



Press Release | 04.02.2015



Robin Vanbesien, detail of *untitled (Gravidade)*, 2014, acrylic coating, soft pastel and charcoal on fabric on stretcher frame, 92 x 84 cm. © Photo Kristien Daem.

Robin Vanbesien

Gravidade

12.02 - 22.03.2015

12.02 | 19.00 Opening

21.03 | 17.00 Talk with Willem Oorebeek and Robin Vanbesien

Because he's alone, a sailor's always telling himself who he is, writes Kathy Acker in her short story 'Lust' (1988), revisiting Jean Genet's 'Querelle de Brest' (1947), a novel about a young sailor and a trade-off between a murder and a transgressive sexual act. A sailor is nowhere home, always alone, which gives him the opportunity to act within the illusion of a mirage. Taking his cue from Acker's and Genet's "sailor", Robin Vanbesien unfolds a metonymic figure for a nameless desire circulating through painted partial objects and prolific poetic images invoked by words. Characters, genders and bodies appear at sea before the possibilities of an undecidably erotic (homoerotic or just autoerotic) fantasy. The relations appear dissociated, stemming from the desire of an emptied-out self. All seems to be given with the gravity that yields a passive tense of verbs, static gestures, and staged compositions. Landscape, painted or filmed, functions as the medium to circumscribe the figures. It reflects the notion of a framing gaze returned from its object in a specular dialogue. Although they seem to encompass each other's plastic-pictorial unity, the author and its hero, the figure and the spectator, are conjoined in worlds separated from each other.

'Gravidade' takes its title from the eponymous film*, which is posed in the centre of a circular distribution of seven paintings in the exhibition space. The paintings partition a figure in the landscape, therefore forming a series of part-bodies as partial objects detached from both the figure and its imaginary surroundings (bollocks, penis, hands, tongues, fish etc.). The expressive

pictorial quality in the film's staging of figures through poetic quasi-dialogue renders it as another sort of painting toward which the other images in the room gravitate. Hence the film provides an illusion of restoring the lacking totality of each image on its own.

* *Gravidade* (2015, HD, 23') was produced during the artist's residency at the Maumaus Programme. Directed by Robin Vanbesien; Actors: Cláudio da Silva, Diogo Bento, Ricardo Vaz Trindade; Cinematography: Graça Castanheira; Sound: Isabel Dias Martins; Color Grading: Graça Castanheira; Sound Design: Bart Aga; Editing: Robin Vanbesien; Production Assistant: Rui Gonçalves; Text: Robin Vanbesien; Translation: Pedro Sena-Lino, Rui Gonçalves.

Robin Vanbesien (Ostend, 1979) lives and works in Brussels. He studied History at the University of Ghent and Fine Arts at the Gerrit Rietveld Academy (Amsterdam) and de Ateliers (Amsterdam). His recent solo and group exhibitions include 'Celluloid Brushes', Culturgest (Porto, 2015) / Ludlow 38 (New York, 2013) / Witte de With (Rotterdam, 2012); 'lighting the throat = lighting the throat', Objectif Exhibitions (Antwerp, 2014); 'stray fire / ships to sink like this', Rupert (Vilnius, 2014); 'F. Hodler' (with Willem Oorebeek), Pinacoteca (Vienna, 2014); 'What thinks me', Taiga (Saint Petersburg, 2014); 'duty-bound away from the keyboard of the screen of my face', WIELS Project Room (Brussels, 2014); 'Monstrance Air Pump', San Serriffe (Amsterdam, 2013); 'The Incapacity Not to Enter into Every Skin', Walden Affairs (The Hague, 2012); 'Ville en abîme', Hotel Charleroi (Charleroi, 2012) and 'A Means to a Place', Mu.ZEE (Ostend, 2012). Among his artistic residencies are Maumaus Residency Programme (Lisbon, 2014/15), Capacete (Rio de Janeiro, 2014), Rupert (Vilnius, 2014) and WIELS Residency (Brussels, 2013). He is the author of the artist book 'Instant Ruins' (MER. Paper Kunsthalle, 2012).

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Rua Tomás del Negro, 8
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Wednesday to Sunday, 15.00 to 19.00 or by appointment

Lumiar Cité is the exhibition space of Maumaus.

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