

Press release

Title: The Boar and the Shepherd

Artist: Tom Hallet

Venue: Museum of Contemporary Art, M HKA, Antwerp
(Leuvenstraat 32, 2000 Antwerpen)

Opening hours:

From 04/08-27/08/2023 Tuesday-Sunday, 11am-18pm

Curator: Liliane Dewachter

Photographer: Ilse Raps

Writer: Koi Persyn

The exhibition is made possible through the generous support of M HKA

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Instagram tags: @mhka (venue) @tomhallet (artist) @i_raps (photographer) @koi_persyn (writer)
curator has no instagram

Press Release

For INBOX (M HKA) Belgian artist Tom Hallet presents a new installation consisting of a series of thirteen drawings and a sculpture, in which two primordial gods battle it off against each other, or... together. They change shape in an eternal cycle of destruction and re-creation, like shapeshifters, navigating a pitch-black atmosphere on the eve of a catastrophic event. A boar and a shepherd, both existing in similar surroundings but are opposites. One is wild, the other tries to keep order. But at the end of the day, who looks after the others' safety?

In a wilful way, Hallet interweaves queer theory and generational trauma. Using a world-building full of complex symbols, he reaches for a recognisable, but never fully reliable, humanity.

Tom Hallet (°1990, Brussels) has a multidisciplinary practice and mainly makes drawings and sculptures, two media that he connects in a constant dialogue with each other and with the viewer. By building a visual world in which mythology, queerness and personal chronicles merge, Hallet examines history (as we think we know it) and tries to introduce an inclusive narrative.

Hallet graduated with a Master in Fine Arts at **Luca_School of Arts (2014)**. After graduating, he was selected for **Currents, Marres Maastricht (2015)** and **Prijs van de Vrienden v/h SMAK (2016)**. Hallet is, together with three other artists, the founder of **SOIL Collective (2016-2020)**, a

curatorial platform. The collective has curated 10 exhibitions, including Tom Hallet's first solo show titled **Sincerely Yours (2019)**. He participated in his first gallery show at **STEMS Gallery (2020)**, Brussels, and was selected for a residency at **Morpho (fka AAIR), Antwerp (2020-2021)**. He is a *studio assistant to Laure Prouvost*, and has worked for her for over three years.

After taking part in **Generation Brussels (2020)**, during the Brussels Gallery Weekend, he presented his work at Morpho and took part in **Regenerate, a group exhibition at Wiels (2021)**, Brussels. Two drawings were purchased by the **Flemish government for the M-Leuven collection**. He completed a **residency at M-Leuven (2022)**, which resulted in a solo presentation and a performance at the museum.

In 2023, Hallet presented his work at **Plus.One Gallery & Sofie van de Velde Gallery**, and currently has a solo exhibition at **INBOX, M HKA**, in august. In September 2023 Tom Hallet will have a solo exhibition at Pizza Gallery, Antwerp, and programmed by Netwerk Aalst, Aalst, for a duo-show in March 2024, together with Antonia Brown.

Exhibition text by Koi Persyn

INBOX

Tom Hallet

The Boar and the Shepherd

04.08 – 27.08.2023

My dearest T. H. Sanglier,

I hope this letter finds you well,

Last night, I slept through an odd dream. The illusive afterimages and -tastes must have been crossing my mind at slumber or wake, dusk or dawn, as visual vestiges. Nightly, I dream in first person, but with hindsight, my proper body appeared as the lucid specter, wandering past a desolate horizon. My flesh encountered a constellation of multi-eyed birch that obstructed the only passage from O. to I. Under the X- and V-shaped trunks, I discerned a human chimera that looked strangely familiar to me. The sleepy sun set, or rose, and my shadowy replica grew gargantuan. It struck me that I could still/already witness a glimpse of the celestial zodiac. The excruciating heat ignited the ether to dance to the rhythm of a snoring, sultry breeze. Opaque fumes oppressed my bust with a feverish gravitational force, luring me closer into the mortal (portal):

I. A wild boar - his eye-balls glare with fire suffus'd with blood; 1

A wild body – its eyeballs have bruised brown irises that strangle milky pupils. The skull discloses an eruptive ravine, where two tectonic bones unveil a fontanel of cerebral magma.

II. His neck shoots up a thick-set thorny wood; 2

The sequence of concussive earthquakes is immortalized in rippling wrinkles. Its ear's helix is slit, tinting its scalp ruby red. Erosive salt trails are the sediments of facial estuarian deltas.

III. His bristled back a trench impal'd appears, 3

Rope-burns unearths a tamed larynx, while its Adam's apple crawls as stagnant as a glacier.

IV. And stands erected, like a field of spears; 4

Sweaty osmosis forges dew drops upon its scarred skin. Purple lips harness mutilated tusks.

V. Froth fills his chaps, he sends a grunting sound, 5

It must have fallen from the firmament onto this bedrock, just like the airborne Phaëton, sun's son of Helios, or Icarus, Daedalus' lastborn, buried in melted wax and burning feathers.

VI. And part he churns, and part befoams the ground, 6

Clavicles armor a concave chest like a robin that spreads its wings. Its sternum sinks in the bodily massif as a valley that gathers briny rain. When licking the liquid from its thorax, I sense a soft zephyr that blows from a gaping wound - its mouth - striking my ear.

VII. And Jove's own thunder from his mouth he drove..., 7

Frequent freckles, bruises, lesions, and hickeys are connected by incised crevices, like one would draw star signs on celestial maps. Withered wounds are sheltered by red-hued bark.

VIII. ... From hence the boar was rous'd, and sprung amain, 8

The weary wind is subtly scented with wilted wild pansy and moldy menacing lavender.

IX. Like lightning sudden, on the warrior train; 9

In a faraway distance, a barn owl distresses the serene silence with screeching sirens.

X. Beats down the trees before him, shakes the ground. 10

Its abdomen is cut through the navel, draining its interior currents. Birds of prey are circling in orbits above our bewildered heads, as they assemble for a promethean torment.

XI. The forest echoes to the crackling sound; 11

The pulse in its half-hard genitals is the only bodily relic of its arrhythmic heartbeat. Its bristly pubes resemble a coarse boar's coat, unfurling gradually from the pelvis onto its entire skin.

XII. Shout the fierce youth, and clamours ring around. 12

Scars adorn its lower limbs and X-shaped knees as a palimpsest of tragic trauma and grey grief.

O. All stood with their protended spears prepar'd

Ashes of a mercurial phoenix lay as a gossamer stratum of mycelium over the pale membrane of the wild body –

Sincerely yours,

K. J. Persyn

Title by sequence and credits list

1. *Installation view “The Boar and the Shepherd” + “Snowy View - 41.296111 N 105.515000 W” (birch wood, metal, latex, human-animal hair, rope, flowers), 2023, MHKA, Antwerp, photography by Ilse Raps*
2. *Installation view “The Boar and the Shepherd” + “Snowy View - 41.296111 N 105.515000 W” (birch wood, metal, latex, human-animal hair, rope, flowers), 2023, MHKA, Antwerp, photography by Ilse Raps*
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6. **“To S. Ahmed”**, (pencil on paper), 2023 75x57, MHKA, Antwerp, photography by Ilse Raps
7. *Installation view “The Boar and the Shepherd” + detail “Snowy View - 41.296111 N 105.515000 W” (birch wood, metal, latex, human-animal hair, rope, flowers), 2023 + **taxidermy barn owl, no title**, MHKA, Antwerp, photography by Ilse Raps*
8. **“To A. McKinney”** (pencil on paper), 2023, 75x57, MHKA, Antwerp, photography by Ilse Raps
9. *Installation view “The Boar and the Shepherd” + detail “Snowy View - 41.296111 N 105.515000 W”(birch wood, metal, latex, human-animal hair, rope, flowers), 2023 + **“To O’Shea Sibley”** (pencil on paper), 2023, 75x57, MHKA, Antwerp, photography by Ilse Raps*
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14. *Installation view “The Boar and the Shepherd” + detail “Snowy View - 41.296111 N 105.515000 W” (birch wood, metal, latex, human-animal hair, rope, flowers), 2023 + **taxidermy robin, no title**, MHKA, Antwerp, photography by Ilse Raps*

15. *Installation view “The Boar and the Shepherd” + detail “Snowy View - 41.296111 N 105.515000 W” (birch wood, metal, latex, human-animal hair, rope, flowers), 2023 + “S. Ahmed”, (pencil on paper), 2023 75x57, MHKA, Antwerp, photography by Ilse Raps*
16. **“To R.W. Rogers Jr.”**, (pencil on paper), 2023 75x57, + **taxidermy robin, no title**, MHKA, Antwerp, photography by Ilse Raps
17. **“To W. Ninja”**, (pencil on paper), 2023 75x57, MHKA, Antwerp, photography by Ilse Raps
18. *Installation view “The Boar and the Shepherd” + detail “Snowy View - 41.296111 N 105.515000 W” (birch wood, metal, latex, human-animal hair, rope, flowers), 2023 + “To R.W. Rogers Jr.”*, (pencil on paper), 2023 75x57, + **taxidermy robin, no title**, MHKA, Antwerp, photography by Ilse Raps
19. **“To O’Shea Sibley”**, (pencil on paper), 2023 75x57, MHKA, Antwerp, photography by Ilse Raps
20. *Installation view “The Boar and the Shepherd” + detail “Snowy View - 41.296111 N 105.515000 W” (birch wood, metal, latex, human-animal hair, rope, flowers), 2023 + taxidermy barn owl, no title*, MHKA, Antwerp, photography by Ilse Raps