



To the press

Sven Augustijnen

«Spectres»

13 August – 9 October 2011

Press preview: Friday, 12 August, from 11 a.m. on (in the presence of the artist)
Opening: Friday, 12 August, 6 p.m.

Is it possible to reconstruct history as an objective entity? Or is this prevented by deficient memory, human narcissism and the will to manipulate? Does objectivity remain merely an ethical wish?

These are the central questions in the exhibition of the Brussels-based artist Sven Augustijnen (*1970) and his unusual film essay *Spectres*. As documentary, portrait and thriller at the same time it never takes up a position but allows various voices to speak and mixes journalism, politics and history. Augustijnen's conceptual starting point is Karl Marx's stay in Brussels while writing *The Communist Manifesto* and its effects on the crown prince (later Leopold II), who annexed the Congo one year after Marx's death. The Kunst Halle Sankt Gallen is pleased to present this film, produced with other European institutions – both on its own premises as well as in the cinema in the Lokremise (Kinok).

The protagonist of *Spectres* is Jacques Brassinne de la Buisserie, who in 1961 – the year of the execution of Patrice Lumumba, the first prime minister of the independent Congo – was active in the young state as a member of the Belgian government. The precise background of this execution and those responsible for it remain unknown and are the subject of speculation and conspiracy theories. The film analyses the themes of history and the writing of history through the figure of the 80 year-old Brassinne – who researched Lumumba's death for years and among other things wrote a book about the last 50 days of the politician's life – and shows how it is always influenced by subjective perception. An engrossing 100-minute journey visits various locations in Belgium and the Congo, shows people who influenced this historic moment and brings the events alive again for the audience.

The film is embedded in an exhibition which brings together photographic works and documentary material surrounding Lumumba's murder and enables deeper exposure of the subject. A central role is played by the tree where Lumumba was shot, which Brassinne documented with photographs in the 1980s. Today it no longer exists physically but only as a myth and a symbol. Augustijnen is currently working on a reconstruction of the tree in cooperation with the Kunstgiesserei St. Gallen. The first traces of this process, which at some stage could lead to the creation of a monument, can be seen alongside Brassinne's photographs.

With Sven Augustijnen's exhibition and his interest in colonialism and its consequences the Kunst Halle wants to make a small contribution to the visibility of the postcolonial discourse and thereby also to a critical analysis of Europe's economic system.

Spectres was produced in cooperation with the Wiels Contemporary Art Centre in Brussels and de Appel in Amsterdam. The film is on show until the end of July in Wiels and will be presented in October at Kunsthalle Bern and from November to January in Amsterdam. It has already received several prizes including at the 22nd Festival international du documentaire de Marseille.

A comprehensive publication with documentation, photographs and texts accompanies the exhibition.

About the artist

Sven Augustijnen studied at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts Antwerp, at Hoger Sint-Lukas Instituut in Brussels and at Jan van Eyck Academie in Maastricht. Solo exhibitions of the artist took place (amongst others) at Wiels Contemporary Art Centre, Brussels (2011), at Gallery Jan Mot, Brussels (2008) and at Argos, Brussels (2004). Further, he participated in various group exhibitions, amongst them at the following institutions and galleries: MuHKA, Antwerp; Kunsthalle Bern (2010); De Hallen, Haarlem (NL); Kunsthalle Basel; Shanghai Art Museum; National Museum, Singapore; Tate Modern, London; Ernst Museum, Budapest; Contemporary Art Museum St. Louis (US) (2009); Württembergischer Kunstverein, Stuttgart; Museion, Bolzano (IT) (2008); Old Embassy, Tokyo; Vakgroep Architectuur en Stedebouw, Ghent (BE); CC Strombeek (BE); Ruimte voor actuele Kunst, Antwerp (BE); Deuxièmes Rencontres Internationales du Film Documentaire, Doc à Tunis (TN); Kunst op de Wei / Rock Werchter, Werchter (BE); Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Siegen; CAAC, Sevilla; Documenta Magazines, Kassel (2007); Centre d'Art Contemporain, Fribourg (CH); Université de Luxembourg; CGAC Centro Galego de Arte Contemporánea, Santiago de Compostela; Freestate, Ostend (BE) (2006).

Educational and accompanying programme

Guided tours through the exhibition

Tuesday, 16 August, 6 p.m.

Sunday, 25 September, 3 p.m.

Guided tour with the artist

Friday, 9 September, 12 noon

Screenings *Spectres* at Kinok

(Lokremise, Grünbergstrasse 7, St. Gallen)

Wednesday, 17 August, 8.30 p.m.

Sunday, 28 August, 8 p.m.

Thursday, 8 September, 5.30 p.m. / Afterwards: **Talk with Sven Augustijnen and Giovanni Carmine, director Kunst Halle Sankt Gallen**

Art Lunch

Thursday, 18 August, 12 noon

Guided tour with subsequent lunch, prepared by Peter Regli, artist

Admission: CHF 25/members CHF 22; please sign up: info@k9000.ch

Workshops for school classes

Starting from the 15 August we offer free workshops in the exhibition (in German).

More information: www.k9000.ch/de/vermittlung/Schule/

Information to the press

High-resolution images can be found in the press kit on our website

(www.k9000.ch/en/information/press/). For further questions please contact Giovanni Carmine (carmine@k9000.ch) or Maren Brauner (brauner@k9000.ch).

The Kunst Halle Sankt Gallen is supported by St. Gallen City Council, Kulturförderung Kanton St.Gallen, Swisslos, Federal Office of Culture, Migros-Kulturprozent, Martel AG, St. Galler Tagblatt. The educational programme is made possible by Raiffeisen.

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Opening times:

Tuesday to Friday 12 noon–6 p.m.

Saturday and Sunday 11 a.m.–5 p.m.