

KIOSK

EXHIBITS

Danny Devos

*Fantastic Voyage
through the
Body of an Artist*

13.04 – 09.06.2024

EN |

“I wanted to create works of art that have the same impact as a car accident: something that you don't forget, that enters your body and stays in your head, but that you don't do anything with.”

Danny Devos, interview with Ory Dessau,
The Hague, February 18, 2024



With *Fantastic Voyage through the Body of an Artist*, KIOSK presents an exhibition by one of the most idiosyncratic Belgian artists: Danny Devos, aka DDV.

DDV's oeuvre is characterized by his perseverance and versatility. Over the past forty-five years he has given 174 performances, had twenty-nine solo exhibitions, and been in 123 group exhibitions around the world, as well as appearing not only as a subject but as a character in various publications. Now, to KIOSK, he brings a selection of historical works and shows his most recent body of work for the first time.

Fantastic Voyage through the Body of an Artist cannot simply be read as a retrospective or an overview exhibition. The human body is the common thread: that of the artist using his body as an instrument for his art, but also that of the viewer who is mentally and physically stimulated and challenged by the artworks.

Until Devos got seriously injured in a bicycle accident on July 13, 2013, he used his own body to realize confrontational performances, with or without the presence of spectators. While he has rarely documented his performances in the past, for several years now he has been making models of some of his most evocative actions and installations. These “bonsai” sculptures, made with new semi-digital techniques such as 3D printing, laser cutting, and CNC milling, represent an unprecedented approach to documenting/reconstructing performance art. These works have not been exhibited before.

Devos has also been conducting in-depth research into the possibilities and limitations of artificial intelligence by using AI text-to-image machine learning models to

generate new images by entering text. Sometimes the text is simply his name, “danny devos,” sometimes complex phrases that refer to historical or current events. He then translates the AI-generated images thus obtained into sculptural objects using advanced 3D technologies.

On the occasion of the exhibition at KIOSK, Devos used various AI text-to-image generators to create twenty-three posters, as absurd as they are colorful, of fictive ‘posters for an exhibition by AI artist Danny Devos’ in famous contemporary art centers and museums (Centre Pompidou, Tate Modern, MoMA, etc.). Two thousand copies of those posters have been disseminated around the walls of Brussels, Ghent, Antwerp, Rotterdam, and Amsterdam.

This interest in technological developments can be read as a new chapter in the existential search for the individual's human condition by a child of the “no-future generation”—within the context of a society that is developing systems that determine its future faster than ever.

In *Fantastic Voyage through the Body of an Artist* Devos resolutely does not use exhibition props, pedestals, or walls. He places his works on furniture that he could find on or around the academy campus, including the KIOSK information desk. The exhibition is accompanied by a six-hour original soundtrack (to be listened to in the exhibition space or online during KIOSK opening hours from 12 noon to 6 pm) created by two visual artists: Zeger Velters and Jakke Jalink. They delved into more than forty years of collected audio material from DDV and Club Moral, creating a sound work of selected recordings and releases layered with their own music.



Birth(+)Facts(*)Future(∞)

+ 20.IX.1959 – Danny Devos is born in Vilvoorde.

* 16.VIII.1966 – The US science fiction adventure film *Fantastic Voyage*, directed by Richard Fleischer and scripted by Harry Kleiner, premieres. The film is about a submarine crew that shrinks to microscopic size and ventures into the body of an injured scientist to repair the damage to his brain. (nr. 1)

* 11.I.1979 – Danny Devos realizes his very first performance as a first-year sculpture student at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Ghent. For a Sculpture Department party, he creates an installation at the entrance of the building—a mandatory passageway for the partygoers. He uses chipboard to build false walls and a floor. He lies under the floor so that it rests on his body. A window in the floor gives a view of his bandage-covered head and chest, to which he has previously inflicted wounds. After three hours he stops the performance due to the aggression of some fellow students. In 2021, DDV will make a *bonsai* sculpture of the performance on the occasion of the so-called Brievenproject at KIOSK. (nr. 2)

+ 28.III.1979 – Danny Devos realizes his second performance, *Thriller*, at his home in Ghent (Prinsenhof 3): he tries to stand against a wall for as long as possible, with a razor blade pressed between his lips and the wall. No spectators are present. He makes a photo of the performance, which he will much later use to make bas-reliefs with his 3D printer and CNC milling machine. (nr. 3)

* 20.06.1980 – DDV buys a recent copy of *Qui? Police*, a French crime magazine, in Paris. DDV decides to recreate the images of the criminals on the cover of the magazine with two Polaroid portrait photos of himself. To make the portraits as identical as possible to the originals (facial expressions and lighting), he obtains help from the Belgian friends with whom he has gone to Paris to stay at Galerie Diagonale, a space specialized in performance art. During his one-week stay he realizes four performances. (nr. 4)

* 27.IX.1980 – DDV takes part in a Dutch performance festival at the Willem II Factory in Den Bosch. As the Belgian band Simpletones (formed by Johan De Smet and Rudy Cabie) play their repetitive music, he, with his chest bare, pulls a heavy stone across the ground in the shape of an infinity sign. After twenty minutes the performance *Eternity Forever* is stopped by the intervention of a spectator who throws a glass of beer over an electric socket, causing all power to fail. Forty-two years later, DDV will transform a model railway into a sculpture suggestive of this performance from 1980. He will show it next to a video of the performance. (nr. 5)

* 28.XI.1980 – DDV performs his work *Hear/See* in two rooms of De Beyerd in Breda, the Netherlands. Visitors to the exhibition see slides of industrial landscapes in a first room and hear loud monotonous music in the next.

The door of that second room constantly opens and closes again so that only a few people at a time can briefly see the performance. Illuminated by a spotlight, DDV is strapped to a table that he is single-handedly rotating 360°. In 2021, DDV will create the *bonsai* sculpture *Hear/See* to evoke the Breda performance. (nr. 6)

* 19.06.1982 – DDV graduates from the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Ghent with a photocopied book *Performan-DDV*. Twenty-nine years later, in 2011, he will publish a luxurious catalog of his performances at his own expense, *Performan-DDV. 1979-2011. 160 Performances*, which is for sale at KIOSK. (nr. 7)

* 02.XI.1983 – DDV opens his solo exhibition *Privémilicia* in the space of Club Moral in Antwerp (Kattenberg 122). Two works being shown there for the first time, *Knuppel* and *Hot Seat*, will later be shown at KIOSK. The works belong to a series of self-made objects that simultaneously pass as functional objects and as sculptures. In the eighth issue of the magazine *Force Mental*, which he publishes with Anne-Mie Van Kerckhoven (AMVK) and which “*deals with extremes*,” he explains his motivation behind the event: “*My victims, I bring You images of hate and terror. On You I spit. Here is the atrocity exhibition. Here is the private army from DDV, which will pull Your eyes out of Your head and fills up the empty sockets with terribleness. Enjoy!*” The electric chair is described as follows: “*Blue with rusty iron, thick cable for a lot of electric current in greasy, shaking, vomiting bodies.*” (nr. 8 & 9)

* 13.VII.1984 – DDV visits the Fort of Breendonk with the Australian industrial musician, filmmaker, and hairstylist Paul Hurst. Breendonk was used as a concentration camp by the Germans during the Second World War. With Hurst he creates various sound performances with portable radios and cassette players, including in the room where the fort’s Nazi commander, Philipp Johann Adolf Schmitt, tortured detainees. There are two large sharp wooden wedges on the floor. After the performance, DDV will make a sculpture of a chair in metal with two sharp wedges: *Pro-Breendonk*. In the fifteenth issue of the magazine *Force Mental*, DDV will place the reproduction of the chair next to a short text: “*Pro-Breendonk is another chair for a favorable quest. Major Schmitt, who had himself ordered the decoration of the torture-room, was brought back there during this trial, he had only one remark: the wooden wedge, on which the prisoners hanging from the bulley were dropped when they refused to confess, was “a little too high.*” (nr. 10)

* 01.I.1985 – DDV publishes the first version of the calendar *Birth(+)Fact(x)Death(-)*. After accidentally discovering a few years earlier that Peter Sutcliffe (aka the Yorkshire Ripper) and Marquis de Sade were both born on June 2, DDV decides to compile information about people who interest him and events that are meaningful to him. Until 1993, DDV will offer a new printed version of this calendar for sale every year through Club Moral. DDV will continue to add to the calendar daily, even after 1993. Its internet version will come to boast more than 35,000 web pages (<https://>

EXHIBITS

Danny Devos

Fantastic Voyage through the Body of an Artist

13.04 – 09.06.2024

www.birthfactdeathcalendar.net). For DDV, *Birth(+)
Fact(x)Death(-)* will be a kind of encyclopedia and
source of inspiration for acquiring new knowledge.
He will regularly use the data from the calendar in his
projects: for example, he will associate AI-generated
images with events from the calendar. (nr. 11)

* 04.VI.1987 – DDV opens his solo exhibition *IN
MEMORY OF ED GEIN, AMERICA'S MOST
BIZARRE MURDERER* in Ruimte Morguen, in
Antwerp. The title of the exhibition refers to the
collector's item book by Robert H. Gollmar: *Edward
Gein, America's Most Bizarre Murderer*. Robert H.
Gollmar is the judge who convicted Ed Gein in 1957
for the murder of Bernice Worden. Ed Gein adorned
himself in garments he made from the skin of exhumed
female corpses. Several horror stories and films are
based on his actions, such as *Psycho*, *The Silence of
the Lambs* and *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre*. For
the exhibition in Antwerp, DDV is inspired by Ed
Gein and, among other things, creates rubber gloves
modeled on his own hands. The work is subsequently
reproduced in a monograph about the murderer.
(nr. 12)

* 27.VI.1987 – The solo exhibition *IN MEMORY OF ED
GEIN*, at Ruimte Morguen, ends. One work from the
exhibition has attracted the attention of Antwerp art
collector Frank Heirman. *Tower of Crime* is a metal
prison tower composed of true crime books that DDV
owns. He has been collecting books about serial killers
and criminals for several years in Great Britain and
the United States, where they are published much
more often than in Belgium. The tower is the height
of DDV itself (175 cm). Two locks make the books
inaccessible. To respond positively to Heirman's
unexpected request and at the same time not let go of
his rare and painstakingly collected publications, DDV
decides to replace them in the tower with a series of
detective books. For the exhibition in **KIOSK**, DDV
has once again made a selection from the books in
his private collection: biographies about famous and
lesser-known mass and serial killers, as well as non-
fiction novels such as *In Cold Blood* by US author
Truman Capote. (nr. 13)

* 17.VI.1989 – DDV's solo exhibition *BELGIUM'S
MOST BIZARRE ARTIST* opens in Ruimte Morguen in
Antwerp. Serial killers Peter Kürten, Edward Paisnel
(aka the Beast of Jersey) and Erzsébet Báthory (aka
Die Blutfrau) play a central role in the exhibition in
which DDV presents a series of sculptures activated by
motors for the first time, including *The Black Dahlia*.
The work evokes the murder of Elizabeth Short in
January 1947 in Los Angeles, California. The body of
the young woman, who was referred to in the media as
Black Dahlia, was found in a park, badly beaten and
cut in half. Her mouth was cut open from ear to ear.
The murder has not been solved to date and continues
to inspire many visual artists, filmmakers, writers and
even video game makers. DDV shows two photos by
Elizabeth Short in wooden frames. While he originally
used a record player to move the blades for the two
photos, a few years later - after the player broke down
- he used a regular motor with a spinning disc on
which a photo of the legs of the investigators during

the inspection of the crime scene, where blood was not
found anywhere. (nr. 14)

* 25.X.1991 – DDV and AMVK open the double
exhibition *True Crime Art/Een bloem van smarten was
haar mond* at Galerie Transit in Leuven, with portraits
of famous US and English serial killers: David
Berkowitz (aka Son of Sam), Dean Corll (aka the
Candyman), John Christie (aka the Strangler from 10
Rillington Place), Neville George Clevely Heath, and
Ted Bundy. Two of the works will later be shown at
KIOSK. Portrait of a Sadist shows the face of Neville
Heath, the English murderer who killed two young
women in the summer of 1946 and was executed the
same year at London's Pentonville Prison. To engrave
the portrait on a one-centimeter-thick, one-meter-
squared metal plate, DDV uses the image on the cover
of Paul Hill's book of the same name, *Portrait of a
Sadist* (nr. 15) The title of the second work, *Burn
Bundy Burn*, refers to the phrase chanted by hundreds
of people who gathered at the Florida State Prison on
January 24, 1989, to celebrate the execution of Ted
Bundy. Before his execution, Bundy confessed to more
than thirty murders, but it has been estimated that
he killed more than a hundred women. Bundy often
approached his victims in public and asked them for
help. Once in his car (usually a Volkswagen Beetle)
they were beaten unconscious, handcuffed, and taken
away. For his portrait, DDV brings together the hood
of a Volkswagen Beetle with a wooden evocation of
an electric chair, the device used to execute Bundy.
The back of the chair shows a laser-printed photo of a
deceased Bundy on the dissection table. (nr. 16)

* 27.VIII.1995 – On the last day of the exhibition *De
Gemartelde Tijd (The Martyred Time)* in the Chapel
of the Romanesque Gate in Leuven, DDV performs
*Marteling van de Heilige Erasmus (The Martyrdom
of Saint Erasmus)*. The performance is based on a
painting by the Leuven painter Dieric Bouts from
around 1459. The audience enters the space through
a glass door. Then DDV ties a thin rope to the outside
of the door, lies down on the ground and ties his feet
to two posts on the sidewalk. He swallows the other
end of the rope. The performance stops when someone
opens the door from the inside. (nr. 17)

* 05.IX.1996 – DDV opens the solo exhibition *Daders
van Dodingen (Perpetrators of Death)* at Annette
De Keyser gallery in Antwerp. DDV presents the
eponymous work *Daders van Dodingen*: 200 metal
frames showing the eyes of male and female Belgian
murderers from 1959 (the year of his birth). The title
of the work is also that of a scientific study published

- in 1990 by forensic psychiatrist Jean-Pierre De Waele into the context of murders, aimed at assessing difficult situations more quickly and possible prevention. To realize this work, DDV has collected all published photos of murderers that have ever appeared in the four newspapers preserved in their entirety on microfilm in the Antwerp Library: *De Gazet Van Antwerpen*, *De Volksgazet*, *Het Nieuwsblad*, and *Het Laatste Nieuws*. The BRT broadcast a 21-minute report about the project in September 1996: the viewer can follow a silent DDV during the months-long creation process. This ranges from DDV's search for photos of criminals on the microfilms, completing a personal database with information about the murderers, editing the photos in Photoshop, printing the edited images and making the metal frames, to installing the 200 frames in the gallery. After the end of the exhibition in Antwerp, DDV decides to reuse the rough wooden planks of the installation as storage and transport boxes for the frames. (nr. 18)
- * 01.II.1999 – DDV presents *DEVOS KUNAVICHAYANONT* in the *Alter Ego* exhibition in Bangkok. The work is the result of his collaboration with the Thai artist Sutee Kunavichayanont during his residency at Silpakorn University. The work consists of two A4 sized books, the pages of which are filled with a computer-generated wordlist with all available English words that appear in the sum of all letters of the family name of the two artists. The first book has 2000 pages, the second 2184 pages. There are only two copies of the artist's book: each artist owns one set of books. In KIOSK, the books are presented on an old school desk from the academy, in a semi-closed space composed of original wooden doors from the Clinical and Outpatient Institute designed by the architect Louis Cloquet. There is a canvas hanging on the central door showing the bottom of Danny Devos' face. DDV made the work in Thailand, using gold leaf that is available in Buddhist temples for believers to cover the statues present. (nr. 19)
- * 07.V.2008 – DDV presents, in the context of the group exhibition *Pop-Eye* curated by Danny Ilegems, Vincent Loozen, and Mauro Pawlowski at the Old Prison of Hasselt, a series of four photos taken in four hours in his house in Borgerhout on April 10 of the same year with the help of hairdresser Lieve Noels and photographer Ima Wuytack. After growing his hair for about two years, DDV mimics the appearance of the four main leaders of the Red Army Faction (Ulrike Marie Meinhof, Gudrun Ensslin, Andreas Baader, and Jan-Carl Raspe) in order to become Ulrike Meinfuchs, Gudrun Fuchslein, AndreVos Baader and Jan-Carl Voske. The portraits will later be shown at KIOSK next to the snapshots that AMVK took during the performance and reproductions of the photographic portraits of the four RAF leaders. Three of these were taken in prison using a camera smuggled inside in their lawyer's underwear. (nr. 20)
- * 13.VII.2013 – DDV is seriously injured in a bicycle accident. He loses confidence in his body, which he has used for years to realize confrontational performances. He will almost never perform again.
- * 12.XII.2021 – DDV uses his first name and last name without capital letters (*danny devos*), for the first time as a prompt for two digital images generated by an AI machine-learning model. Over the next nine months he will repeat this operation almost every day to generate a maximum of three images per day: usually resulting in abstract spaces. The last image dates from August 8, 2022. The next day the AI model will “realize” that Danny Devos is a person and that it should generate a portrait rather than images of three-dimensional spaces. Between December 12, 2021 and August 8, 2023, all resulting digital images will be published daily on one of DDV's Instagram accounts (@textoimage). During that period, DDV starts using software to convert the two-dimensional images into three-dimensional files to be printed on the 3D printer he has at home and which he considers an extension of his own body. (nr. 21, 22 & 11)
- * 21.IX.2023 – DDV sends a mailing to his contacts with the subject: *Rencontrez Aviette, 18 to 20 ans*. A link has been added to the email to a YouTube video of a dancing robot, preceded by a short text in French: “*Rencontrez LA JEUNE AVETTE, dite AVIETTE, — 18 to 20 ans, sportive, rieuse, délurée, ne craint rien, ne respecte rien, ne songe qu'à s'amuser, leste, souple, étourdie, imprudente, effrontément moqueuse.*” These lines are a fragment of a 1921 film script by the French writer Romain Rolland in collaboration with Belgian artist Frans Masereel: *La Révolte des Machines ou La Pensée Déchaînée*. The fragile robot Aviette will only be activated at KIOSK when DDV himself is present in the exhibition space. When DDV turns *Aviette* on using an app on his smartphone, she does a welcome dance to a piece by Belgian pioneer noise band Etat Brut, *Une machine qui reproduit mes paroles*. Then she dances to *Main Title* from the soundtrack of the film *Rosemary's Baby* by Roman Polanski. Then she stops and starts dancing again to *Smells Like Bambola*, a mashup of Nirvana vs Patty Pravo by Ricordi Bastardi. Then she stops again and performs a final dance to *Mekano* by SPK. Mekano happens to be the name of the model building lab at the Artesis Hogeschool/ University of Antwerp that DDV founded and operated for fourteen years. Through Mekano he learned to work with 3D printers and CNC machines. (nr. 23)
- * 08.03.2024 – The twenty-three different *Posters for Exhibitions by AI Artist Danny Devos* appear for the first time in the streets of Antwerp. Each poster has been printed in an edition of 100 copies. In the following weeks, the posters are also pasted in Ghent, Brussels, Rotterdam, and Amsterdam. The name of Danny Devos as publisher is hidden in the design of the poster, as well as a QR code to DDV's website. The images were generated by an AI machine-learning model based on the prompt “*Poster for an exhibition by AI Artist Danny Devos at + name of a renowned museum or center for contemporary art.*” DDV carefully selected twenty-three images from the dozens he had generated by the AI. (nr. 25)
- * 13.04.2024 – The solo exhibition *Fantastic Voyage through the Body of an Artist* opens at KIOSK Ghent. Visual artists Zeger Veters and Jakke Jalink provide a

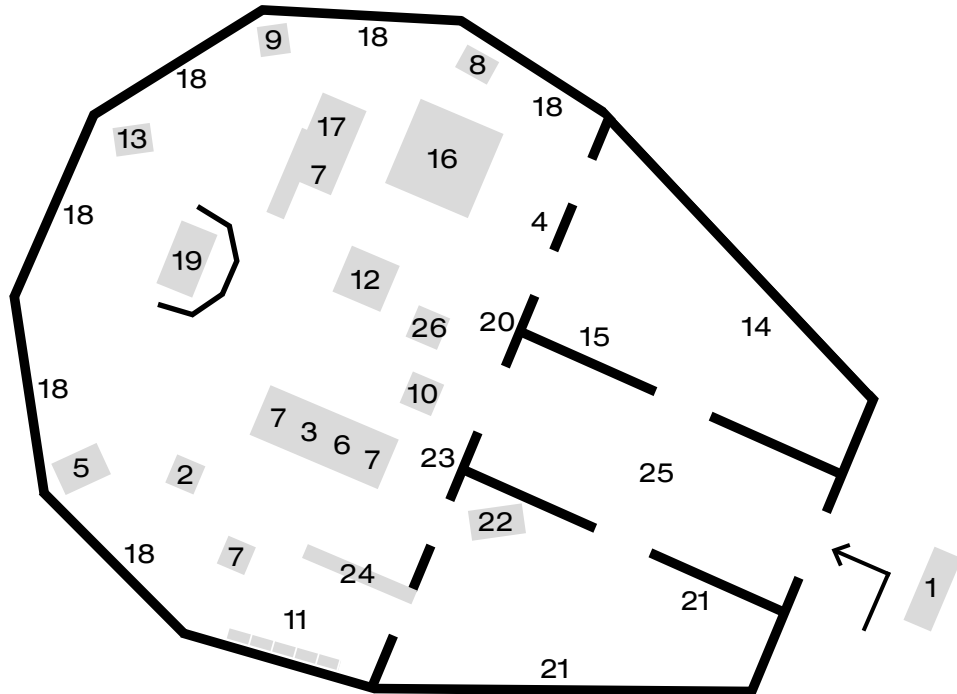
sound performance with a reel-to-reel recorder based on a six-hour original soundtrack they have created for the exhibition. For this sound work, they have delved into more than forty years of collected audio material from DDV and Club Moral and created a layered composition based on selected recordings, releases, and their own music. The soundtrack can be listened to daily in the exhibition space or online only during **KIOSK** opening hours, from 12 noon to 6 pm. (nr. 26)

- ∞ **02, 16 & 30.V.2024** – Visual and performance artist Mercedes Sturm-Lie organizes three reading sessions at **KIOSK** around the book *The Outsider* by the British writer Colin Wilson. Through the works and lives of various artists (including Blake, Hemingway, Kafka, Nijinsky, Nietzsche, Sartre, and van Gogh), Wilson explores the psyche of the Outsider, including the Outsider's effect on society and society's effect on the Outsider. Reading the book at a young age left a strong impression on DDV. The sessions take place between 6 pm and 8 pm at **KIOSK**, in the presence of DDV.
- ∞ **08.V.2024** – At the request of DDV, Dr. Jan Bolt gives a lecture at **KIOSK**'s Cirque auditorium about his work as a medical doctor and his internal and external clinical examinations of victims of accidents and assaults.
- ∞ **09.06.2024** – On the last day of the exhibition, **KIOSK** invites everyone who has ever witnessed a DDV performance to come and share memories. An open call has been launched on the **KIOSK** website to bring as many people together as possible and thus keep the historical memory of DDV's extensive performance work alive.

Thanks to Isabelle Arthuis, Simon Delobel, Jenifer Evans, Kobe Ipers, Jakke Jalink, Jacob Lambrecht, Lenny Lyphout, Shino Matsuura, Gust Neuville, Thomas Peeters, Sara Plantefève-Castryck, Jasper Rigole, Jean-Paul Simons, Chiara Stefanelli, Mercedes Sturm-Lie, Jan Vanbriel, Sam Van Ingelgem, Lien Van Leemput, Anne-Mie Van Kerckhoven, Valerie Verhack, Zeger Veters, Sebastian Vielma Fleischhacker, the **KIOSK** Saviours and the whole team of **KASK & CONSERVATORIUM** School of Arts Ghent.

With the support of:





1. *Fantastic Voyage*, books and DVD's
2. *Installation 1*, 1979-2022, chipboard, acrylic paint, 3D-print
3. *Thriller*, 2022, 3D print and CNC milling work
4. *Une jeune fille victime toute une nuit de deux monstres*, 1980, magazine, polaroid pictures
5. *Eternity forever*, 1980-2022, 3D-print, model railway, video
6. *Hear/See*, 1980-2021, MDF, 3D-print, electric motor, electronics, microcontroller
7. *Performan-DDV. 1979-2011*, 2011, book
8. *Knuppel*, 1983, metal, rubber, paint
9. *Hot Seat*, 1982, metal, wood, electric wire
10. *Breendonk Chair*, 1984, metal
11. *The text to image works*, 2022, 2 x 3D-print, grey MDF
12. *Ed Gein Gloves*, 1987, latex rubber (+ books, poster and invitation card)
13. *Tower of Crime*, 1987, metal, *True Crime*-books, collection Frank Heirman
14. *The Black Dahlia*, 1989, wood, electric motor, metal, photos, knives, black nightgown
15. *Portrait of a Sadist*, 1991, engraved metal
16. *Burn Bundy Burn*, 1991, Volkswagen Beetle hood, wood, leather straps, glass, laserprint
17. *Marteling van de heilige Erasmus*, 1995-2024, 3D-print, plexiglass, ropes, exhibition catalog, laser engraving, mounted on grey MDF
18. *Daders van Dodingen*, 1996, metal, glass, digital prints
19. *DEVOS KUNAVICHAYANONT*, 1999, printed A4 sheets bound in leather
20. *Ulrike Meinfuchs, Gudrun Fuchslein, AndreVos Baader, Jan-Carl Voske*, 2008, prints
21. *Text to image*, 2021-2022, prints
22. *150 dannydevos Blocks in Colour*, 2021-2024, 3D-print, grey MDF
23. *Aviette 18 à 20 ans*, 2023, toy robot, microcontroller, balsa, acrylic paint
24. *The 12 Faces of AI*, 2023, laser engraved blue stone
25. *23 Posters for Exhibitions*, 2023-2024, posters (digital images by AI Machine Learning Models)
26. Zeger Vettors & Jakke Jalink, *Fantastic Voyage through the Body of an Artist - Original Soundtrack*, 2024, audio