

le bulletin N°4
Romain Van Wissen
WHO IS IN THE HOUSE
13.09.–19.11.2017

orte! », 2017
ox with ten paintings, hangers)

DATES

● 13.09./04.10./08.11., 6 p.m.

Guided tour by Miriam Elebe

● 19.11., 3 p.m.

Director's tour with Frank-Thorsten Moll

● 13.09., *registration required*

Studio visit at Romain Van Wissen's, for adherents of the museum

● 22.10., 5 p.m.

Artist talk with Romain Van Wissen

*« I believe I can fly », 2017
Panoramic painting, Acrylic on canvas and wood,
Height 70 cm, Ø 310 cm*



I

*Instruction manual
for the exhibition
WHO IS IN THE HOUSE
and observations on the oeuvre
of Romain Van Wissen
instead of a preface*

II

*« Passez la porte ! », 2017
Installation, (Entrance portal, box with
ten paintings, hangers)*

III

*« Un tipi au Palais Royal », 2017
Installation (23 paintings, neon lights,
silver foil, video with sound)*

IV

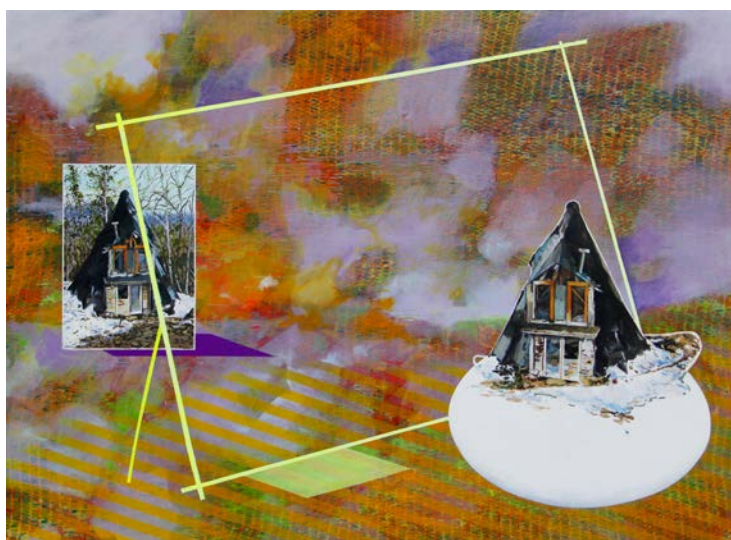
*Romain Van Wissen
Biography*



*« Who is in the House », 2017
Acrylic on canvas, 90 × 122 cm*

*« De près ou de loin », 2016
Acrylic on canvas, 61 × 52 cm*

*« Un Ersatz dérisoire », 2017
Acrylic on canvas, 70 × 95 cm*



*Instruction manual for the exhibition WHO IS IN THE HOUSE and observations on the oeuvre
of Romain Van Wissen instead of a preface
by Frank-Thorsten Moll*

At the moment when entering the IKOB – Museum of Contemporary Art, one first sees an improvised cabin in the back right-hand corner of the ground floor. With a small porch, a doorless entrance and an embrasure-type window, the hut seems makeshift and somewhat consumptive – if it were not changed into something different through its being almost totally wrapped in reflective foil. The mirroring surface transforms it into an image: is it the image of a hut or the literal reflection of the viewers in the work? With questions such as these having been raised, we quickly leave the border of the obvious behind and directly reach the centre of the universe of Romain Van Wissen. For his first solo exhibition in a museum with the resonant title “Who is in the House”, the IKOB is making available all its spaces to the well-known painter from eastern Belgium. An opportunity that Van Wissen knew how to use with a light touch. Even if he became known as

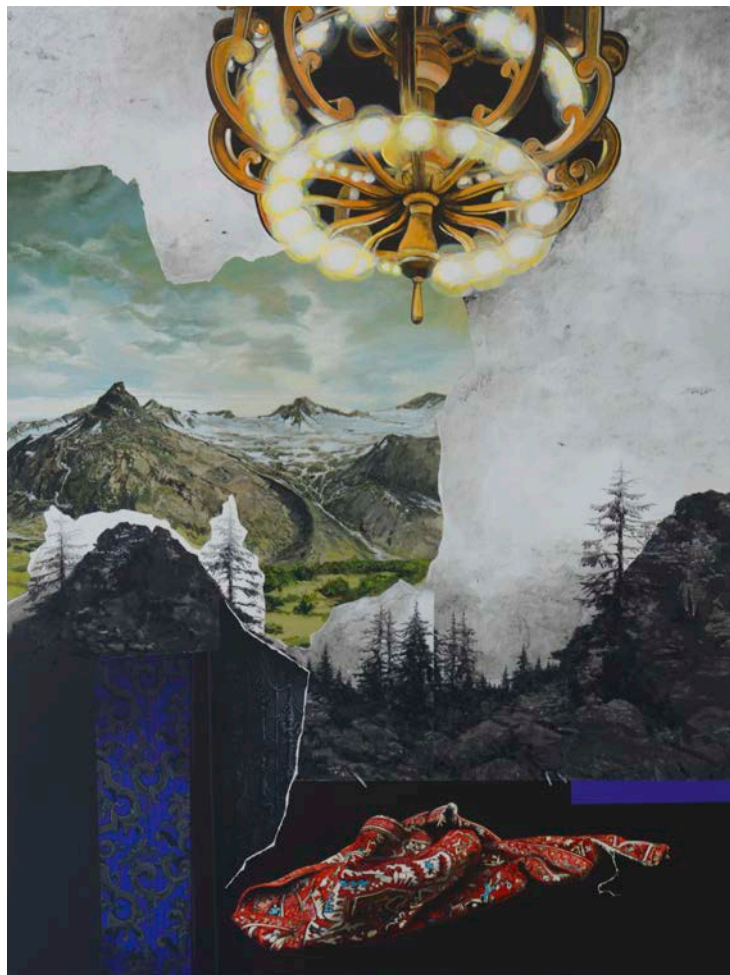
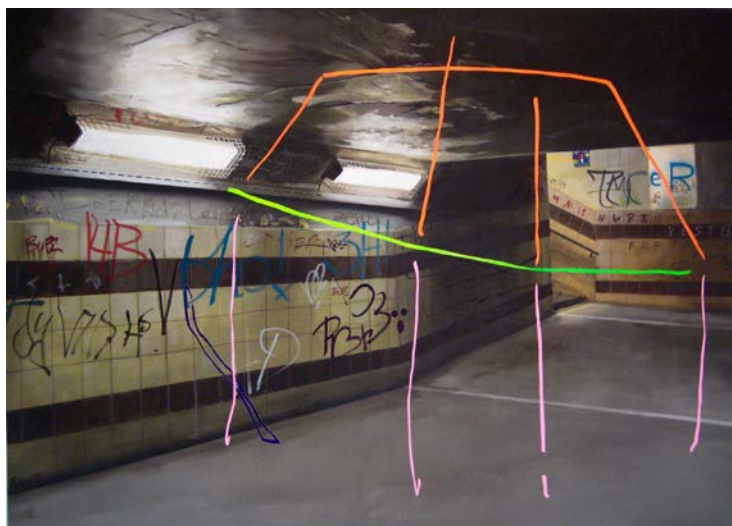
a painter, he currently cuts a convincing figure at the IKOB as the arranger of entire visual spaces conceived in spatial terms, and of installations built up in the exhibition space. Three-dimensional space seems to be Van Wissen’s new passion; he conquers it with impressive new works on the basis of subtle strategies. The hut functions in this context as the prologue to a series of works that focus on the theme of internal and external space. His work “I believe I can fly” in the central space of the IKOB, a painted panorama, initially makes reference to a forgotten painterly discipline – the painted panoramic pictures of the early nineteenth century which arose in the brief phase of the transition from painting to photography. These panoramas or dioramas frequently showed battles or other historical events which were important for determining national identities. The panorama was well-suited for such undertakings, because 360-degree

painting allowed a distanced view onto things (and by the way, the cinema had not yet been developed). Detached from all external obstacles, the viewer could comprehend a complex historical context with a single circular act of vision and thus was himself part of the overall ensemble. However tinged the depictions were with a glorification of heroism, the diorama embodied the ideal of the objective viewpoint of a recently awakened scientific outlook which endeavoured to understand the world in its entirety. Romain Van Wissen’s panorama quotes this strategy and applies it with strict logic to his own art. In self-confidence and over 360 degrees, the artist unfolds an entire visual universe for the visitors. But he does not leave them utterly alone in front of the work as non-participants; instead he allows them to enter into the interior of the picture and thereby integrates them in an intelligent manner. With this work, we are literally part of the

picture. But this pictorial inclusion cannot be misunderstood as a violation of our self-determination – the entrance occurs voluntarily and is ultimately motivated solely by the curiosity of each individual. “Wanting to see” actually stands at the beginning of all contemplation of art and is deliberately stimulated by Romain Van Wissen in this exhibition – on the one hand, by the use of painterly strategies that make alternating use of realism and abstraction; and on the other hand, through the selected motifs. The house, or the aforementioned hut, is of fundamental importance, because the borders between inside and outside, between private and public, between friend and foe allow themselves to be defined and negotiated here. So as soon as the artist Van Wissen introduces the facade of a house into the picture, he plays with these oppositions. We understand this immediately and are directly *in the House* – or should we say: in the picture?

Diography

*« La lumière rêveuse », 2013
Acrylic on canvas, 80 × 100 cm*



*« Sur les pas d'un géant », 2015
Acrylic on canvas, 144 × 108 cm*

*« Dans la vie de tous les jours », 2017
Acrylic on canvas, 160 × 117 cm*



*« Tout le monde court trop après le temps », 2015
Acrylic on canvas, 104 × 153 cm*



« *Passez la porte!* »
2017, Installation
by Miriam Elebe

WHO IS IN THE HC
n Van Wissen instead of
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(Entrance portal, box with
ten paintings, hangers)

The seasons alter a landscape in pre-established rhythms.

Seeing, hearing, smelling and touching play an important role in perception. We respond to a landscape with all our senses. Hills, fields, meadows, sand and water, the sky up above, the weather, trees, blossoms and colours trigger a feeling in us; an image arises. With this series of works, Van Wissen presents a successful representation of emotional landscapes.

With the cycle *Passez la porte!*, the artist further creates his own vision of landscapes that always appear to be partly real, partly fictitious. It is almost as if he were creating his own cosmogony. Here as well, the basis for his painting is the collage. Van Wissen cuts selected details out of trivial newspapers or from his own photographs, then glues them together into a pictorial surface that is in several senses multi-dimensional. The appearance of these “found” landscapes oscillates between paradise and a nightmare of genetic technology. The portal and the arch, as well as the gate, stand for the transition into another world.

The origin and creation of the world, its composition and structure, its meaning and purpose as well as its relationship to the divine belong to the fundamental questions addressed by the artist. Where philosophy and science investigate these issues, Van Wissen endeav-

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ours to convey tension and disruption on several levels of interpretation.

The spatial installation for which the cycle of paintings *Passez la porte!* was created is supposed to animate the visitor to the museum to become active himself. A monumental entrance in the form of a triumphal arch awakens curiosity. In the middle of the space is an open box with eight small-formatted depictions of landscapes, all with the same arch. Two larger works of the cycle are already hanging on the wall. Nails have been attached to the further walls. This may initially seem puzzling, but the reason is quite simple: the box with the works has been made available to the visitor, who is supposed to decide himself how the pictures should be hung on the wall. The paintings differ above all in their varying landscape renditions.

Van Wissen shows within a single painting different natural environments which are separated from each other by the archway, so that the impression arises as if one were passing from level to level.

The experience of nature is determined by many different impressions out of which we create our own, entirely personal landscape image, our emotional location. Thus the hanging and thereby the impact of the spatial installation in its entirety is determined by the emotional mood of the respective visitor.



*« En marche arrière », 2017
Acrylic on canvas, 97 × 122 cm*



*« C'était une star à sa façon », 2015
Acrylic on canvas, 90 × 65 cm*

*« Au centre d'insoutenables paradoxes », 2017
Acrylic on canvas, 160 × 117 cm*



*« ...,mais souviens toi,... », 2016
Acrylic on canvas, 90 × 122 cm*



« *Passez la porte* »
2017, Installation
by Miriam El

« *Un tipi au Palais Royal* », 2017, Installation
(23 paintings, neon lights, silver foil, video with
sound; video production: Peter Baumgarten)
by Friedemann Hoerner

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When we read in texts about the “universe” or the “cosmos” of an artist, these are mostly makeshift choices from the linguistic arsenal of art jargon which seek to describe an intellectual and formal world derived from the works. But in the case of the spatial work constructed here, the term “universe” is apt and useful, because one of the possible mental images which the installation *Un tipi au Palais Royal* can summon up is the notion that this particular installation could also exist in the same form in another, parallel universe.

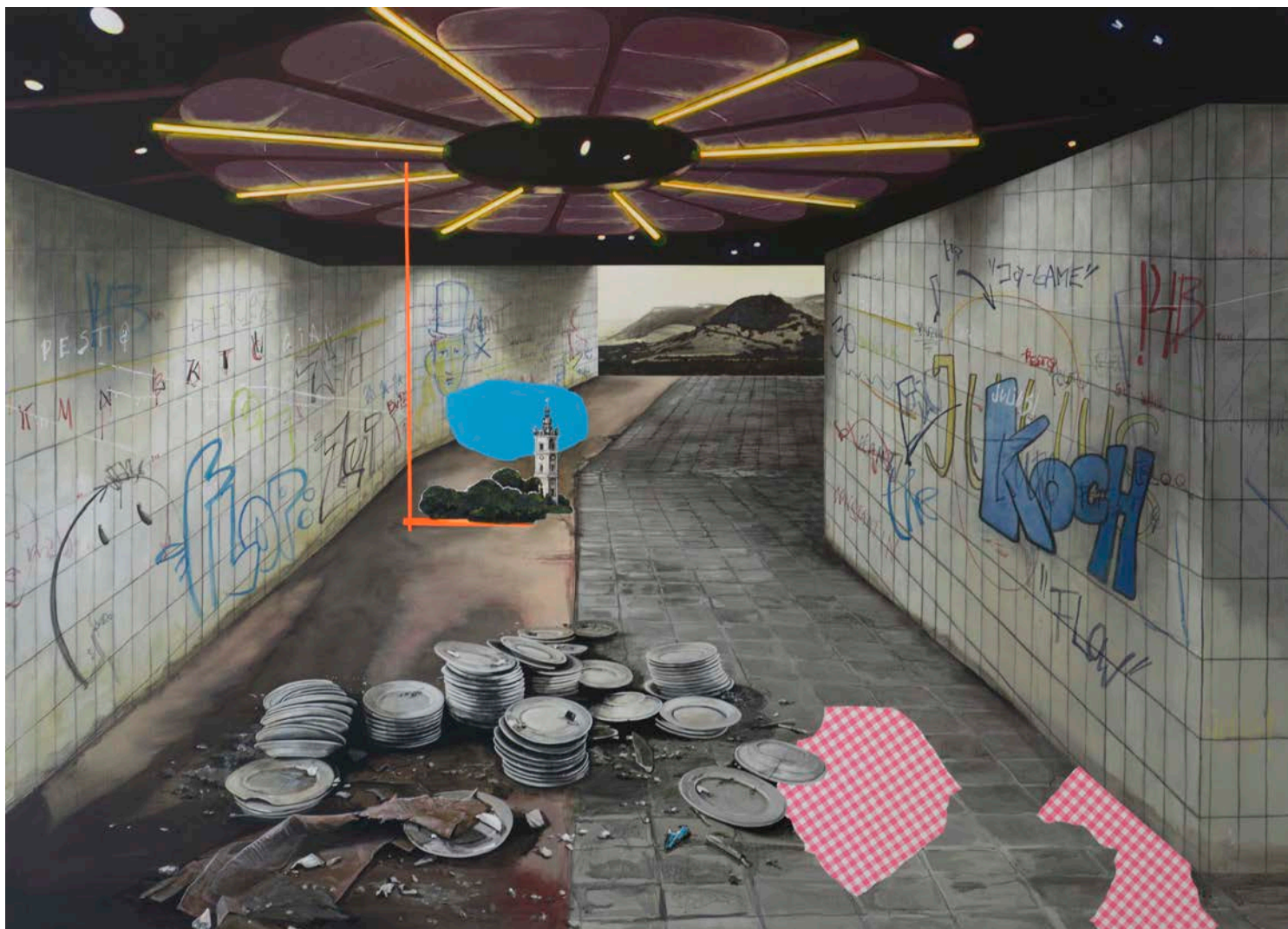
In a dark room are fifteen same-sized paintings that resemble targets on a field. They are slightly inclined backwards and maintain this position through a construction of wooden battens. The paintings are illuminated by flash lights with short neon tubes, each connected to a black cable. Erected in the back corner of the room is an open tent, likewise built out of wooden battens, likewise with paintings, four on each of the two outer sides of the teepee; inside it is covered with reflecting foil. On the floor is a television apparatus that plays a video by the artist. The entire setting seems improvised and fleeting; it has something of the hastily unfolded offerings of a black-market dealer.

In this space, it is a matter of a sort of mystery of images and of a phenomenon which, as something actually possible and plausible, can emerge in our imagination – not only because the research of quantum physics has come to conclusions similar to those of the artist. It is the idea that these paintings could simultaneously exist also at other places and in other situations: for example, outside and in daylight, possibly located on fallow land at the edge of a forest. The video running in a loop in the tent suggests this reading. Because here I follow the camera along a course through the same exhibited canvases which I have just passed by *in the space*, set up in the same formation, presented by day and at various places which themselves have an indefinite and ephemeral identity. The luminous intensity of the video recordings rises and falls slowly – from entirely dark to bright to dark, and so forth.

A slowed-down blinking – what was that just now? What did I just see? Neither does one trust one’s own eyes over the course of the video: the same canvases painted with stripes or curved lines are located on fallow ground, then in a glade, then once again in an abandoned industrial hall.

With this spatial work, Van Wissen pursues the logic of the *image within the image* further to an idea of works which are detached from a specific space-time continuum. Yet everything remains light; there is a playing with our perception, with the déjà-vu, with the magic of pictures and of imaginary spaces. As well as with the space of the teepee, which is composed of eight paintings. Such a teepee could also be imagined in the Palais Royal.

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*« D'ici et d'ailleurs », 2015
Acrylic on canvas, 200 × 280 cm*

*« À l'autre bout du jardin », 2015
Acrylic on canvas, 80 × 70 cm*

*« The Butterfly Effect », 2016
Acrylic on canvas, 90 × 122 cm*



Romain Van Wissen, who was born in 1965 in Eupen, started studying in 1986 first painting and subsequently graphic reproduction at the Académie des Beaux-Arts in Verviers. From 1995 to 2005, he was a member of the graphic reproduction group based in Lüttich “La nouvelle poupée d’encre”. In 2005, he was awarded the IKOB Art Prize and, nine years later in 2014, was named Artist of the German-speaking Community of Belgium.

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At the beginning of his artistic activity, Van Wissen’s works were primarily gestural-abstract. Over the years, he changed his painting style; today he combines figurative depictions of buildings and everyday objects – for example, tables, doors, wheels, mirrors, etc. – with stylistic elements from Pop Art. This gives rise to works with a surrealistic appearance and impact.

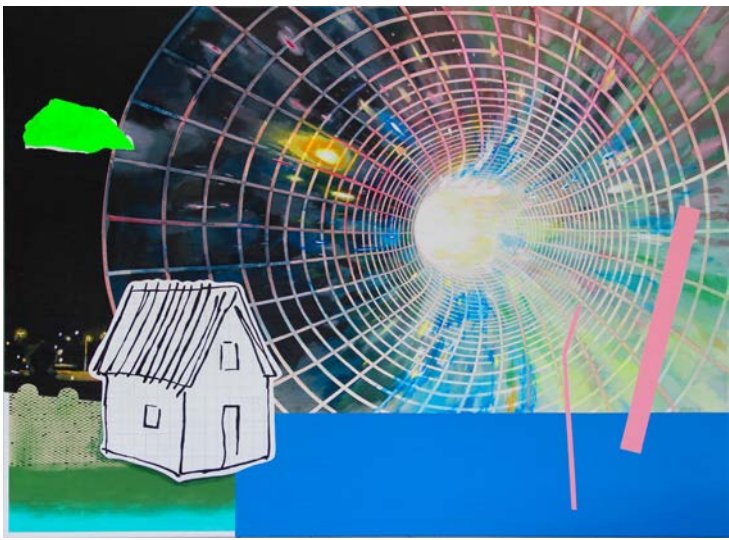
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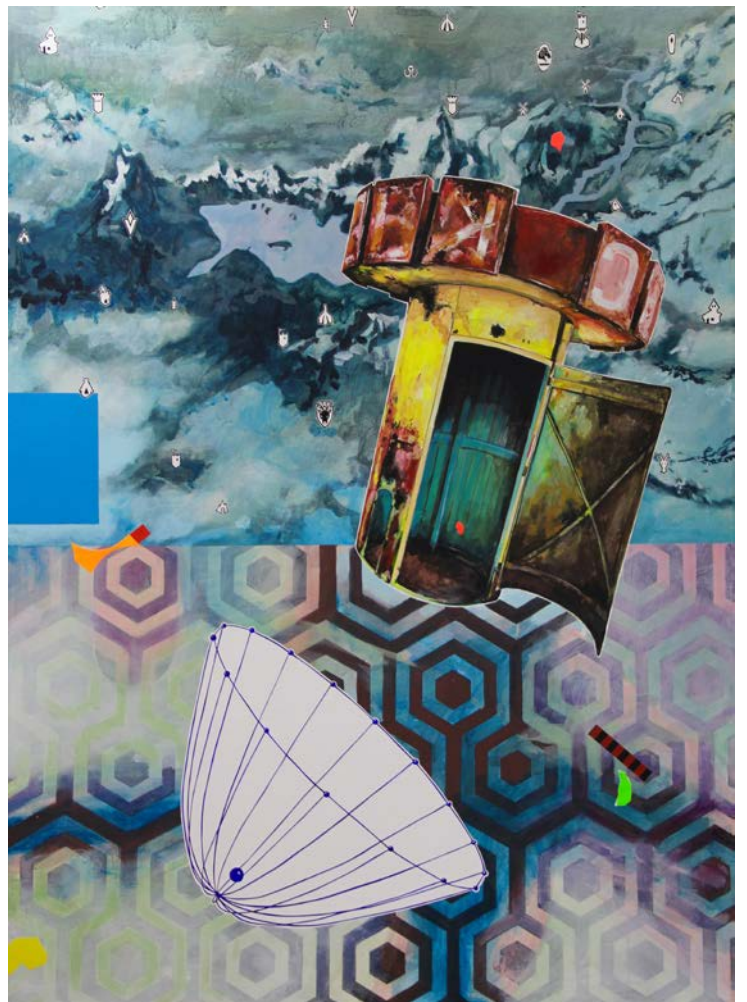
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Since 2005, his works have repeatedly been presented in the framework of thematic exhibitions at the IKOB. *Who is in the House* is the first solo exhibition at a museum by the artist, who today lives and works in Membach (Belgium).



« Apothéose nocturne », 2017
Acrylic on canvas, 90 × 122 cm



« Zone d'ombres », 2017
Acrylic on canvas, 160 × 117 cm

« Devant la baraque du géant Constantin », 2015
Acrylic on wood, 35 × 22 cm

« L'objet d'une mise en scène », 2015
Acrylic on wood, 35 × 22 cm



STAR WORK N°24:
Checkpoint Charlie
 Emilio López-Menchero
 13.09.–22.10.2017

In 2010, the Belgian artist set up Checkpoint Charlie as part of a performance in Brussels. Alongside the canal between the Rue Antoine Dansaert and the Chaussée de Gand, there suddenly appeared an exact copy of the guardhouse that stood in the Friedrichstraße in Berlin until 1989. The unexpected border check in a city that couldn't be more international had a disconcerting effect. But it is borders of family background and income to which López-Menchero points at this site, replete with symbolic significance for Brussels, between the districts of Molenbeek-Saint-Jean and Bruxelles.

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STAR WORK N°25:
A Billion Square Circles
 Emmanuel Van der Auwera
 25.10.–19.11.2017

Exploring the city as a mineral body with the means of a geological cartography was at the heart of this project. Emmanuel Van der Auwera used the scientific scan system LIDAR in order to describe the cavity of the tunnel system carved with dynamite in the quarries of the Sambre valley, the mining area around Charleroi. The landscape is rendered in a cloud of pixels, during a circumvolution around the machine's blind spot in the centre. (HOTEL CHARLEROI – Annexe)

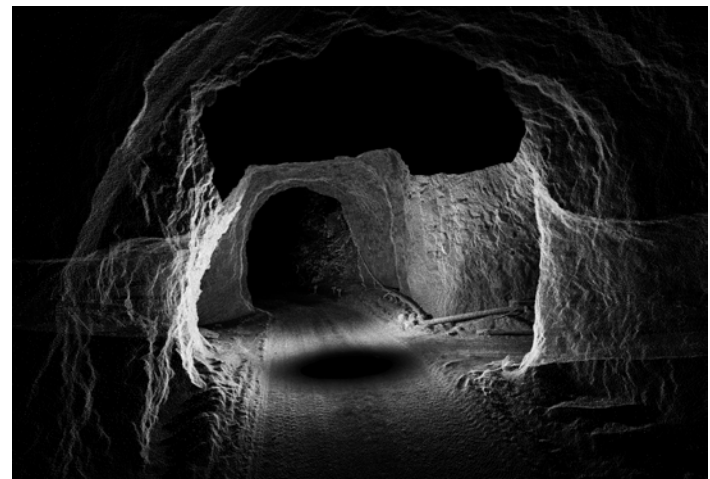
STAR WORK

Within the Star Work series a different artwork from the IKOB Collection is displayed each time.

« *Checkpoint Charlie* », 2010
 Digital print on tarpaulin,
 160 × 240 cm



« *A Billion Square Circles* », 2012
 Black and white planograph,
 260 × 342 cm

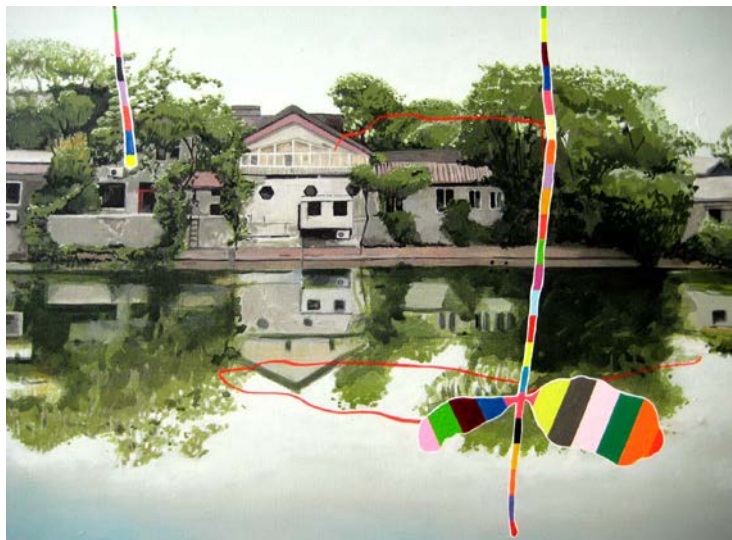


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*« Entre temps », 2010
Acrylic on canvas, 61 × 43 cm*



*« Une forme de vertige », 2016
Acrylic on canvas, 145 × 117 cm*

*« Destination hasardeuse », 2016
Acrylic on canvas, 104 × 153 cm*



ENTRY

- 6€ / 4€ reduced price for disabled and elderly people and for students
 - Free entry for children and teenagers up to 18 years and for adherents of the museum
- Free entry on every first Wednesday of the month
-

OPENING HOURS

- Wednesday – Sunday 1 – 6 p.m.
-

OUTREACH

- For any inquiries about our educational programme please refer to Miriam Elebe: m.elebe@ikob.be, +32 87 56 01 10.
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*With the support of Deutschsprachige
Gemeinschaft, Service général du Patrimoine
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Ostbelgien 

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*Serge Cloot, Miriam Elebe, Friedemann Hoerner,
Frank-Thorsten Moll, Ingrid Mossoux, Nadja Vogl*

IMPRINT

*Editorial staff and Texts: Miriam Elebe,
Friedemann Hoerner, Frank-Thorsten Moll
Design: Dreams Office together with possible.is*



*« Passez la p
Installation (Entrance portal, b*