

Press release

for immediate release

SIRENS

03/09/2015-31/10/2015

Berlinde De Bruyckere | Alex Verhaest | Raffaella Crispino
Laetitia de Chocqueuse | Juan Pablo Plazas | Adam Vackar
Stanislas Lahaut | Quinten Ingelaere | A.F. Vandevorst
Frédéric Dumoulin | Nicolas Hommelen | Happy Famous Artists
Pauline M'barek | Maxim Frank

I. Data

Press preview	2 September as of 6 PM and 3 September as of 11 AM and by appointment
Vernissage	3 September as of 6 PM
Opening hours	Wed-Sat and on Sunday 13 September: 11 AM on 6 PM
Nocturnes	(until 10 PM) on 10,11 and 12 September Exceptionally opened on Sunday 13 September
Press inquiries	laurence@dauwensbeernaert.com 0478/568626

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II. Press text

Dauwens & Beernaert Gallery is pleased to present '*Sirens*' a group show featuring works by Berlinde De Bruyckere, an installation by A.F. Vandevorst and recent works by young emerging artists from Belgium, Germany, France, Colombia, Czech Republic and the UK.

On view until 31 October 2015 the exhibition takes its name from the encyclopaedia definition of a siren.

Siren

noun /'saɪrən/

1. *a device that makes a long loud sound as a signal or warning*
2. *(in ancient Greek stories) any of a group of sea creatures that were part woman and part bird, or part woman and part fish, whose beautiful singing made sailors sail towards them into rocks or dangerous waters*
3. *a woman who is very attractive or beautiful but also dangerous*
4. *siren voices/song/call (literary) the temptation to do something that seems very attractive but that will have bad results*

The group exhibition investigates the duality between absence and presence, poetry and violence and representations of women in contemporary art: from muse and source of inspiration, to powerful victim and vulnerable heroine.

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III. Participating artists

Alex Verhaest is best known for her video installations. On the occasion of *Sirens* she created a series of 3D-prints (Grete_001-3). Her sculptures are inspired by Grete Samsa, one of the protagonists of the novella *The Metamorphosis* by Franz Kafka. The constructed 3D-prints investigate themes such as deconstruction, transformation and the loss of communication. The works serve as a foretaste of Alex' forthcoming solo exhibition at Dauwens & Beernaert. Alex Verhaest recently won the Golden Nica at the Ars Electronica Festival Linz and the New Face Award at the Japan New Media Arts Festival Tokyo.

Adam Vačkář's for *Concerto for a Shotgun* blank partitions were shot upon by a shotgun in order to create partitions for random music, which reflects directly the brutality of the real. The brutality of the real and the contrast of poetic music (embodied by *Sirens*) is accentuated by the personal story of the artist who's grand father was a famous Czech classical music composer and his other grand father a hi-rank army general who fought in the 2nd WW together with the former Czech president Svoboda. Adam has shown his work in exhibitions around the world including at Art Basel - Art Statements, Palais de Tokyo, Aargauer Kunsthaus and the Kölnerischer Kunstverein. His work is amongst others included in the collections of SMAK Ghent and Maison Rouge, Paris.

London based **Happy Famous Artists' *Lebensborn*** derives its title from the SS-initiated and state-supported project with the goal of raising the birth rate of "Aryan" children via extramarital relations of persons classified as "racially pure and healthy" based on Nazi racial hygiene and health ideology. The Hitler-esque portrait is a combination of Hitler's face and the eyes of Lady Di, the erstwhile Princess of Wales. *Lebensborn* challenges the relation between violence and gender and the concept and importance of descendance.

Raffaella Crispino's installations and video's address the condition of being foreign as well as the conditions of foreigners. Raffaella's, sociologic works depart from subjective narratives in order to confront us with social and political issues. One of Raffaella's installations at Dauwens & Beernaert is based on the personal story of Samia Yusuf Omar, a female Somalian Athlete who died in a boat accident while on her way to Italy on a refugee boat to find a coach to train for the 2012 London Olympic Games.

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Berlinde De Bruyckere's drawings represent an independent part of her work and offer insights into the artist's world view and creative processes. *Dekenvrouw* represents a female figure her bodies covered with woollen blankets. The drawing investigates the duality of blankets. Woollen blankets do not only symbolise protection and warmth, but also vulnerability and fear – they seem to be able not only to provide shelter, but also to suffocate.

Fashion: the moment you are sure that you understand her meaning and have adjusted your wardrobe as to be on top of the trends, she shifts in another directions, turns another corner and voila; you are right back where you started. Belgian designer label **A.F. Vandevorst** used this character trait of fashion as the starting point for their installation 'Dreaming Project'. They created a candle in the shape of a sleeping girl on a hospital bed. The design was based on one of their signature shows that was held in Paris in 1999. What starts out as the perfect picture melts down and slowly disappears.

Quinten Ingelaere's paintings adapt different themes of art history. The three anachronistic portraits that he made on the occasion of Sirens create uncertain access points to new narratives. The unconventional portraits investigate the way classic themes and archetypes of art history installed themselves in our collective memory, how these allegories influence our expectations towards, and the way we perceive contemporary art.

Stanislas Lahaut's text works and installations are characterized by his tragicomic yet poetic approach of daily life and the absurd mechanisms of the (art) world. Sirens includes a major in situ installation of Stanislas Lahaut at "Direction".

Jörgen Voordeckers worked under the pseudonym **Nicolas Hommelen**, or N. H. Nicolas Hommelen's paintings and installations reflect his interest for ancient painting techniques. He paints contemporary images in a classic way and gives them an ancient and alienating aspect by using a glazing technique and several layers of varnish. He focuses on the artisanal, deliberately avoiding reproducibility. Nicoals Hommelen's works are included in the Caldic Collection, MHKA collection and the Collection of the Flemish Community.

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Pauline M'barek drawing *Hollow Profile* represents the imagined backside of an African masks. With this drawing, she tries to imagine the backside of an African masks by turning it mentally inside-out and drawing its possible negative form. On the drawing, the coveted front side is turned away from the viewer, while the interior of the mask - the negative form - opens up towards him. The drawing sheet turns into a hollow profile, into which the viewer can place his own face like into a perfect shape of his skin. A reversed portrait.

Frédéric Dumoulin makes silent paintings. Frédéric's works are an investigation of the duality between loneliness and intimacy, and between remoteness and proximity. A gracious woman is turned into a vulnerable person, a solid rock is turned into a place of introspection and reflection.

Laetitia de Chocqueuse's *Autoportrait involontaire* ('The accidental self-portrait') is a found object. Upon first sight the work is an old sheet of cardboard that turned yellow over time. Upon closer inspection, one can however distinguish the silhouette of a person. Indeed, the cardboard served as the back of a frame of an engraving by the French artist Georges Rouault (1871-1958). The impact of sunlight and time created a negative imprint of the original print. The work is therefore a posthumous self-portrait, made by a self-portrait of the represented artist. Even though the work was made without any intervention of the artist, the work embodies all central themes of Laetitia de Chocqueuse's work.

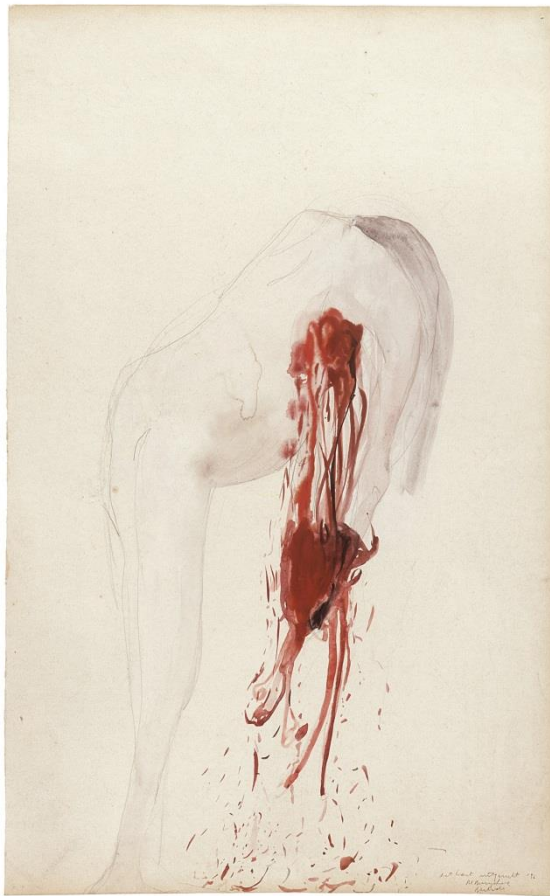
Juan Pablo Plazas departs from ordinary household objects to construct his sculptures. By manipulating these objects Juan Pablo gives them another meaning, another dimension which contradicts with their functionality. By modelling these objects they are deprived from their initial teleological purpose.

Maxim Frank lives and works in Brussels. Maxim Frank's sculptures, videos and installations question the teleology of objects, their initial and intrinsic purpose. Each project challenges and investigates the customs and conventions that are inherently related to everyday objects. Maxim Frank's works are an exploration and investigation of the utilitarian limits of, and our conventional attitudes towards these objects

The exhibition runs from 3 September until 31 October 2015.

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Berlinde De Bruyckere



Het hart uitgerukt | Pencil and gouache on paper | 1996 | Private collection

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Stanislas Lahaut



I'm not afraid of repeating myself | Ink on wall | 2015

In situ installation Dauwens & Beernaert Gallery

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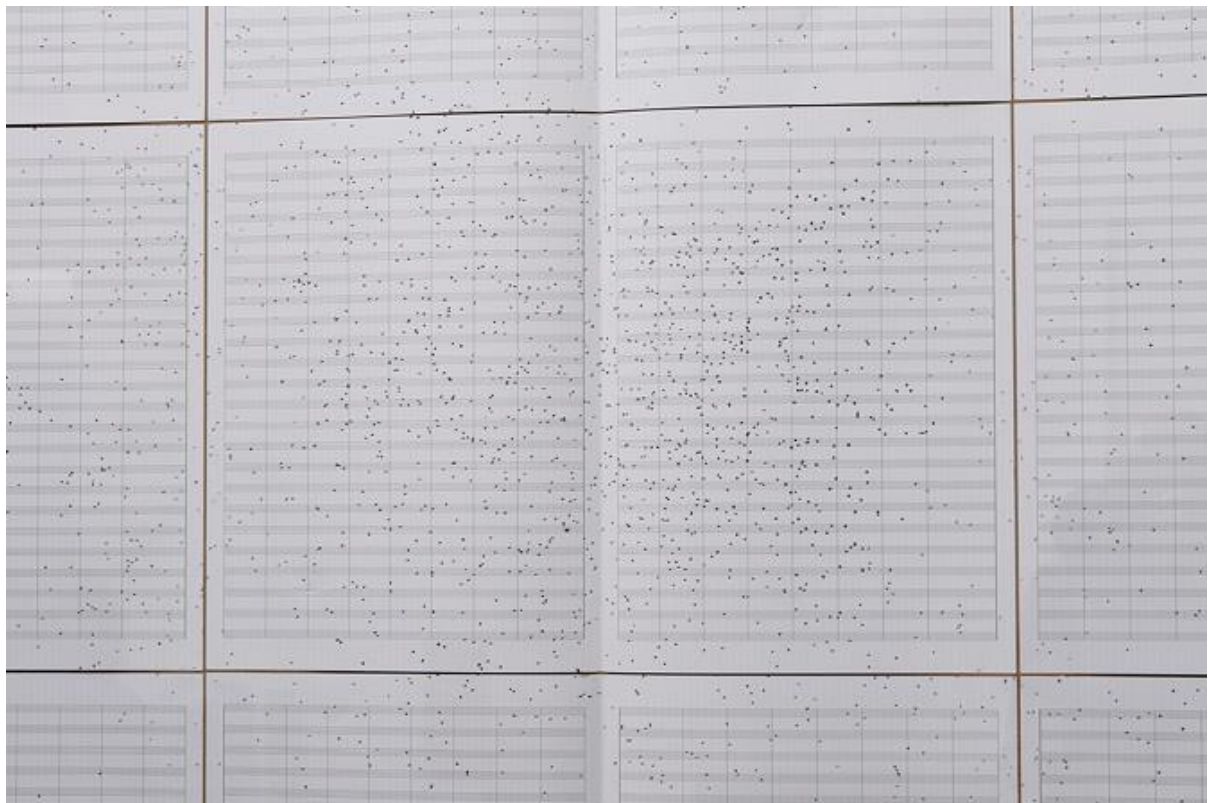
Nicolas Hommelen



Kristall, Paint on photographic print | 1992

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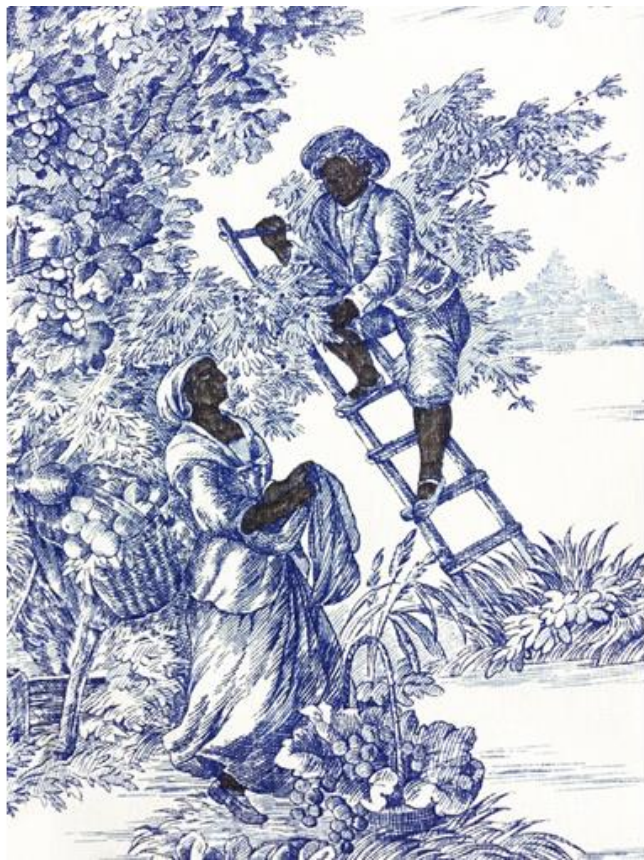
Adam Vackar



Concerto for a Shotgun | partitions, wood, plexibox | 2015

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Raffaella Crispino



Samia (detail) | Toile de Jouy (hand colored) | 2015