 2021

mixed media, variable dimensions

On long-term loan from the Flemish Community Collection

William Ludwig Lutgens (b. 1991) is chiefly known for his drawings and paintings in which he depicts excessive scenes in an expressive, dreamy linear style. It is an often-burlesque universe that evokes the contrarian spirit of James Ensor with a biting sense of humour. For some time now, he has also been making more spatial work. An important recent piece within his oeuvre is *That Clinking Clanking Clunking* (2021), an installation of seven sculptures that allegorically perform a game of musical chairs. The heads of the various characters – who together form a colourful crowd – are made of painted ceramic. The artist has used recovered materials such as transport boxes, furniture and textiles for their bodies, which rest on a bar stool or another support. One of these characters has a demonic goat's head and produces irritating music that is interrupted at intervals, just like a real game of musical chairs. The game serves as a metaphor for the ruthless competition within the capitalist system that is satirically depicted here.

Peter Morrens

Point Blank Press, 1998-ongoing

Video projection

On long-term loan from the Flemish Community Collection

Peter Morrens (b. 1965, Lier) works on a multifaceted oeuvre that includes drawings, photos, installations and performances. With puns and idiomatic expressions, he reflects on the world around us, often with a biting but at the same time relativising sense of humour. His work consists of various components that he gathers together in new constellations, often using free association. Morrens's stylistic versatility also reveals itself in his various pseudonyms, such as PM, Herman Smit and Point Blank Press. He deliberately opts to make the most economical use of materials in his work. The artist often just writes words or phrases on paper using Chinese ink or alcohol markers. In the process, he also explores the graphic properties of the words and plays with different registers. Morrens sometimes uses his drawings – or rather his 'word-images' – performatively, in a type of 'lecture-performance'. The video projection *Point Blank Press* (1998-ongoing) is typical of his practice. For this work, he scanned more than 2,500 earlier drawings and projected them via a software programme. The intervals and sequences are entirely random, which creates a ceaseless stream-of-consciousness slideshow.

Mathias Preneu

#FENCE#BALUSTER#JackieChan, 2018

On long-term loan from the Flemish Community Collection

Mathias Preneu (b. 1990) is mainly active as a sculptor. He creates work in a variety of scales, ranging from small sculptures to large-format installations. After graduating from the Ghent Academy, he studied lacquerware and textiles in the Japanese city of Kanazawa. By deploying unusual combinations and contrasts in his sculptural practice, Preneu questions the traditional notions of form. In so doing, he deliberately positions his sculptures on the threshold of abstraction and representation. *#FENCE#BALUSTER#BALUSTER#Chan* (2018) belongs to the overarching *#BALUSTER#JackieChan* series, in which the artist combines the form of a 15th-century Western baluster ornament with images of well-known figures from different continents. With these totem-like objects, Preneu probes how the values associated with a particular culture can be compromised by spectacle-oriented mass media.

Narcisse Tordoir

Z.T., 2020

Mixed media, variable dimensions

On long-term loan from the Flemish Community Collection

Narcisse Tordoir (b. 1954) explores the boundaries of painting by approaching the traditional medium from an interdisciplinary perspective. As a result, his oeuvre is extremely multifaceted. Tordoir has employed different styles and experimented with a variety of media throughout his artistic career, including performances, installations, photographs and drawings. Yet his artistic practice is extremely consistent because he constantly questions the status of the image and makes the world around him a starting point. *Z.T.* (2020) is a typical multimedia image montage. The work not only includes a number of fixed elements, but also two surfaces, one black and one white, which the artist applies to the wall using decor paint. Their size is relative to the scale of the exhibition space. Like most of Tordoir's output, the work is entitled *[Z.T. is short for the Dutch words zonder titel, meaning 'without title']* as the artist wants to explicitly focus on the process of observation. A plexiglass panel printed with text and two black-and-white prints offer the viewer some clues, while the geometric areas of colour deliberately obscure the artwork's unambiguous legibility.

Filip Van Dingenen

Flota Níumu, 2019

Mixed media, variable dimensions

On long-term loan from the Flemish Community Collection

Filip Van Dingenen (b. 1975, Diest) is a multidisciplinary artist with a research-based practice that translates into installations, drawings, dioramas, cabinets, archives, videos, books, performances, lectures and workshops. Van Dingenen conducts anthropological and historical research from an artistic perspective. A crucial work in his oeuvre is *ZOONATION* (2002-2006), an ambitious multimedia project based on the old Zwartberg Zoo in Genk. When the establishment was forced to close in the late 1990s, Van Dingenen catalogued the dispersal of the animals around the world. *Flota Níumu* (2019) is an autonomous project that emerged directly from *ZOONATION*. The work is dedicated to Copita de Nieve (or Snowflake), an albino gorilla who became a popular attraction at the Barcelona Zoo. A few months before the primate's death, the establishment launched a huge publicity campaign that offered children a free entrance ticket in exchange for a drawing of the animal. This resulted in a collection of some 4,358 children's drawings. Van Dingenen wanted to sketch the gorilla's portrait using some of these drawings in combination with others made during a workshop that he organised in Equatorial Guinea. His installation takes the form of miniature wooden cabinets containing stamp-sized children's drawings. In *Flota Níumu*, Van Dingenen not only criticises the zoo as an institution but also the differing forms of mass hysteria.

Gert Verhoeven