

Galerie Templon is showing a series of neon installations by conceptual Chinese artist He An, never before seen in Brussels.

He An's light sculptures are made up of characters stolen – with the complicity of the local mafia – from the signs that light up his native city of Wuhan. Using these stolen ideograms, often damaged by the weather and the course of time, the artist recreates the names of people who are dear to him. We see the name of his father, a martyr of the regime, and of a Japanese erotic actress, the illicit heroine of his youth when her banned videos circulated secretly in China.!!

He An's work is autobiographic and obsessive: he offers us an approach to contemporary Chinese society that is both intimate and subversive. The artist's style falls somewhere between illegality and investigation, bringing us “a breath of authenticity, a slice of raw reality” as Jérôme Sans puts it.

Representing a new generation of emerging artists whose works explore cultural prohibitions and taboos, He An surprises us with his capacity to combine the tenderness of a gaze with the irony of criticism.!!

Born in 1972 in Wuhan, He An graduated from the Hubei Beaux-Arts Academy. !Initially interested in the practice of photography, He An now concentrates on sculpture and installations. ! He has exhibited in Japan (2000), New York (2001) and Guangzhou (2003) and participated in collective international exhibitions, such as “The Real Thing” at the Tate Liverpool in 2007, “Rendez-vous 2008” at the Musée d’art contemporain (MAC) in Lyon and “Carnegie International” at the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh (2013).

In 2009, he showed his first institutional solo exhibition at the Ullens Center for Contemporary Art (UCCA) in Beijing, a show curated by Jérôme Sans. In 2013, he was present at “Art Unlimited” during the Basel Fair with Hubble, an installation with a vintage cylindrical advertising sign, stolen from an old building in Wuhan. The work is a reference to Tatlin’s Tower, a monument project that Vladimir Tatlin worked out for the Third International, but that was never build. Hubble is typical for He Ans work on the urbanization of the new China – and its ideological ambivalence.

In November 2013, the new museum of Nanjing, the Sifand Art Museum, dedicated a major solo exhibition to him at its inauguration.

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