

TEMPLON



HANS OP DE BEECK

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Hans Op de Beeck's "Whispered Tales" Beguiles at Templon New York

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In "Whispered Tales," Belgian artist **Hans Op de Beeck** orchestrates an exhibition of extraordinary scale and vision at **Templon New York**, a space transformed into a realm of reverie, melancholy, and mystery. Known for his monumental, often monochromatic installations, Op de Beeck's work suspends time, evoking stillness and contemplation in the viewer. This exhibition is **Templon New York's** first to showcase his work, and it is monumental not only in physical size, covering the **gallery's** entire 500-square-meter space, but also in its psychological depth and evocative power. "Whispered Tales" invites visitors to step into an immersive world where the familiar and the uncanny meet, and ordinary objects and figures transform into poetic, sometimes unsettling symbols.

With the guidance of **Mathieu Templon**, Op de Beeck has crafted a distinctive body of work that touches on themes of memory, temporality, and the human experience, grounding his visual language in minimalist, restrained aesthetics. Each sculpture, film, and watercolor painting in the show has been created with an intricate attention to detail, yet with a palette that seldom deviates from grey tones. This monochrome choice, a hallmark of Op de Beeck's style, emphasizes the weight of his subjects, and in "Whispered Tales," it acts as a unifying medium for a world seemingly paused, veiled in dreamlike serenity.



Installation View Of Hans Op De Beeck's "Whispered Tales." © And Courtesy Of The AROST And TEMPLON, Paris, Brussels, New York.

Enchanting, Melancholy Environments Unfold

Op de Beeck's installations are not mere exhibitions; they are environments—constructed worlds that draw visitors in, often through life-size or larger-than-life depictions of humans, animals, and everyday settings. In "Whispered Tales," he assembles what can be described as a contemporary "cabinet of curiosities," a collection imbued with the enchanting yet melancholic quality that has become his signature. Far from a whimsical showcase, however, this cabinet carries an atmosphere of restrained magic, a presence that does not rely on overt surrealism but instead subtly distorts reality. A seated girl with angel wings, a life-size horseman carrying a monkey, and a classic display cabinet featuring a pier under a starlit sky are just some of the elements that weave together a tapestry of strange beauty and unexpected melancholy.

Through his fictional, static scenes and figures, Op de Beeck cultivates a form of anonymous universality. Unlike classical sculpture, which often glorifies individual subjects, his work strips identity to its bare essence, embodying instead the fleeting and fragile nature of existence. The figures, whether human or animal, possess a haunting anonymity, as though existing outside time or history. This approach contrasts sharply with traditional statuary, where physical details exalt the subject's individuality or divinity. Instead, Op de Beeck's sculptures feel distant and introspective, asking viewers to see beyond physical appearance to a collective, universal human experience.

Offering Suspended Moments Both Cinematic and Timeless

The thematic core of “Whispered Tales” revolves around moments that feel suspended—scenes that occupy a liminal space between the real and the surreal. These are fragments of life and imagination caught outside linear narrative, each one suggesting potential stories that are left incomplete, encouraging the viewer to fill in the gaps. The static posture of each figure, the quiet drama of each scene, captures moments that feel both cinematic and timeless. Op de Beeck’s background in film influences this approach, with an intuitive sense of framing and atmosphere that speaks to his commitment to creating immersive environments. His work captures an essence that, while often cinematic, is still highly sculptural, grounded in form and materiality rather than dialogue or plot.

What adds another layer to the experience is Op de Beeck’s careful manipulation of scale and spatial perception. His works loom over visitors, creating an environment where familiar scenes are suddenly strange and captivating. This tactic disrupts conventional perspectives, making the ordinary appear newly strange and mysterious. The monumental horseman, for instance, holds a monkey sheltering him with a parasol—an image that, while whimsical, becomes powerful in its surreal contrast to the quiet seriousness of the monochrome palette. These figures, rendered in velvety grey, elicit not just contemplation but a sense of quiet disorientation as if one has stumbled into a parallel world, close enough to reality to be recognizable yet detached enough to feel foreign.



Installation View Of Hans Op De Beeck's "Whispered Tales." © And Courtesy Of The Artist And TEMPLON, Paris, Brussels, New York.

Layering Film, Paintings, and Sculptures for Amplified Sensations

A central component of the show is Op de Beeck's black-and-white animated film, alongside watercolor paintings that echo the themes of his sculptures, amplifying the sensation of worlds held in suspension. The film and paintings are as important as his three-dimensional works, extending the exhibition's narrative into new mediums. The film, like his sculptures, is rendered in monochrome, inviting viewers into another level of active contemplation. Through animation, Op de Beeck can evoke more dynamic, albeit subtly restrained, sequences, where fluidity of motion contrasts with the stillness of his other works. Meanwhile, the watercolor paintings add a more intimate dimension to the show, grounding the exhibition's large-scale installations with delicate scenes that echo the larger themes.

The overall tone of "Whispered Tales" is one of quiet intensity, a slow unfolding of emotion that prompts viewers to sit with their feelings. Op de Beeck does not impose specific narratives on his audience. Rather, he opens doors for them to explore their own memories, questions, and dreams within the quiet spaces his work provides. His creations are meditative landscapes, spaces for contemplation and introspection, where the simplicity of form masks layers of meaning and emotional depth. There is a deeply human element in this silence, a resonance that speaks to shared experiences of loss, nostalgia, and longing.

In its essence, "Whispered Tales" is an invitation to pause, to contemplate the mystery of life's fleeting moments, and to find meaning in the unspoken, the unsung, and the unseen. Through this exhibition, **Templon New York** becomes not just a gallery but a portal into Op de Beeck's evocative world, where reality is rendered softly surreal and where simplicity births wonder. As viewers wander through this immersive environment, they are invited to confront their own sense of temporality, to engage with the beauty in the mundane, and perhaps to embrace a touch of melancholy in the silence that permeates Op de Beeck's creations.