

TEMPLON



Press release
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HANS OP DE BEECK
WHISPERED TALES
November 7 - December 21, 2024



Zhai-Liza (angel), 2024, polyester, polyamide, coating, 81 × 59 × 59 cm

This autumn Templon New York is hosting a project on an unprecedented scale. *Whispered Tales* is the gallery's first exhibition of work by Belgian artist Hans Op de Beeck, an immersive ensemble occupying the 500 square metres of the gallery's New York space.

Hans Op de Beeck, 55, is known for his monumental, often monochrome, sculptural installations that plunge visitors into silent and introspective universes. His distinctive body of work explores temporality, memory and the human condition. He uses a minimalist aesthetic to evoke scenes, both familiar and mysterious, where the apparent simplicity of the form masks an emotional complexity.

In creating fictitious interiors, outdoor scenes, still lives and human figures seemingly frozen in time he seeks to capture suspended moments, fragments of life, lying outside linear narrative. This approach and its treatment of the human body and of spaces embraces the legacy of both classical sculpture as well as cinematographic imagery, while distancing itself from that same legacy with forms of abstraction in its representations. In contrast to classical statuary and its glorification of the individual or divinity, Op de Beeck strives to express the fleeting nature of existence, opting for a form of universal melancholic anonymity.

The exhibition is designed as a cabinet of curiosities, imbued with the subtle presence of the marvellous, rooted not in a sense of whimsy but rather in the sculptures' capacity to distort reality and create a dreamlike atmosphere. His sculptural works with their soft, velvety monochrome skin, alongside his new black and white

animated film and watercolour paintings, amplify the sensation of worlds suspended in time and space. The viewer is invited to partake in a form of active contemplation, discovering in turn a seated little girl with angel's wings lost in her thoughts, a classic display cabinet showing a nocturnal pier with a Ferris wheel under a starry sky, or a life size enigmatic horseman with a little monkey on his shoulder holding a parasol over his head.

The way the artist plays with the perception of scale and atmosphere sparks a disconnect, a feeling of strangeness when confronted with scenes lifted out of the ordinary. Each work offers us the seed of yet another possible story. With his characteristic grey tones and carefully thought-out staging, Hans Op de Beeck transforms the prosaic into an almost magical experience where simplicity gives birth to the unexpected.

Born in 1969 in Turnhout, Belgium, Hans Op de Beeck obtained his Master's Degree in Fine Arts at Kunsthogeschool Sint Lukas in Brussels. He continued his studies at the Higher Institute of Fine Arts (HISK, previously in Antwerp), then at Rijksakademie in Amsterdam. In 2002–2003 he was artist in residence at MoMA PS1 in New York. Some of his pieces feature as permanent installations, such as *Location (5)* (2004) at the Towada Art Center in Japan and *The Quiet View* (2015) at the Herkenrode site in Hasselt, Belgium. The many solo exhibitions of his work include shows at the GEM Museum of Contemporary Art, The Hague, the Netherlands (2004), M HKA Museum of Contemporary Art, Antwerp, Belgium (2006), Centraal Museum, Utrecht, the Netherlands (2007), Towada Art Center, Towada, Japan (2008), Smithsonian's Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington, USA (2010), Kunstmuseum, Thun, Switzerland (2010), Centro de Arte Caja de Burgos, Burgos, Spain (2010), Butler Gallery, Kilkenny, Ireland (2012), Kunstverein, Hanover, Germany (2012), Tampa Museum of Art, Tampa, USA (2013), The Harn Museum of Art, Gainesville, USA (2013), FRAC Paca, Marseille, France (2013), MIT List Visual Arts Center, Boston, USA (2014), MOCA Cleveland, USA (2014), Sammlung Goetz, Munich, Germany (2014), Screen Space, Melbourne, Australia (2015), Château de Chamarande, France (2015), Art Basel (Art Unlimited), Basel, Switzerland (2016), Espace 104, Paris, France (2016), Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, Wolfsburg, Germany (2017), Fondazione Museo Pino Pascali, Polignano a Mare, Italy (2017), Kunstraum, Dornbirn, Austria (2017), Morsbroich Museum, Leverkusen, Germany (2017), Scheepvaartmuseum, Amsterdam, the Netherlands (2018), Kunsthalle Krems, Krems an der Donau, Austria (2019), The State Hermitage Museum, Saint Petersburg, Russia (2021), Amos Rex Museum, Helsinki, Finland (2022) and Musée de Flandre, Cassel, France (2023).