

*To stand amongst the elements and to interpret what one knows* is the first overview exhibition in Belgium of the work of British artist Ryan Gander (born 1976). In this exhibition, the various aspects of his multifaceted oeuvre can be discovered. His work can take the form of an action, a sculpture, an installation, but also a thought, a promise or an encounter. Ryan Gander likes to play with absurd logic and surprising insights about himself and his surrounding environment. Nothing is what you think you know, and all his works resemble puzzle pieces of which it may be feared that ultimately they will never fit perfectly together.

His imagination and mental leaps take many directions and are difficult to grasp in a specific and recognisable style or shape. The common thread in the work of Ryan Gander is the sincere generosity toward the viewer: Gander provokes us again and again to let go of our ingrained expectations and to let our imagination work to further develop the storylines he puts forward. Hence an exhibition by Ryan Gander requires great attention to detail. Not everyone can always fathom everything, but everyone will recognise different elements and give them meaning.

Art history - and especially sculpture - is a major playground for Ryan Gander. In the past he already made playful references to among others the ballerinas of Edgar Degas and the thinker of Auguste Rodin. For the exhibition *To stand amongst the elements and to interpret what one knows* Gander realised the technical complex *Toodaloovantongerloo (Of friends and rivals)* (2015), based on the silhouette of a sculpture by the Belgian modernist artist Georges Vantongerloo.

*As is ... (Cupid kindling the torch of Hymen, 1831, George Rennie)* (2015) also incorporates a classical sculpture, but without the two human figures. For that matter the installations and sculptures of Olive, the daughter of Ryan Gander, occupy their place in the oeuvre of the artist. On the lawn in front of the museum stands a gigantic amplification of her plasticine giraffe sculpture and in the museum there are some marble sculptures based on dens made with bed sheets and furniture. Besides art history, architecture is also omnipresent in the work of Gander. One of the new works he made for this exhibition is *Mr Gander, My Fickle Friend*, for which he studied/researched the different architecture styles of fifteen houses nearby the museum.

Many works of Ryan Gander reinterpret existing work made by himself and others or continue the fictional storylines he already started in previous exhibitions. The deeper and more attentive you dig into the work of the artist, the more relationships and connections you uncover. An exhibition of Ryan Gander is, in other words, a discovery involving all our senses. You may be confronted with time, self-reflection, childhood memories, or simply with an unexpected plot.

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