

Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen is staging a one-man show of works by the French-Israeli artist Absalon (1964 - 1993). Absalon is an artist whose impressive oeuvre is greatly appreciated by connoisseurs, but is unfamiliar to the general public. His work consists of white, architectural, geometric structures and models, some films and drawings that reflect his rage and his yearning for security and safety.

As in the KW in Berlin, the exhibition will display Absalon's enigmatic works – living cells painted neutral white and made entirely of wood. These so called 'Cellules' are, as it were, living pods for just one person, in which everything can be found for day-to-day, ritual activities down to the smallest detail, including window slits to keep unwanted guests at a distance. Absalon created these units for six World cities: Tokyo, New York, Tel Aviv, Paris, Zurich and Frankfurt. The form of Absalon's Cellules is reminiscent of the modernist architectural styles of Le Corbusier, Bauhaus, De Stijl and the Russian constructivism. They are, however, stripped of their Utopian ideals. The living cells are based on the dimensions of Absalon's own body and are, as it were, air-raid shelters for just a single person. The spaces suggest a need for protection and shielding from the chaotic daily life. Absalon described his Cellules as "a bastion of resistance against a society that prevents me from becoming what I must become."

Absalon was born in the sixties in Israel as Meir Eshel. He chose his new name Absalon (after the rebellious favourite son of the Old Testament King David) in Paris where he moved at the end of the eighties. In Paris he got to know other artists, studied at the Institut des Hautes Etudes et Arts Plastiques and started on his oeuvre in which enormous developments took place in just a short time. He becomes fascinated with spaces. His Cellules are the end product. At the beginning of the nineties he moves to Boulogne where he lives in a house by Le Corbusier. Five years later, he returns to the land of his birth for his exhibition in the Tel Aviv Museum of Art. He then decides to live in his Cellules, spread over various cities. Absalon's plan was never realised; he dies at the age of 28 in Paris on 10 October 1993.

The exhibition transferred from the KW Institute for Contemporary Art in Berlin, the first institution to stage a major retrospective of Absalon's work since 1994.

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