

Exhumer le futur

A Maarten Vanden Eynde exhibition

Curators: Katerina Gregos et Sandrine Wymann



Maarten Vanden Eynde, *Restauration du Lac de Montbel*, 2003 © photo: Marjolijn Dijkman

June 10 – October 30 2022

Thursday June 9 2022

Press preview: 10:30 am

Opening: from 6 to 8 pm

Seated on the fractured earth, Maarten Vanden Eynde uses plaster to fill in the cracks in the surface of a dried-up lakebed. *Restauration du lac de Montbel* (“Restoring Lake Montbel”) serves as a perfect prologue to this exhibition. Immersed in his image, the artist makes a simple and ludicrous gesture against a climate-related phenomenon, an act on the human scale, ambitious but deliberately in vain. He does not so much restore the lake as shed light on a natural catastrophe that both surrounds and overwhelms him. With this work, the artist lays out a framework with which to question, sometimes speculatively, the role and the consequences of human actions within the Earth’s ecosystems.

Everything starts from a reconsideration of the notion of progress, literally a step forward, something better, an improvement, something that carries us collectively into the contemporary world and which the artist sees as largely responsible for the current state of the planet. As the driver of the world’s greatest changes, progress has never stopped accelerating, particularly during the industrial age and right up to the snowball effect of the recent decades.

Maarten Vanden Eynde studies the impact of human activities on the environment. Crossing through the centuries, imagining what we will leave behind for our descendants to find, he not only examines what the Earth will be like in the future but also analyzes the powers and systems that shape the world we bequeath to the generations that follow.

What are the stakes of progress? What links has it formed between the contestants in a global competition which has been and still is played out between the dominators and the dominated, between producers and consumers, between decision-makers and players?

Maarten Vanden Eynde carries out a reflection on this global situation, torn between the best and the worse, through a combination of fictional narratives and scientific data acquired from his many collaborations with experts in sociology and ethnology as well as environmentalists and historians. His works inform us while also speaking to our emotions. They are constructed of materials and symbols which the artist shifts slightly in order to demonstrate their contradictions or their faults.

Previously exhibited at the Mu.Zee in Ostende in 2021 before arriving at the Kunsthalle in Mulhouse, *Exhumer le futur* (“Digging up the future”) is Maarten Vanden Eynde’s second retrospective exhibition, based on an eponymous book contextualizing his work and covering twenty years of persevering and still ongoing research. For the Mulhouse exhibition, a selection of catalogued works is organized around the issue of industrialization, production processes and the transformation of raw materials and products. Maarten Vanden Eynde has also created a new piece for the exhibition, *Fat Man 3D*, a literal reference to the code name of the atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki, Japan in 1945. The work links together three countries in the artist’s personal

history: the Congo, which supplies raw materials such as cotton and uranium; France, in particular the Mulhouse industries which manufacture thread from cotton fiber; and Belgium, which transforms cotton thread into exceptional lacework. All of these come together in the form of an explosive installation suspended in the art center's entry hall.

Biography

Maarten Vanden Eynde is a visual artist based in Brussels, Belgium and Saint-Mihiel, France. He graduated in 2000 from the Gerrit Rietveld Academy in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, attended the experimental MSA[^] Mountain School of Arts in Los Angeles, USA in 2006 and finished a postgraduate course in 2009 at the Higher Institute for Fine Arts in Ghent, Belgium where he is currently a regular guest tutor. Since 2020 he has been a PhD candidate at the University of Bergen in Norway, focusing on the history and evolution of external memory devices. In 2017 he was nominated for the first Belgian Art Prize and won the Public Prize. In 2005, together with Marjolijn Dijkman, he founded Enough Room for Space, an interdependent art initiative that develops and coordinates events, residencies, research projects and exhibitions worldwide. Recent exhibitions include: Mu.ZEE, Ostend, BE (2021); Beaufort 21 Triennial, BE (2021); Z33 House for Contemporary Art, Design & Architecture, Hasselt, BE (2020); Museum Morsbroich, Leverkusen, DE (2020); Tallinn Photomonth - Contemporary Art Biennial, EE (2019); 6th Lubumbashi Biennale, DRC (2019); RIBOCA/Riga International Biennial of Contemporary Art, Riga, LV (2018); Belgian Art Prize 2017, Bozar, Brussels, BE (2017); 2050. A Brief History of the Future at National Museum of Fine Arts, Taichung, TW (2018), Palazzo Reale, Milan, IT (2016) and The Royal Museums of Fine Art, Brussels, BE (2015); Realitiés Filantes, 4th Biennale de Lubumbashi, CD (2015); Beyond Earth Art at Johnson Museum of Art, Ithaca, US (2014); Ja Natuurlijk, Gemeentemuseum Den Haag, NL (2013); The Deep of the Modern, Manifesta9, Genk, BE (2012); The Museum of Forgotten History, M HKA, Antwerp, BE (2012) and Dublin Contemporary in Dublin, IR (2011). Vanden Eynde is represented by Meessen De Clercq gallery in Brussels, Belgium, and NOME gallery in Berlin, Germany.

www.maartenvandeneynde.com

Mu.ZEE, Ostend (Belgium) is a partner of the exhibition and presented the first part of *Exhumer le futur* from September 04, 2021 to January 16, 2022.

The exhibition is produced with the support of Flanders State of the Art and the companies [DMC](#) and [Prevel Signalisation](#).



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Opening hours

Wednesday to Friday, from 12 to 6 pm

Saturday and Sunday, from 2 to 6 pm

Closed on Mondays and Tuesdays and July 14

During Art Basel week (June 14th to 17th): open Tuesday to Friday, 10am to 6pm

Free entrance

Location

La Kunsthalle Mulhouse - Centre d'art contemporain

La Fonderie

16 rue de la Fonderie - 68093 Mulhouse Cedex

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