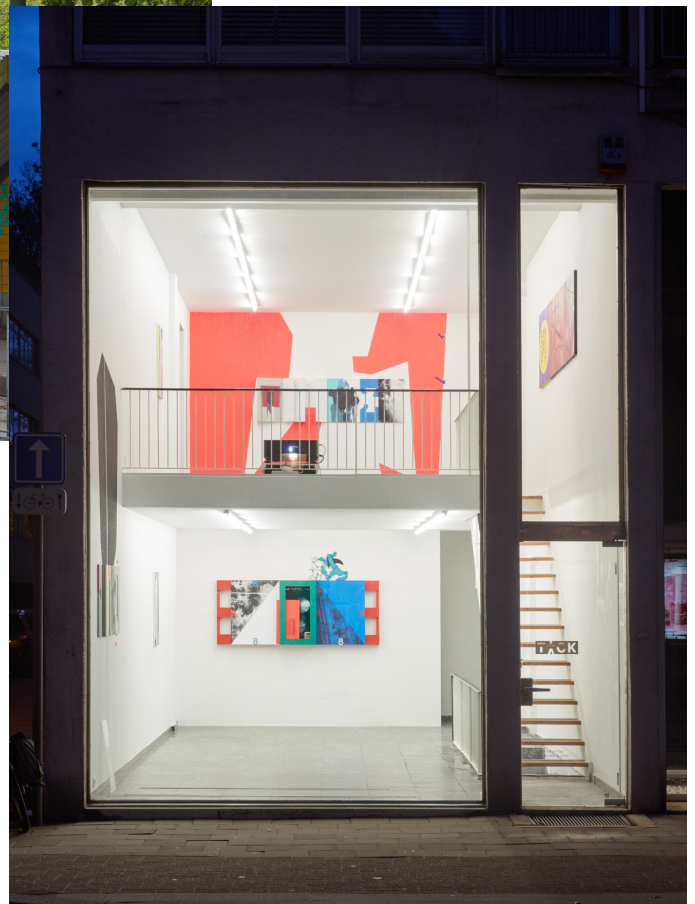


For the solo exhibition *PEOPLE* at TICK TACK, Narcisse Tordoir (Mechelen, 1954) will present a new body of work consisting of both in-situ and stand-alone pieces. In addition, a public artwork, in collaboration with Yvon Tordoir, will be unveiled in the heart of Antwerp as part of this presentation.



Narcisse Tordoir (Mechelen, 1954) is a visual artist who lives and works in Antwerp, Belgium. He works with various media, ranging from drawings, prints and paintings to photography and installations. Through this, seemingly effortless, versatility, Tordoir digs into historical references to painting, while at the same time placing himself outside of the medium. With an explicit focus on the act of perception, his well thought-out and complex image montages challenge the intersections between romanticism and reality, between history and current affairs.

Tordoir's practice spans over four decades with exhibitions at Paleis voor Schone Kunsten, Brussels; Venice Biennial, Belgian Pavilion; Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo; Centraal Museum, Utrecht; M HKA, Antwerp; Koninklijke Musea voor Schone Kunsten, Brussels; Museum Plantin Moretus, Antwerp; CC Strombeek; SMAK, Ghent; Roger Raveel Museum and Emergent, Veurne.

Tordoir's works are included in museum collections such as M HKA, Antwerp; Mu. ZEE, Ostend; SMAK, Ghent; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Kröller-Müller Museum, Otterlo and Centraal Museum, Utrecht.



One might begin, in preparing to assemble a text on the highly evolutionary work of Belgian artist Narcisse Tordoir (born in 1954), which spans over four decades, by stating a word which sets the tone, the key term that unravels self-generative paths and simultaneous weaves: the word “flow”. By observing Narcisse Tordoir’s complex work as a whole, we are confronted with a flooding river that tremendously runs. At times slowing down to meet other influxes and new elements, and then retreating, changing direction, opening up unusual paths, each time welcoming new and increasingly articulated ways of expression, as well as atypical iconographic entities. Far from creating futile tangles, fluidly, they manage to dance together in an aesthetic rhythm that takes the word to the word and decants not the pure form, but the image in all its historical complexity scrutinised and sniffed from the moment of its very formation, and then questioned from an ontological point of view until reaching the bustle of meanings that the modern world has assigned to it. Tordoir is certainly known for having broken pre-existing models, mainly his own; his productive ardour is punctuated by methodological deaths and rebirths that stimulate the internal energy of his research, always spurring new impulses of renewal. This is how his polyphonic choreographies, in which the chromatic language enters an intimate conversation with the abstract form, while the vaguely figurative elements filter current events through the remnants of representations belonging to various cultural spheres, are born. The group of works Z.T., among others, developed between 2019 and 2020 and presented in the exhibition, seem to make up a further evolutionary step in the artist’s prolific production. Indeed, compared to the early works in which fields of pure colour, geometry and enigmatic signs interacted, and to later works characterised by the collage technique, in which fragments were stacked one on top of the other and in which no hierarchy distinguished the abstract compositions from the colour fields, the spatial supports from the cut-out images, we can now observe a more mature methodological result, in which everything appears decidedly more relaxed, where colour has already shouted out its value amidst the intricacies full of hermeneutic references and each element, though vivid, carves out its own moment in the crowd: People.

Text by Domenico de Chirico

Translated from Italian by Colombe Fassin

Peoples, Peoples, Peoples

In the opening of Jimi Hendrix's cover of Elmore James' *Bleeding Heart*, he seems to mispronounce the words "Peoples, Peoples, Peoples" as double plurals. The lyrics of the original song are 'People, People, People' and Hendrix does use the correct form later on in his version, hinting on the fact that he was aware of this deviation. Was Hendrix addressing an entire population group, as the translation of the word *peoples* implies? Blues musicians were by no means averse to some boasting and big talk with a healthy dose of humour. In doing so they claimed their spot within the 'established' music culture. Therefore, "Peoples, Peoples, Peoples" is perhaps not only a sigh, which goes hand in hand with the blues, but also a relational statement.

In addition to his in-situ solo exhibition *PEOPLE* at TICK TACK, Narcisse Tordoir collaborated with graffiti artist Yvon Tordoir, better known as RiseOne. The result is a permanent work of art in the public space, a painted tram stop pavilion, strategically located opposite the art space designed by Léon Stynen, which already has its own specific facade. The tram stop across the street is part of a key transfer point for commuters in Antwerp. The front of the building highlights the exhibition title disguised as the DHL logo. This is a reference, among other things, to the transport of people as if they are goods. The backside depicts some creatures, waiting for the tram. Yvon Tordoir's waiting animals are in turn depicted against a graffiti-stained wall, possibly a nod to the *dirty* image of street art. In its entirety, the work functions as the stage of a theatre, commenting on its own ongoing play. Sometimes big gestures and bold winks are necessary to draw our attention to, for example, ourselves, the *people*. Will the commuters at this tram stop-turned-public artwork be aware of the decor they themselves are a part of? Or will the decor, the People painted by these two artists, merge into an unsuspecting crowd.

In any case, Narcisse Tordoir is referring to you and I, since he himself is standing solitarily across the street. The artworks of this exhibition oversee the graffiti spectacle from behind TICK TACK's high vitrine window. These witnesses, however, are neither silent nor compassionate. The artist translates his observations into a blatant sense of monumentality. Every now and then a good stirring of the pot can catch our gaze and hopefully inspire us. Tordoir's attractive visual language is a way of seducing us and sometimes give a slap on the wrist.

Some visual artists try to construct a kind of dam, a stillness or even rigidity regarding the extensive flow of images with which we are confronted. Tordoir once noted that for him reality is an endless source of images.¹ At TICK TACK, he is presenting himself as a *Luftmensch*, a man of smoke, unwilling to comply. A free mind that

doesn't rely solely on intellectual references but on the image itself which, ultimately, cannot be restrained by logical terminologies. He bombards us with razor sharp images of current affairs without, at any moment, the need to be discursive. For Tordoir, it's all about a kind of logic that only unfolds through images. Although derived from reality, these images are completely reconstructed. In this case, the *image as method* is of great importance since the artist's practice is not based on a concept but directly on an image. Tordoir is not producing manifestos and the original image must always undergo a transformation.

Most of the works are untitled because the use of language could distort our gaze. How can one come up with a name for something that is, and must remain, so fragmented. A title could diminish the work and turn it into something tangible, something Tordoir seems to want to counteract. Of course he offers a helping hand by using recognizable images, but places them next to formal geometrical forms. For example, the work (Untitled) which features the black wall painting: a man (with the divine name Divino!) is carrying a television set, next to the image of an androgynous model. That which could be attributed a literal meaning by the viewer is being disrupted by the artist through the jet-black, distorted shadow of a projection that hangs menacingly over the work. Ultimately, the work interlinks with a series of constructed variables, which might have a different meaning for each viewer. Narcisse Tordoir's variables cannot be captured in a clearly defined airtight language, he's after all a man of smoke, and invites us to be one as well. The image grabs him and not the other way around. His ego is subordinate. There's still room for *the other*.

Sometimes, the artist reveals his source material, which results in works that are a little more explicit, for example the work with the red pallet. From our conversations it became clear that an Iranian refugee once tried to cross the ocean on a pallet. The man didn't make it and his identity remained unknown until a journalist got hold of his mobile phone which had a *selfie* on it. Tordoir placed a negative print of the portrait in the middle of his work. The man is staring at us through some sort of filter. It's a fateful story and a raw image which sensitive viewers can censor with a red sliding panel. Meanwhile, George Orwell's 84, is dotted around the work as a warning. Linking this work to the graffiti across the street, Tordoir seems to envision a (clandestine) DHL service for people, more precisely emigrants. It might even be a more humane alternative than the current situation where people attempt to make the crossing in boats not fitted for sea. This is of course no solution, only a sigh reflected in an image. *Peoples, peoples, peoples* (my oh my).

Hilde Borgermans, May 2021

Translated from Dutch by Mathias Swings

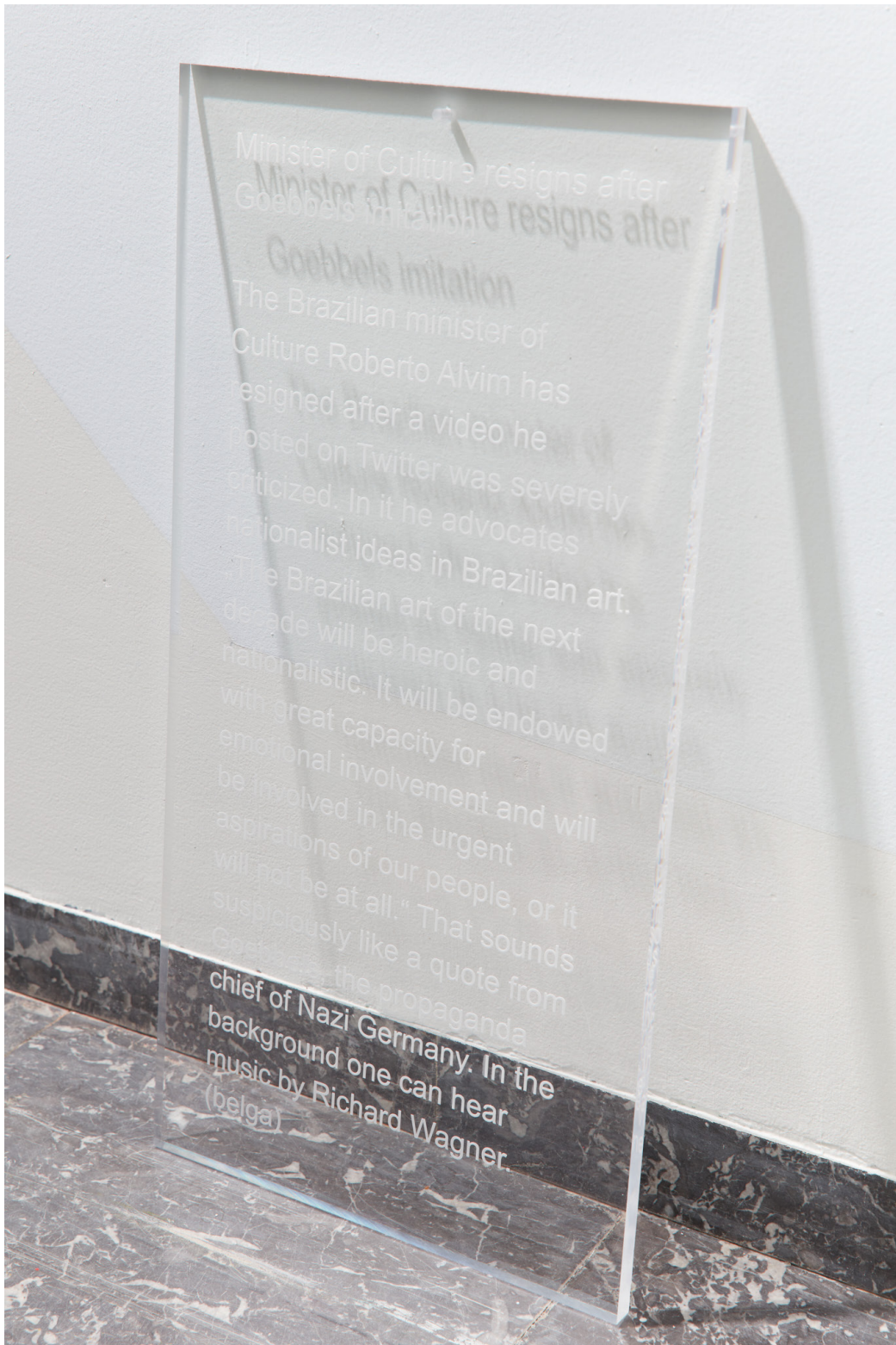


Z.T., 2020
 acrylic on wood, digital print, screenprint, spray paint, stainless steel, plexi, acrylic on wall
 60x165x7cm (black and white planes of variable dimensions)



Z.T., 2020

acrylic on wood, digital print, screenprint, spray paint, stainless steel, plexi, acrylic on wall
 60x165x7cm (black and white planes of variable dimensions)



Z.T. (detail), 2020

acrylic on wood, digital print, screenprint, spray paint, stainless steel, plexi, acrylic on wall
 60x165x7cm (black and white planes of variable dimensions)



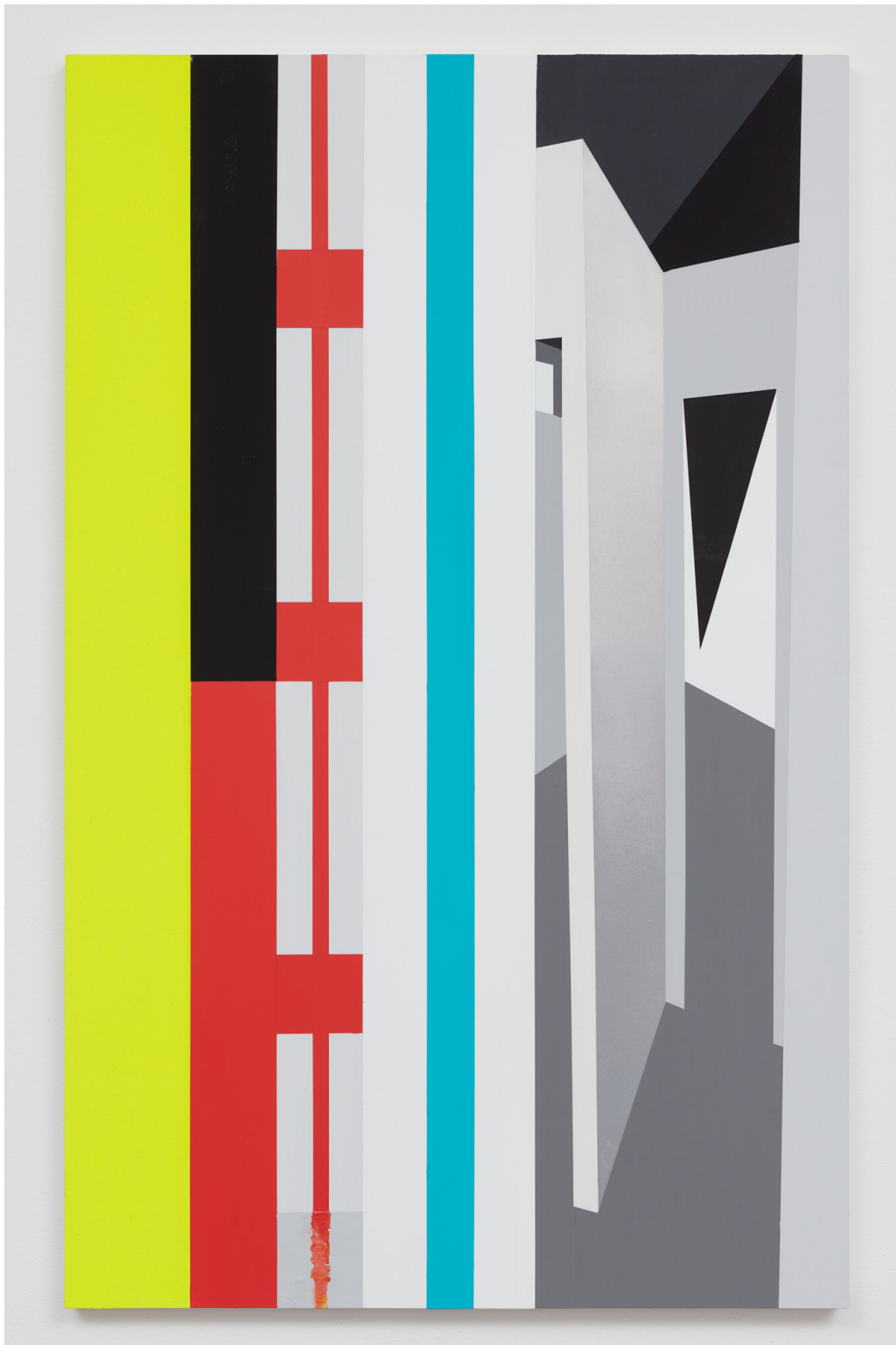
Z.T., 2020
acrylic on wood, digital print, spray paint
80x50cm



Z.T., 2020
 acrylic on wood, digital print, screenprint, lacquer, plexi glass, postal card
 110x200x28cm



Z.T., 2020
acrylic on wood, digital print, spray paint
80x320cm



Z.T., 2020
acrylic on wood, digital print, spray paint
80x50cm



Z.T., 2019
acrylic on wood, digital print, acrylic on wall
60x200x15cm (wood plane of variable dimensions)



Z.T., 2019
 acrylic on wood, digital print, acrylic on wall
 60x200x15cm (wood plane of variable dimensions)

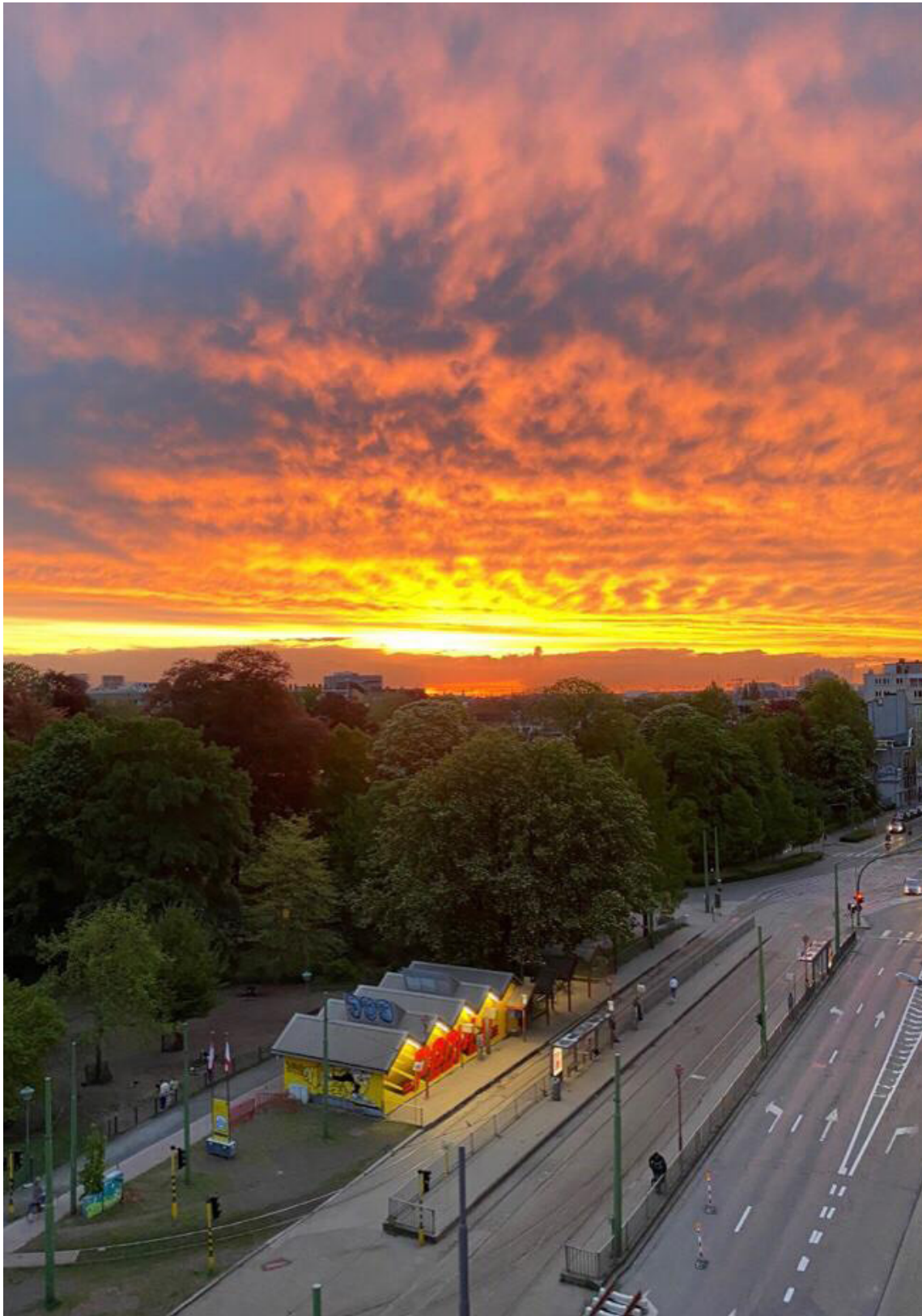














For the CINEMA TICK TACK program, Narcisse Tordoir invites Fernando Sánchez Castillo (Madrid, 1970) to screen moving image works on the occasion of the exhibition. The works will be screened into the public space from sunset until 01:00 AM.

Courtesy tegenboschvanvreden, Amsterdam



In his work Fernando Sánchez Castillo analyzes the relationship between art and (political) power. The artist presents us with a different view of, and interaction with, reality in his work. Sánchez Castillo often uses existing “traces” from the past as a starting point for his work and as material for his analysis and transformations. He does so—on the basis of strong social commitment—in a playful and humorous manner. Sánchez Castillo’s fascination with the history of his home country, with the civil war, the postwar era and the dictatorship, but also with today’s world, departs from a concern not only for the political and the revolutionary, but certainly for the social aspects of historical processes as well. Collective memory extends far beyond national boundaries and finds its way into the present. The artist plays with connotations that once sought images to match and, conversely, with images that now demand new connotations. The work of the Sánchez Castillo is an attempt to rewrite history, at least to make us aware of its complexity and traces, and also to show that history is a story that is constantly being constructed from the vantage point of power.

Fernando Sánchez Castillo was born in 1970 in Madrid (ES). He holds a degree in Fine Arts from the University of Complutense Madrid, and a MA degree from the Instituto de Estética Contemporánea, Universidad Autónoma, Madrid. He is a former member of the research group of ENSBA Paris. In 2005 and 2006 he was a resident at the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten in Amsterdam (NL). Sánchez Castillo participated in the Research Team of the United Nations Geneva, PIMPA Memory, Politics and Art Practices. He had solo exhibitions at a.o. Shchusev State Museum of Architecture, Moscow (2019, RU); Kunstraum Innsbruck (2016, AT); Sala de Arte Público Siqueiros, Polanco (2016, MX); Stedelijk Museum ’s-Hertogenbosch (2016, NL); Centro de Arte Dos de Mayo CA2M, Madrid (2015, ES); OK Centrum Linz (2014, AT); Rabo Kunstzone, Utrecht (2013, NL); Kunstpavillon München (2013, DE); Kunstverein Braunschweig (2012, DE); Matadero Madrid (2012, ES); CAC Malaga (2011, ES). Group shows at a.o. Riga Biennial (2018, LT); National Center for Contemporary Arts. Moscow (2016, RU); Today Art Museum Beijing (2016, CN); Biennale Gherdëina (2016, IT); Centraal Museum Utrecht (2016, NL); Manifesta 11 Zürich (2016, CH); Albertinum Dresden (2015, DE); Palais de Tokyo (2015, FR); MOTA Tokyo (2014, JP); Goteborg Biennial (2013, SE); De Appel Amsterdam (2013, NL) and MAC Marseille (2013, FR). Works by Fernando Sánchez Castillo are part of international public and private collections.



Rich Cat Dies of Heart Attack in Chicago
2004

Genoveva Rückert on *Rich Cat Dies of Heart Attack in Chicago*:

“The toppling of a monument, an instance of political iconoclasm, denotes the politically motivated removal or destruction of symbols of rule or portraits of sovereigns, usually in connection with the overthrow of a ruler or the collapse of a political system. In the long history of iconoclasm, the goal has always been to make visible symbolically the loss of power or to lastingly remove the symbols of a defunct regime from public view. In the video performance *Rich Cat Dies of Heart Attack in Chicago*, the head of a statue is abused in a number of ways, accompanied by classical music. The individual attacks on the symbolic fallen dictator develop a very immediate comic affect, the work providing a humorous commentary on the symbolic power of monuments, which are either worshipped or also destroyed as proxies of those they represent. The quirky title is a reference to a headline after the coup d'état in São Paulo in December 1968 and refers to the fact that the loss of freedom is possible merely through censorship and the absurd. In the friction between art and society, art often takes the form of social counter-draft and barb, also defining its own responsibility and mission as such – no longer in the realm of high culture or subculture, however, with the resulting barriers to access, but instead as entertainment on a high level. Is this a wrong-headed, or perhaps actually a viable strategy that art uses for its own purposes? Humour as a legitimate means and viable strategy of mediation can be found in many works by Fernando Sánchez Castillo ()”

in: Más allá | Monuments and Other Coincidences, exhibition catalogue for solo exhibition Fernando Sánchez Castillo in Centro de Arte Dos de Mayo CA2M, Madrid (2015, ES)

Courtesy tegenboschvanvreden, Amsterdam



Pegasus Dance
2007

In the work *Pegasus Dance* water cannons are rid of their violent image. Their original function is given a new twist: the trucks fall passionately in love with each other. To the sounds of classical music, two water cannons twirl about each other, as though performing a mating ritual, while festively spouting water. As the sun slowly sets, the sky turns a painterly orange. While the water cannon is meant to keep others at a distance, here it tries to lure seductively.

Tactica
2010

“Hands cautiously feel their way across the surface of the sculpture. Gentle fingers follow the contours of the face, the forehead, the lines of the eyebrows, down the nose from its bridge. There they remain still for a moment and then continue, moving along with the undulations of the mouth and chin. Calmly, the camera follows them. For his film *Tactica* (2010) the Spanish artist Fernando Sanchez Castillo (1970) invited a group of blind people interested in politics and history to feel, and thereby to ‘see’, monuments and portraits of the dictator Franco. Bronze equestrian statues, wax images, busts: everyone talked about them, but nobody wanted to have them. Anything reminiscent of the dictator has been removed from public space in recent years and stored in dark warehouses and army depots. Some of the blind people, who lost their sight at a later age, could remember the statues from the past; others, who never were able to see, discovered what the dictator looked like through their sense of touch. The film came about through a complicated process, involving a great deal of institutional censorship. The result is an intense account of the encounter with this Spanish dictator, but also with abstract ideas such as power, time, taboos and memory.”

in: press release tegenboschvanvreden, for solo exhibition *Guernica Syndrome* with works by Fernando Sánchez Castillo, 2010

Courtesy tegenboschvanvreden, Amsterdam





Fernando Sánchez Castillo
Rich Cat Dies of Heart Attack in Chicago, 2004
video, 22'23", 1/5 + 2AP
Courtesy tegenboschvanvreden, Amsterdam



Fernando Sánchez Castillo
Pegasus Dance, 2007
video, 12'14", 4/7 + 2AP
Courtesy tegenboschvanvreden, Amsterdam



Fernando Sánchez Castillo
Táctica, 2010
video, 17'02", 2/5 + 2AP
Courtesy tegenboschvanvreden, Amsterdam



Yvon Tordoir
Mickey
2021
paper mache and acrylic

Edition of 9

Narcisse Tordoir and Yvon Tordoir
PEOPLE
2021
screenprint on Olin regular natural white, 400gr
50x60cm

Edition of 25



Ronald Stoops
PEOPLE
2021
photographic print
A2

Edition of 25

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