

KETELEER GALLERY is very pleased to announce *Die dumme Dänen*, the first solo exhibition by Danish artist Peter Land (°1966, Aarhus, Denmark) with the gallery, consisting of an entirely new series of works. Peter Land is one of Denmark's leading contemporary artists. He makes performances, paintings, drawings, videos, sculptures and installations, all with the same trademark tragi-comedic flair.

Land graduated in 1995 as a painter, but started making videos soon after. These videos always depict the artist in ridiculous, sad or embarrassing situations and were the starting point for themes that would dominate his entire oeuvre. The ambitions and failures of man as he struggles to find balance and meaning are a constant source of inspiration. In Land's works, the mundane of everyday life meets the surreal and the hyper real. With this, the artist confronts us with our own 'all too human'-ness, reminding us how much we are concerned with our identity and how it is perhaps determined more by our failures than by success.

*The Plan* (2020) is a beautiful illustration of how man always tries to come up with the perfect plan, hoping the unpredictable could somehow be avoided. Coincidence and accidents, however, often play a much larger part in shaping our reality. By leaving no room for improvisation or not taking things as they come, man boxes himself in and alienates himself from true creativity and discoveries. The series of sculptures *Selfportrait as a fountain* (2020) are self-portraits of the artist with a stream of water pouring out of his head, symbolising the free flow of ideas. The audience often thinks of the artist as a container of endless ideas, something which is rarely the case.

In looking at a work of art, the viewer looks – as the cliché goes – in a mirror, he looks for small clues in which he recognises himself and which he already loves or will learn to love through the translation of the work of art. In the series of portrait drawings, we see the different types of people that make up the art world and that have transformed into the work they love. The tables are turned: instead of the spectator projecting himself onto a work, the art is reflected in the spectator. The viewer also takes on new things, things he admires are appropriated and woven into his persona. In a way, you become what you see.

You are what you eat – another one of those clichés – doesn't only apply to the individual. The identity of an entire people is often labelled by their alleged eating habits. An American eats hamburgers, Belgians drink beer... The works *Die dumme Dänen 1 & 2* (2020) confront us with this caricatural profiling. 'Die dumme Dänen' – the dumb Danes – was what the German Nazi's called the Danes during the war and is a telling example of the superficial generalisation many peoples are subjected to. *A monument for the Pigeons that shit on monuments* (2020) is a first drawing in a series of 'proposals for monuments' turning the honourable purpose of the monument upside down. What is proposed here is a monument for the embarrassing, prestige degrading behaviour of a thoughtless – one might say dumb – bird.

*The Magician* (2020) is a sculpture of a young boy's body 'looking' at his own head lying on the other side of the room and was inspired by one of Land's traumatising childhood experiences. While watching a magic show, a young Peter was taken from the audience to participate in one of the magic tricks. The magician proudly announced 'I'm going to make your head disappear!' at which Peter panicked and ran out of the theatre in absolute fear. The sculpture is a translation of this memory, Peter's fear, but also becomes a symbol for the loss of a clear role model. In today's times, the white male has been banned as a role model, all he has left is the

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blame for being responsible for every type of discrimination. Young children have to look elsewhere for new role models, which should have nothing to do with this image, and must, in case they're a white young male, even distrust themselves.

Throughout Land's oeuvre, the subconscious and the self are explored by blurring the lines between memories and expression, children's games and nightmares, desperation and the idyllic... The resulting works ignite feelings of existential alienation and wonderment, and we are left unsettled but amused. Many of Land's works stem from very personal experiences but are at the same time quite universally oriented in their critical stance towards today's perfection-driven society. Peter Land uses and equally warns us for clichés and all his seemingly light-hearted works always contain a serious message. In Land's case however, the spoonful of sugar certainly makes the medicine go down.

Lauren Wiggers, 2020.

*Peter Land's works have been featured in numerous exhibitions in Europe, North America, Asia, and Australia, including solo shows at Galleri Nicolai Wallner, Copenhagen, Denmark; the New Museum, New York, NY; and the Mori Art Museum, Tokyo, Japan. In 2005 Land represented Denmark at the Biennale di Venezia.*

- Opening *Die dumme Dänen*: March 7<sup>th</sup>, 5-9 pm. In presence of the artist.

The exhibition will be on view till May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020.

- Opening February 20<sup>th</sup> at 7pm, M HKA hosts a new solo exhibition by Peter Land at their INBOX space, introducing *Boy and Girl* (2012), recent acquisitions of the M HKA collection, as well as a series of drawings and videos. The exhibition will be on view till March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2020.

- March 5<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm, NICC invites Peter Land for an artist talk at the M HKA auditorium.

M HKA, Museum of Contemporary Art Antwerp

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