

Island

Me, me, me, me, ...

Marie Braun, Steve Dehoux, Damien De Lepeleire, Lisa Egio & Elliot Kervyn, Leo Gabin, Ante Timmermans, group show – January 18th // March 3rd, 2018

"Me, me, me, me" talks about the self. Myself, but yourself, themselves and oneself as well. The portrait depicted in this show is the one of a lambda individual, who is the perfect archetype of our occidental society, but also a representation of the society itself. The exhibition presents a series of artworks which operate independently one from another, resonating with peculiarities of the self, a cause or a finality of our ways of life.

Whimsically, almost schizophrenically, we transit from one state to another. Enthusiasm, puzzlement, appeasement, anxiety, contemplation and euphoria are as many stages and emotions that we can experience while confronted with the artworks. *Emotions are defined as a time-limited set of changes of state in response to an external or internal stimulus relevant to the organism*¹. Images sometimes act in an unconscious manner: the viewer sometimes fails to understand what an image induces or what it may contain beyond its first reading. But even though the image is not grasped by his/her awakened consciousness, the viewer sees. In the blink of an eye, we acquire and focus on different concerns. Snatched by an image, we suddenly feel emotionally unstable as everything scrolls past us.

The exhibition proposes to question ourselves by approaching the abyssal fears imposed by the question of the existence itself and the research that tends to understand the ramifications of life. These are the topics towards which the absurd, subjected artworks of Ante Timmermans lean. A composition of his paintings and drawings creates a whole, made of meanders of information. Timmermans plays with the senses and the absurd. His work lies between tragedy and derision, therefore joining in the tradition of Belgian artists.

The exhibition path is maculated with everyday objects which are, in this context, devoid of their initial purpose. A breach opens and offers a pause in time. Through their childish, nostalgic and playful sculptures, the art collective formed by Lisa Egio and Elliot Kervyn divert these ordinary objects and infuse them with a certain sense of poetry.

The artworks of the Leo Gabin collective are fully anchored in a specific period: our time. We are living in the present: a virtual, projected, multiple, impudent time. It feeds itself with "news", YouTube, social media, fast consumption and planned obsolescence. Without making value judgments, Leo Gabin offers us a glance of our world through video collage and serigraphy.

On the other hand, Steve Dehoux thrusts us into the heart of a sober and almost abstract nature. Acting like a "mise en abyme", his works are an interpretation of our urban vegetation. Being linked to memories, his artworks are traces, remains of a space. Dehoux defies this state of in-between, this moment between wakefulness and sleep. Lively and light, the artworks exude no melancholy, but rather emanate a sense of peace from things which "have been".

Marie Braun's work displaces and destabilizes a certain equilibrium that holds within a hazardous dark side, an unrevealed and undisclosed part. The intimate dimension included in her small paintings and drawings forces the viewer to take the necessary time to unfold certain elements at the limit of what is perceptible. This refers to an internal, private, intangible geography. By reproducing the same image twice, Braun insists on and fixes a particular movement in the interest of giving it a new direction, creating movements between the works themselves. The trace left by this motion is recorded, scratched and marked on the wax of a black monochrome.

In the basement, the viewer is confronted with an ebullition. Primitive adolescence euphorically playing loud records. The work here presented, by Damien De Lepeleire, is a composition of musical fragments and iconic record sleeves from a certain time, from all times, from a shared heritage.

Artworks always reflect and capture their authors. As viewers, we could imagine these as self-portraits. But doesn't everyone possess their own interpretation? Isn't it a part of ourselves that we project upon the works? Do the works become portraits of the viewers? An artwork acts up as a mirror. Mirror of the viewer, mirror of the maker, mirror of the world. Everything revolves around the self. Me is you. You could be me. But, in any case, the world is me.

¹ Syntyche Gbehounou, François Lecellier, Christine Fernandez-Maloigne. Extraction et analyse de l'impact émotionnel des images. RFIA 2012 (Reconnaissance des Formes et Intelligence Artificielle), Jan 2012, Lyon, France. pp.978-2-9539515-2-3, 2012. <hal-00656493>

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Marie Braun attended the Royal Academy of Fine Arts of Brussels. Through subtle and delicate pictorial gestures, Marie transforms shapes and colours on small mobile supports, then places them within a space to interrogate it. She creates empty spaces which separate the frames and offer the opportunity of a rarefied contemplation. Her practice unfolds by means of research around colour and temporalities. She recently exhibited her work at ETE 78, but also at Island in Brussels.

Steve Dehoux lives and works in Brussels, where he studied at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts. He works on landscapes impressions hovering between figuration and abstraction and explores the themes of memory and remains. Without a judgment, the artist shows the passage of time and how fragments of images persist in our memory. Dehoux recently exhibited at Royal in Brussels.

Winner of the Belgian Art Prize at age 21, Damien De Lepeleire conceives images of images, representations of representations. He creates copies working with a technique used for apprenticeship in Fine-Arts Academies that lived on for centuries, but is lost today. Paradoxically, it is through the impossibility of creating perfect copies of originals and through their imperfections, that these representations gain autonomy and value. De Lepeleire exhibited in places such as the Cultural Centre of Mechelen, the Emergent Art Centre in Ghent, the Museum van Elsene or the Comète in Liège.

Leo Gabin is a Belgian art collective created in 2000 including Lieven Deconinck, Gaëtan Begerem and Robin De Vooght. They studied together at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts of Ghent, where they live and work. The trio is deeply inspired by the proliferation of user-generated videos they discover on the internet and on social media. By means of its resources, Leo Gabin absorbs and uncovers the symbols established by the "American Way of Life", which are then used by the collective for their recognizable aesthetics.

Lisa Egio and Elliot Kervyn started working as a duo in 2014 when they began to explore "le pays noir" and presented their first in-situ installation during Hôtel Charleroi: "la force du changement".

Egio and Kervyn's work is based on context, they realise in-situ installations either in urban or art spaces. The world and civilisations are perceived as raw materials and artistic issues. They work with different media and societal issues, while always maintaining a form of self-derision. Their university backgrounds (architecture for Egio and sociology for Kervyn) complete each other and enable them to question a wider field of reference.

In 2016 they undertook a 6 months residency at New Taipei city (Taiwan), where they took interest in production and distribution modes. Their latest works deal with these preoccupation.

Ante Timmermans is a Belgian multidisciplinary artist from Ghent. He works on performances, paintings, drawings, sculptures and installations. His work inspired by the absurdity of living, its cycles and repetitiveness. It raises questions on our existence and on how to remain still in this noise. Repetitive structures included in his work attempt to organise the surrounding chaos. Timmermans' mind essentially maps critical reflections trying to seize the world. Some drawings contain text playing with signification of words. Signification or non-sense are issues with which he deals. He recently exhibited at GEM Museum voor Actuele Kunst at The Hague in the Netherlands, at Be-Part in Waregem and at the SMAK in Ghent, and at the Kunsthau NRW Kornelimünster in Germany.