

Press information

HANS OP DE BEECK: THE CLIFF

03.03.–23.06.2019

Kunsthalle Krems



The Cliff, 2019, Steel, concrete, wood, polyester, styrofoam, coating, 291 x 420 x 940 cm
Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Krinzinger, Vienna © Studio Hans

Opening: Sat, 02.03.2019, 7 p.m.

Press conference: Fri, 01.03.2019, 11 a.m.

Pressebilder: <https://bit.ly/HansOpDeBeeck>

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“I’m not interested in simulating reality, otherwise I would probably have gone into film, as a set designer. I would like to interpret the world by creating fictional settings where we can perceive the echo of reality.”

Hans Op de Beeck

„Hans Op de Beeck’s exhibition in Krems is like a journey to a magical and surreal world of stillness and intimacy. The entire Kunsthalle Krems turns into a walkable stage on which we are met by sculptural protagonists, life-sized and monochrome grey. The title-giving highlight of the show is the romantic landscape of The Cliff, which shows a young couple sitting together on a rock, holding hands.”

Florian Steininger, Artistic director of Kunsthalle Krems

Hans Op de Beeck takes us away into melancholic worlds of images between dream and reality. These are stages of imagination and contemplation, spatial picture situations of silence, timelessness, or seclusion. Op de Beeck is director, choreographer, curator, stage designer, painter and sculptor, all in one person. The 1969-born Belgian artist personally choreographed the exhibition at the Kunsthalle Krems and also created new sculptural installations for the occasion. The show becomes a passage, a journey. One encounters monochrome environments set in grey: a sleeping girl on a raft floating in the water, children deeply absorbed in their play of marbles or of bow and arrow, and a couple of young lovers sitting together on a crag. *The Cliff*, which is the title of both the work and the exhibition, is a romantic nature piece in the form of a life-sized sculptural installation. Art and everyday life blur into one another; real-looking persons and objects mutate into sculptures in their monochromy. Life seems halted, frozen like in Pompeian cement. For the artist, this is not at all about creating a hyperrealistic imitation of reality, but rather about his own interpretation of it in the processual creation of a sculptural work.

In his nights, Op de Beeck delves, as a painter and draftsman, into the world of watercolours and ink painting, whose wet washes suffuse the precise matter-of-factness with a painterly lyrical atmosphere. Sometimes these sheets provide the frames for film projects—like for the nocturnal scenes of the animated short *Night Time*, which is presented in the exhibition together with a selection of other films. Among them is *Staging Silence [2]*. In the film, hands appear out of the dark to create imaginative settings on a stage using everyday objects like plastic bottles or lumps of sugar. A surreal journey of the wondrously melancholic world of Hans Op de Beeck.

In 2016, the artist installed a sculptural environment in grey at the Art Basel: *The Collector’s House*, a nouveau-riche mansion with a library, lily pond, grand piano, glass display cases full of collector’s items in the style of a Cabinet of Curiosities, everyday objects like ashtrays and drinks cans as well as human figures oscillating between reality and the sculptural dimension—everything in a one-to-one scale. In it, exhibition visitors were moving about as recipient protagonists of the magical and melancholic ambient. The show in Krems places a special emphasis on those expansive, immersive-sculptural works.

Curator: Florian Steininger

EXHIBITED WORKS

***The Cliff* (2019)**

The monumental sculptural installation features an adolescent couple sitting atop a headland on the edge of the precipice. The girl's open gaze lingers in the distance, as if preoccupied with something beyond the setting, while the boy's attention is entirely focused on her. It is a bittersweet image of young love's vagaries, laced with innocence and designed to appeal to the viewer's sentiment.

***My bed a raft, the room the sea, and then I laughed some gloom in me.* (2019)**

The work depicts a young female figure asleep in her bed, which hovers above a raft, which, in turn, is afloat on a lily pond. By the side of the bed are books, candy, a flashlight, a glass of water, and sleeping pills. Butterflies flutter about, emblems of mortality and transience. The objects serve to invoke a hyperfictional state—guiding the viewer into the story, or perhaps into the girl's reverie. Sleeping and dreaming are conditions that frequently recur in the artist's work, but rather than calling for psychoanalytic readings supporting their presence, they encourage the audience to submit to their own dreams through the imagination.



My bed a raft, the room the sea, and then I laughed some gloom in me., 2019
Polyester, polyurethane, steel, polyamide, epoxy, wood, coating, 114 x 400 x 400 cm
Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Krinzinger, Vienna © Studio Hans Op de Beeck

***Tatiana (Soap Bubble)* (2017), *Timo* (2018), *Timo (marbles)* (2018), *Brian* (2018)**

Featuring mostly children and young adults, this ensemble cast of characters or players figures prominently in his exhibitions throughout the world. Despite their lifelike qualities and expert modelling, they do not address the spectator directly but appear generally self-absorbed, with their eyes closed: *Tatiana (Soap Bubble)* is blowing soap bubbles, *Brian* sits cross-legged holding a crystal sphere, *Timo (marbles)* plays with a set of glass marbles on the ground, and *Timo* aimlessly shoots an arrow with a rubber stopper from a little bow. Their arrested gestures and actions are mundane, inconsequential, and evoke a world of introspection and quiet reflection.



Brian, 2018
Polyester, glass, coating, 62 x 62 x 58 cm
Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Krinzinger, Vienna © Studio Hans Op de Beeck

Christmas (2006)

Christmas is a subtly scaled-down sculptural representation of a designer living room interior, a space we might almost be tempted to enter. The room gives on to a tall, glazed curtain wall, and vintage-retro items—sofas, chairs, tables, a lamp, and planters—complete the designer look. A decorated Christmas tree and wrapped presents underline the homeliness of the scene. Yet, as so often in the artist's work, his interiors are flawed. The entire setting is painstakingly painted in a viscous black lacquer, as if engulfed by an oil slick, rather than appearing as the result of superior taste. Equally, close observation reveals that some objects barely conform to the carefully controlled display—an ashtray brimful with cigarette ends or a ramshackle coffee table, which serve to unsettle the bourgeois smugness.

Watercolours (2019)

Since 2009, Hans Op de Beeck has been working on a growing body of large black-and-white watercolours. Ranging from two and a half to five metres, they are unusually large for a medium more associated with a certain intimacy. Their size is designed to complement his large installations. Painted mainly during night-time, they have become a ritual for the artist as he works away in solitude during the small hours. Watercolour, a transparent medium, is dependent on the light or reflection emanating from the white paper. Traditional techniques tend to be light of touch, while Op de Beeck pushes the medium to an extreme by augmenting the preponderance of black paint across the surface. By reducing the light in the works, the artist invokes the sensation of the nocturne, a tradition so effective in art and music, from James Abbott McNeill Whistler's lugubrious, meditative paintings to John Field's and Frédéric Chopin's piano compositions.



Night Time, 2015
Full HD video, music, 19:20 Min
Courtesy of the artist © Studio Hans Op de Beeck

Night Time (2015)

The animated film brings together a myriad of the artist's watercolour paintings of landscapes, urban settings, interiors, objects, and figures. *Night Time* is conceived as a porous dream in which all proportions, perspectives, and environments are fictitious. The video exudes a sense of dormant danger and potential derailment, reminiscent of the film noir tradition. The nocturne, the artist proposes, is not a real place, but a state of mind.

The Girl (2017)

The film opens with a view of a stately home as it undergoes a process of ruination, supposedly the original home of the only protagonist, an adolescent itinerant girl; she is a witness to different landscapes and urban environments in varying states of dereliction and dilapidation: a dark forest, a vast landfill, a gas station, a highway landscape, a meadow, a factory site, and a misty lake. Later, we find the girl afloat on a raft. Lost in a dream, wisps of her long hair flowing in the gentle breeze, she presents a perfect picture of untainted virtue, but when the lens pans across her prone body, her thin arms appear to show faintly discernible needle marks. This revelation threatens to turn dreams of innocence into the unconscious haze of drug abuse. The original soundtrack for the film was composed by Tom Pintens, based on a text by the artist.

Staging Silence (2) (2013)

The black-and-white footage depicts a small stage on which scenarios involving everyday household objects, foodstuffs, and constructions are played out. Hands appear in the margins of the screen, in the manner of a shadow play or puppet show, to roll out the landscape like a carpet; water is poured and becomes a shimmering sea, whose gentle waves are raised with long black sticks. An island is fashioned in its midst, made from half-peeled potatoes and a bonsai tree, whilst a boat is fastened to a pontoon. In the final sequence, a vast city emerges, built painstakingly from stacked cubes of sugar. Then, black rain falls, administered by watering cans, which causes them to slowly melt and crumble into ruins. The more the artist reveals his sleight of hand, his artifice, the further it chimes with our imagination, and the more we are willing to suspend our disbelief, the most fundamental aspect that defines narrative.



Staging Silence (2), 2013
Full HD video, black and white, sound, 20:48 Min
Courtesy of the artist © Studio Hans Op de Beeck

Titles of the other works exhibited:

Memento Mori (2019), *Blackberries* (2019), *Wunderkammer (7)* (2018), *Wunderkammer (10)* (2018), *Sleeping Girl* (2018)

Titles of the other videos:

The Thread (2015), *Dance* (2013), *Parade* (2012), *Celebration* (2008)

HANS OP DE BEECK

Born in Turnhout, Belgium, in 1969.

Lives and works in Brussels and Gooik, Belgium.

www.hansopdebeeck.com

Solo exhibitions (selection)

- 2019 *Hans Op de Beeck: The Cliff*, Kunsthalle Krems, Krems, Austria
The Conversation, Galerie Krinzinger, Vienna, Austria
- 2018 *Sea of Tranquillity*, Het Scheepvaartmuseum, Amsterdam, Netherlands
Kids, Cabinets, Pictures, Ponds, Galleria Continua Les Moulins, Boissy-le-Châtel, France
- 2017 *Hans Op de Beeck: Pino Pascali Award - XX edition*, Fondazione Pino Pascali, Polignano a Mare, Italy
The Pond Room, Kunstraum Dornbirn, Dornbirn, Austria
Hans Op de Beeck. Out of the Ordinary, Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, Wolfsburg, Germany
The Silent Castle, Museum Morsbroich, Leverkusen, Germany
- 2016 *Saisir le Silence*, Espace 104, Paris, France
The Collector's House, Art Unlimited, Basel, Switzerland
- 2015 *Sea of Tranquillity*, Screen Space, Melbourne, Australia
Décors et Figurants, Château de Chimay, Chimay, Belgium
- 2014 *Hans Op de Beeck: Quiet Scenery and Wandering Extras*, Sammlung Goetz, Munich, Germany
Hans Op de Beeck: Staging Silence (2), Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland, Ohio, USA
Hans Op de Beeck: Staging Silence (2), List Visual Arts Center des Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA
- 2013 *Hans Op de Beeck: Staging Silence (2)*, Harn Museum of Art, Gainesville, Florida, USA
Hans Op de Beeck: Sea of Tranquillity, Frac PACA, Marseille, France
Hans Op de Beeck: Sea of Tranquillity, Tampa Museum of Art, Tampa, Florida, USA
- 2012 *Hans Op de Beeck: Visual Fictions*, Kunstverein Hannover, Hanover, Germany
Hans Op de Beeck: Video Works, Butler Gallery, Kilkenny, Ireland
- 2011 *Hans Op de Beeck: Sea of Tranquillity*, Centro de Arte Caja de Burgos, Burgos, Spain
Hans Op de Beeck: Sea of Tranquillity & Staging Views, Kunstmuseum Thun, Thun, Switzerland
- 2010 *Hans Op de Beeck: Staging Silence*, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden of the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D. C., USA

Group exhibitions (selection)

- 2018 *Black & White. Von Dürer bis Eliasson*, Museum Kunstpalast, Dusseldorf, Germany
Rendez-Vous, Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Brussels, Belgium
2050. A Brief History of the Future, National Taiwan Museum of Fine Arts, Taichung, Taiwan
- 2017 *Artapes*, Museo nazionale delle arti del XXI secolo, Rome, Italy
Les dix ans du Prix de dessin contemporain de la Fondation Daniel et Florence Guerlain, Centre Pompidou, Paris, France
Sterne, Lentos Kunstmuseum Linz, Linz, Austria
Perception is Reality. On the construction of Reality and Virtual Worlds., Frankfurter Kunstverein, Frankfurt, Germany
- 2016 *No Place like Home*, Sammlung Goetz im Haus der Kunst, Munich, Germany
- 2015 *The Importance of Being...*, 40 Belgian Artists, Museo de Arte Moderno de Buenos Aires, Buenos Aires, Argentina
- 2013 *Heimsuchung. Unscanny Spaces in Contemporary Art*, Kunstmuseum Bonn, Bonn, Germany
The Great Magic, Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna, Bologna, Italy
Liquid Landscape, Museo d'Arte Contemporanea di Roma, Rome, Italy
Donation Florence et Daniel Guerlain, Musée National d'Art Moderne, Centre Pompidou, Paris, France
- 2011 *Car Culture, Media of Mobility*, ZKM Zentrum für Kunst und Medien, Karlsruhe, Germany
- 2010 *Do or Die. The Human Condition in Painting and Photography*, Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, Cologne, Germany
Terre vulnerabili 1/4, Pirelli HangarBicocca, Milan, Italy
- 2008 *Le Temps Sensible - Video des Monats*, Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna, Austria
- 2003 *Breaking Away: P.S.1 2002–2003 National and International Studio Program Exhibition*, MoMA PS1, New York, USA

His work was invited for the Biennales of Venice, Shanghai, and Singapore, for the Kochi-Muziris Biennale, Kochi, India, as well as for the Triennale in Aichi, Japan, the Art Summer University at Tate Modern, London, the Art Basel Miami Beach, and many other events.

CATALOGUE

The catalogue accompanying the exhibition *Hans Op de Beeck: The Cliff* (€ 29,80) will be available after the exhibition opening.

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EXHIBITION DATES**HANS OP DE BEECK: THE CLIFF**

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OPENING

Sat, 02.03.2019, 7 p.m.

Address of welcome and presentation byFlorian Steininger, Artistic director of
Kunsthalle Krems**Artist Talk**Florian Steininger in conversation with
Hans Op de Beeck**Official opening by**Christiane Teschl-Hofmeister, member of the
Provincial Government, on behalf of
Johanna Mikl-Leitner, Governor of
Lower Austria**DJ set** by DJ Agathe Bauer**OPENING HOURS**Tue-Sun, Mon when holiday
from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.**ADMISSION**Adults 10 €
Reduced 9 €
Family ticket 18 €**KUNSTHALLE KREMS**Museumsplatz 5
3500 Krems an der Donau
T +43 2732 908010
E office@kunsthalle.at
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Fri, 01.03.2019, 11 a.m.

with Florian Steininger and Hans Op de Beeck

with Shuttle Vienna – Krems – Vienna:

9.30 a.m.: Friedrich-Schmidt-Platz /

Lichtenfelsgasse

1 p.m.: Kunsthalle Krems

PRESS IMAGES<https://bit.ly/HansOpDeBeeck>

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