

Anne-Mie Van Kerckhoven

AMVK



Fridericianum

9 November 2018 – 24 February 2019

INTRODUCTION

AMVK AT FRIDERICIANUM

This exhibition in Kassel concludes a tour that has already brought Anne-Mie Van Kerckhoven's oeuvre to two institutions in Germany (museum Abteiberg Mönchengladbach and Kunstverein Hanover) and one in Belgium (M HKA, Museum of Contemporary Art Antwerp).

Artists are a species that connects everyday things and their everydayness with each other. They connect eras and worlds. They are what makes a difference between generations and what makes them merge.
– AMVK, 2018

It is very rare that an exhibition of this scope and size gets a 'second life'. We – Anne-Mie Van Kerckhoven, the artist, and I, the curator – are happy and grateful for this opportunity to resurrect 'AMVK' and reconfigure it for the magnificent spaces of the Fridericianum. When her survey was shown this spring at M HKA, the Museum of Contemporary Art Antwerp, it was already the third instalment of a series that was launched at Museum Abteiberg Mönchengladbach in the late autumn of 2016 and continued at Kunstverein Hannover in the spring of 2017.

In those two German venues the exhibition was titled 'What Would I Do in Orbit?', paraphrasing a title Van Kerckhoven had given one of her drawings: *What Would You Do in Orbit?* This title conveyed her consistent interest in technology and science on the one hand (not least the latter-day mysticism that shrouds much cutting-edge research into artificial intelligence) and bodily experience (not least when it is female) on the other.

Yet after reviewing her substantial and many-faceted oeuvre together we decided that the exhibition needed to be rethought for Antwerp, the city where she was born in 1951 and still lives. We knew, of course, that 'no prophet is accepted in his own country' (Luke, 4:24), but we wanted to challenge that too-gendered truth, so we set out to make an exhibition that would make viewers accept that they only *thought* they knew what kind of artist Van Kerckhoven is. And it seems to have worked. Visitors to the exhibition could see and feel for themselves how extensive and intensive her work is.

One of the first things we decided was that the exhibition title should be nothing more and nothing less than 'AMVK', the non-gendered acronym Van Kerckhoven adopted very early and that has, in her own country, become an instantly recognisable tag line. We also decided that the twelve 'chapters' she had devised for the first two instalments of the exhibition, based on long-standing engagements such as digitalism and mysticism, alchemy and numerology, evil and entertainment, would be replaced by a fluid display of images and ideas.

The project that now culminates in Kassel seems to illustrate the three stages of classical Hegelian dialectics. The exhibition in Antwerp could be thought of as the 'antithesis' to the 'thesis' of its German predecessors. It communicated the same concerns and inspirations and trajectories, but in a more visual and more visceral way. The exhibition at Fridericianum can, in turn, be seen as the 'synthesis' of both approaches, 'sublating' them to the next level. It is a story of Van Kerckhoven's development as an artist from 1970 until today, told by hundreds of works that all have a voice of their own. At the same time, it is a conversation between all these drawings, paintings, objects, installations and films and the Fridericianum itself, whose spacious halls already follow each other like words in a sentence.

Or like chapters in a book. The dialogue between Van Kerckhoven's oeuvre and the building often called 'Kassel's living room' yielded nine new chapters. We consider them a truthful embodiment of her work and thought. This, in fact, is probably the essence of dialogue: that the resistance offered by both parties to a conversation helps us build a credible image of truth. The nine chapters corresponding to the spaces of the Fridericianum have also provided the headlines for this newspaper, which functions as a catalogue of all the constituent parts of 'AMVK'.

What kind of artist is AMVK? You, the visitors to the exhibition, will eventually have to judge that, but this short biography, based on an even shorter presentation written by a friend back in the 1990s, is how she herself prefers to introduce her practice and her persona:

Anne-Mie Van Kerckhoven studied graphic design at the Fine Arts Academy in Antwerp and has been prolific in her output of drawings and other works on paper and synthetic materials, as well as short videos, since the early 1980s. A straightforward feminist tone pervades in all her work, in which the erotic meets machine-fetishism. Interior, if not domestic spaces often serve as settings for her drawings and collages, from which dream-like futuristic enactments between human and machine-like forms unfold. In the 1990s, works on paper gave way to computer graphics, while text has always featured alongside images, underlining the message of Van Kerckhoven's proud, sometimes exhibitionist female figures like song

lyrics. Music plays an important role in her creative production in parallel to her visual output, and she and Danny Devos have stood as a key pair of the Antwerp experimental music scene under the band name Club Moral (1981–now).

If this is read together with Van Kerckhoven's introductions to the chapters in this newspaper and her concise background stories to the works on display, also printed here, it will give a rather good understanding of what prompted her to make the works featured in 'AMVK' and how they enter into dialogue with each other. It is all there: the drawings and experimental films as distinct sub-oeuvres, her concern for the spatial impact of the work, her interest in the visualisation of scientific thought and her approach to creative work as research into questions that concern her – and her viewers – both cerebrally and viscerally. How is the female body imaged and imagined? What might morals and mysticism mean today? Can interiority be a liberating power?

When I use the term 'research' I have in mind what the French poet and artist Robert Filliou once wrote: 'Research is not the exclusive privilege of those who know. Rather, it is the domain of those who don't know.' To me, Van Kerckhoven is a prime example of an artist for whom the work is a constant dialogue with what she doesn't know. Rather than seeing the work as an ascent to glory – which is not unheard of among accomplished artists – she turns it into a path towards understanding.

When I look at Van Kerckhoven's still and moving images or read her words, I sense that I am included in her ongoing struggle to make sense of the world, and sometimes to overcome the bewilderment or even disgust that it causes in her (and also in me, possibly in all of us). I have never, not once, found myself thinking that she is using this or that tactic, this or that strategy, to achieve something at the expense of the world that surrounds her. For her, the freedom to investigate and respond to life as she sees and understands it must be absolute. And therefore it is.

I believe that 'AMVK' – in its mature version at Fridericianum, accompanied by this newspaper – corroborates this view of Van Kerckhoven. I hope that the exhibition presents her work and thought in such a way that viewers find their own path to understanding through it. The book *AMVK*, published earlier this year by Koenig Books in collaboration

with M HKA, Museum Abteiberg Mönchengladbach and Kunstverein Hannover, offers further contextualisation and interpretation of Van Kerckhoven's work. In connection with 'AMVK', M HKA has also launched an online digital archive at amvk.ensembles.org, with detailed information about her oeuvre.

Anne-Mie Van Kerckhoven and myself would like to thank documenta gGmbH and the team at Fridericianum for the opportunity to realise this exhibition and for the pleasant collaboration. We thank M HKA for supporting this extended version of the exhibition it produced earlier this year. Our thanks also go to Museum Abteiberg Mönchengladbach for commissioning and hosting its first version, and Kunstverein Hannover for taking over and refining it. We express our gratitude to Zeno X Gallery in Antwerp and Galerie Barbara Thumm in Berlin for their logistical and moral support and all the lenders, private and institutional, who have generously contributed their work. We specially thank Danny Devos for contributing his technical expertise and much more to this project in all its stages and versions. Thanks also to Saartje Geerts, Katleen Schildermans and Samyra Moumouh for their efficient assistance.

Antwerp, October 2018

Anders Kreuger
Curator of the exhibition
Senior Curator at M HKA,
Museum of Contemporary Art Antwerp

Unless otherwise stated, all works in the exhibition are courtesy of the artist and Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp.

CHAPTER ONE

DRAWINGS

1970–2018

The linear drawing is like a skeleton, a framework that needed a lot of time to become what it is. Around it possibilities, the flesh of thought, are suspended. Colour indicates what is useful, what thoughts and science might be used for. Drawing is a form of understanding, enabling you to simplify your observations and make them manageable. Recurrent themes: the relation between humans and animals, between intelligence and intuition, between human creativity and technology, between self-image and human-made environments. This collection of drawn works is a combination of pictures from the personal sphere, pictures from memory and visualisations and fragments from the image- and word-culture that surrounds us.

Mijn vader (My Father), 1970

Pencil on paper

22 × 29.5 cm

Gezichten (Faces), 1971

Pencil on paper

36 × 27 cm

Stoel (Chair), 1972

Pencil on paper

27 × 17.5 cm

Tweeling (Twin), 1972

Ink and watercolour on paper

13.3 × 7 cm

Taboeret (Stool), 1972

Ink and watercolour on paper

12 × 7 cm

Denkt vluchtig (Thinking Airily), 1973

Ink on paper

20 × 12 cm

Hugo, 1973

Ballpoint pen on paper

21 × 26.8 cm

In de lucht (In the Air), 1973

Ink on paper

22.9 × 14.1 cm

Vliegende(n) (Flying), 1973

Ink on paper

26.7 × 17.6 cm

Zonder titel (Untitled), 1973

Ink on paper

17.5 × 26 cm

Bijenzwerm (Swarm of Bees), 1974

Ink and coloured pencil on paper

29.5 × 21 cm

Dromen van een hermafrodit

(Dreams of a Hermaphrodite), 1974

Ink and coloured pencil on paper

26.8 × 17.5 cm

Hugo in de zoo van Antwerpen (Hugo

in the Antwerp Zoo), 1974

Ink and coloured pencil on paper

32 × 24 cm

Krabben (Scratching), 1974

Ink and coloured pencil on paper

21 × 12.3 cm

Mannen? (Men?), 1974

Ink on paper

21 × 15.5 cm

Naakte Pastoor (Naked Priest), 1974

Ink on card

15.2 × 20.8 cm

Nadenken (Reflection), 1974

Ink on paper

26.7 × 17.3 cm

Op school (At School), 1974

Ink on paper

26.8 × 17.5 cm

Persoon is taart (Person is Cake), 1974

Ink on card

27 × 18.5 cm

Schoenpersoon (Shoe Person), 1974

Ink on card

26.7 × 17.3 cm

Staat van zaken (State of Affairs), 1974

Ink and coloured pencil on paper

35 × 23 cm

Vooroverbuigen (Bending Over), 1974

Ink and coloured pencil on paper

15 × 12 cm

Vrienden? (Friends?), 1974

Ink and coloured pencil on paper

17 × 11 cm

Collection of Jan Van Kerckhoven,

Antwerp

Vrouw op kerkstoel

(Woman on Church Stool)

1974

Ink and coloured pencil on paper

26.8 × 17.5 cm

Wenende man met rokje (Crying Man

with Skirt), 1974

Ink on card

23 × 13.5 cm

Wezens op stander met prijskaartjes

(Beings on Stand with Price Tags), 1974

Ink on paper

17.5 × 26.6 cm

Zetel (Easy Chair), 1974

Ink on paper

26.8 × 17.1 cm

Zitten (To Sit), 1974

Ink and coloured pencil on paper

15 × 12 cm

Zonnen in hoofd (Suns in Head), 1974

Ink on paper

21 × 10 cm

Daar gaat hij

(There He Goes)

1975

Ink and coloured pencil on paper

35 × 26 cm



- Dandy**, 1975
Ink and coloured pencil on paper
26.9 × 17.6 cm
- De blaren vallen in Aalst** (*The Leaves are Falling in Aalst*), 1975
Ink and coloured pencil on paper, 27.5 × 24 cm
Private collection, Belgium
- Dwingend interieur** (*Mandatory Interior*), 1975
Ink on paper
26.7 × 35.5 cm
- Elk diertje zijn pleziertje** (*To Each His Own*), 1975
Ink on paper
27 × 36 cm
- Figuur op tafel** (*Figure on Table*), 1975
Ink and coloured pencil on paper
35 × 23 cm
- In de late namiddag** (*In the Late Afternoon*), 1975
Ink, coloured pencil and watercolour on paper
50 × 40 cm
Courtesy Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp
- Man droomt van bed terwijl hij zelf bed is. Het onmogelijke verlangen** (*Man Dreaming of Bed While He Is Bed Himself. The Impossible Longing*), 1975
Ink and coloured pencil on paper
35 × 23 cm
- Na het einde van de wereld** (*After the Apocalypse*), 1975
Ink and coloured pencil on paper
36 × 27 cm
- Oude vrouw schijnt geen kans te hebben bij jongeman met potentie onder de arm** (*Old Woman Seems to Have No Chance with Young Man Carrying His Potency under the Arm*), 1975
Ink and coloured pencil on paper
21 × 20 cm
Collection of Jan Van Kerckhoven, Antwerp
- Straat en ander landschap** (*Street and Other Landscape*), 1975
Ink on paper
25 × 35 cm
- Twee jaar samen** (*Two Years Together*), 1975
Ink and coloured pencil on paper
26 × 31.5 cm
- Verskillende perspectieven** (*Different Perspectives*), 1975
Ink on paper
21 × 29.5 cm
- Vrouw doet in broek van blijdschap bij het zien van haar vrijer** (*Woman Wets Herself When Spotting Her Suitor*), 1975
Ink and coloured pencil on paper
35 × 23 cm
- Vrouw met rooskleurige toekomst** (*Woman with Rosy Future Ahead*), 1975
Ink and coloured pencil on paper
35 × 25 cm
- Zomertaferreel** (*Summer Scene*), 1975
Ink and coloured pencil on paper
27 × 35.5 cm
- Adstruktie tot totale adhesie** (*From Adstruction to Total Adhesion*), 1976
Ink and coloured pencil on card
27 × 35.8 cm
- Cohesie tot en met** (*Cohesion to the Nth Degree*), 1976
Ink on paper
35 × 26 cm
- Destruktief intellect met te flauw verleden** (*Destructive Intellect with Too Questionable Past*), 1976
Ink and coloured pencil on paper
27 × 36 cm
Collection of M HKA/The Flemish Community, Antwerp
- Man met wolk als hoofd** (*Man with Cloud as Head*), 1976
Ink and gouache on paper
30 × 25 cm
- Ook een tafel** (*Also a Table*), 1976
Ink on paper
19.5 × 36 cm
- Some Make Plans**, 1976
Felt-tip pen on paper
24 × 36 cm
- (# - - - !## (.), 1977**
Ink and coloured pencil on paper
27 × 36 cm
- IIIIII = ∞**, 1977
Ink and coloured pencil on paper
27 × 36 cm
Collection of Gabi and Wolfgang Schürmann, Herzogenrath/Berlin
- Broodmens op tafel aan raam** (*Bread Man on Table by Window*), 1977
Ink on paper
22.2 × 29.3 cm
Private collection, Belgium
- Dag in juni** (*Day in June*), 1977
Ink and coloured pencil on paper
27 × 36 cm
- De mollige massa erbuiten gelaten** (*The Plump Mass Left Out*), 1977
Ink on paper
17.5 × 26.8 cm
- Gossip and Unfaithfulness Are the Main Enemies of an Agreeable Life**, 1977
Ink on paper
17.5 × 26.8 cm
- Met deze middelen ben ik in staat de suggestie van natuur op te roepen** (*With These Tools, I am Capable of Evoking the Suggestion of Nature*), 1977
Ink and coloured pencil on paper
27 × 36 cm
- Onduidelijke bewegingen** (*Unclear Movements*), 1977
Felt-tip pen on paper
26.8 × 36 cm
- Ontwerp voor performance** (*Sketch for Performance*), 1977
Felt-tip pen and coloured pencil on paper
8.3 × 21.4 cm
- René**, 1977
Ink and coloured pencil on paper
27 × 36 cm
- Van Kerckhoven**, 1977
Ink and coloured pencil on paper
27 × 35 cm
- Zwaar onheil** (*Doom and Gloom*), 1977
Ink and coloured pencil on paper
27 × 36 cm
- Harmonie met verticale streep** (*Harmony with Vertical Line*), 1978
Ink and coloured pencil on paper
27 × 36 cm
- Schuine richtingen** (*Oblique Directions*), 1978
Ink and colour marker on paper
27 × 36 cm
- Zelfportret/Dinsdagsnamiddag 3.10u** (*Self-Portrait/Tuesday Afternoon 3.10pm*), 1979
Felt-tip pen on paper
27 × 36 cm
- Personen und Handlungen** (*Peoples and Activities*), 1981
Ink and felt-tip pen on paper
33.3 × 21.4 cm
- Tafereel** (*Scene*), 1982
Felt-tip pen on paper
29.6 × 21 cm
- Katalepsie** (*Catalepsy*), 1983
Felt-tip pen on paper
31.9 × 23.9 cm
- Vrouwen ondereen** (*Among Women*), 1983
Ink and felt-tip pen on paper
27 × 36 cm

Ars Subtilior – Complexe Polyfonie
(*A Subtler Art: Complex Polyphony*), 1984
Ink and felt-tip pen on paper
29.5 × 20.9 cm
Private collection, Belgium

Marionet (Puppet), 1984
Ink on paper
20.9 × 29.5 cm

Sjamaan (Shaman), 1984
Ink on paper
20.9 × 29.5 cm

Gedragen Worden (Being Carried), 1985
Ink on paper
13 × 16.7 cm

Great Men Exist Because They Tackle Great Problems, 1985
Felt-tip pen on paper
27 × 21 cm

DDV, 1986
Ink on paper
36 × 27 cm

Droomarbeid (Dream Work), 1986
Ink and coloured pencil on paper
27 × 36 cm

Man en vrouw (Man and Woman), 1986
Ink on paper
21 × 13.5 cm

Sculptuur met rechtstaande persoon
(*Sculpture with Person Standing up*) 1986
Ink on paper
13 × 16.8 cm

Twee gedeconstrueerde personen
(*Two Deconstructed Persons*), 1986
Ink on paper
21 × 13.5 cm

Vijf gezichten (Five Faces), 1986
Ink on paper
27 × 36 cm

Zittende vrouw met meubelementen
(*Seated Woman with Elements of Furniture*), 1986
Ink on paper
21 × 13.5 cm

1945, 1987
Water-based felt-tip pen on paper
29.5 × 20.8 cm

Denkend persoon met drie constructen
(*Thinking Person with Three Constructs*), 1987
Felt-tip pen on paper
29.5 × 20.8 cm

Homuncula, 1987
Felt-tip pen on paper
27 × 36.2 cm

I Like You, 1987
Felt-tip pen on paper
27 × 36 cm

Interieur (Interior), 1987
Felt-tip pen on paper
29.7 × 21 cm

Tien elementen (Ten Elements), 1987
Ink and felt-tip pen on paper
27 × 36 cm

Zwijgen dan en nu (Silence Then and Now), 1987
Ink on paper
27 × 36 cm

3 vrienden verenigd 1 (3 Friends United 1), 1988
Felt-tip pen on paper
29.8 × 42.1 cm

3 vrienden verenigd 2 (3 Friends United 2), 1988
Felt-tip pen on paper
29.8 × 42.1 cm

Erklären Sie den Begriff Führerprinzip (Please Explain the Leader Principle), 1988
Ink and felt-tip pen on paper
27 × 36 cm

Fossilisatie (Fossilisation), 1988
Ink on paper
27 × 36 cm

Buiten! (Out!), 1989
Felt-tip pen on paper
27 × 36 cm

Centaurea, 1989
Felt-tip pen on paper
25 × 17.7 cm

Huis op helling (House on Slope), 1989
Felt-tip pen and coloured pencil on paper
27 × 36.2 cm

Nostalgia, 1989
Felt-tip pen on paper
27 × 36 cm

Liggend naakt (Lying Nude), 1990
Felt-tip pen on paper
27 × 36 cm

Liggende vrouw in rotspartij
(*Woman Lying in Rock Party*), 1990
Felt-tip pen on paper
27 × 36 cm

Variatie op ontwerp voor Ponton Temse
(*Variation for Design for the Exhibition 'Ponton Temse'*), 1990
Felt-tip pen on paper and transparent

foil, collage
35 × 22.5 cm

Rotsen rollen (Rolling Rocks), 1990
Felt-tip pen on paper
20.5 × 29.5 cm

Verdierlijking (Animalisation), 1990
Felt-tip pen on paper
20.5 × 29.5 cm

Zelfportret, tekenend (Self-Portrait, Drawing), 1990
Ink on paper
27 × 36 cm

DDV met Poespoes (DDV with Poespoes), 1991
Ink on paper
27 × 36 cm

Een kunstenaar heeft geen vijanden
(*An Artist Has No Enemies*), 1991
Ink on paper
27 × 36 cm

Khadafi, 1991
Felt-tip pen on paper
25 × 17.7 cm

Odalisk met telefoon (Odalisk with Telephone), 1991
Ink and felt-tip pen on paper
21 × 29.6 cm

Strategic Considerations in Location No.1–10, 1992
Ink on paper
27 × 36 cm

What Would You Do in Orbit?, 1992
Ink on paper
27 × 36 cm

Zelfportret met oorverband (Self-Portrait with Ear Bandage), 1992
Pencil on paper
42 × 30 cm

De vormgeving van gedachten (The Design of Thoughts), 1993
Ink on paper
27 × 36 cm

Dit zijn geen mensen maar symbolen
(*These Are Not People But Symbols*), 1993
Ink on paper
27 × 36 cm

Dynamisch evenwicht
(*Dynamic Balance*), 1993
Ink on paper
27 × 36.2 cm

Eurovisiesongfestival (Eurovision Song Contest), 1993
Felt-tip pen on paper
21 × 29 cm

Katastrofale rust (*Catastrophic Calm*), 1993
Ink on paper
27 × 36.2 cm

Naar buiten kijken is naar binnen kijken (*Looking Outside Is Looking in*), 1993
Ink on paper
26.5 × 35.7 cm

Ontwaakte droom (*Awakened Dream*), 1993
Ink on paper
27 × 36.2 cm

Visioen i.v.m. het Tantragebergte dat we 18 en 19 september van dit jaar beklommen (*Vision Relating to the Tatra Mountain That We Climbed on 18 and 19 September of This Year*), 1993
Ink on paper
27 × 36.2 cm

Voorspelling voor eeuwig (*Prediction for Ever*), 1993
Ink on paper
27 × 36.2 cm
Collection of Jan Meersman, Belgium

Woordenloos overbrengen van boodschappen (*Wordless Transfer of Messages*), 1993
Ink on paper
27 × 36 cm

Abstrakte kunst (*Abstract Art*), 1994
Ink and coloured pencil on paper
27 × 36.2 cm

De Heilige Geest zal U bijstaan (*The Holy Spirit Will Assist You*) 1994
Felt-tip pen on paper
27 × 36 cm

Fantasie en escapisme (*Fantasy and Escapism*), 1994
Ink and coloured pencil on paper
27 × 36 cm

Kunst en onthechting (*Art and Detachment*), 1994
Ink and coloured pencil on paper
27 × 36.2 cm

Lachende plant (*Laughing Plant*), 1994
Ink on paper
27 × 36 cm

Natuur en reflectie (*Nature and Reflection*), 1994
Ink and colour pencil on paper
27 × 36.2 cm

Schuld en plezier (*Debt and Pleasure*), 1994
Ink and coloured pencil on paper
27 × 36.2 cm

Tabula Rasa, 1994
Ink and coloured pencil on paper
27 × 36.2 cm

Tesamen met de meubels (*Together with the Furniture*), 1994
Ink and coloured pencil on paper
27 × 36.2 cm

Theatrale (*Theatrical*), 1994
Ink on paper
27 × 36 cm

Van boeken dromen (*Dreaming of Books*), 1994
Ink and coloured pencil on paper
27 × 36 cm
Collection of M HKA/The Flemish Community, Antwerp

Toneelstuk (*Theatre Play*), 1995
Ink on paper
27 × 36 cm

Dingen veranderen soms (*Things Change Sometimes*), 1996
Ink on paper
27 × 36 cm

Droom (*Dream*), 1996
Ink on paper
27 × 36 cm

Good Mixture of Vulnerability and Arrogance, 1996
Ink on paper
16 × 22.5 cm

Ik trek los (*I Let Go*), 1996
Pencil on paper
27 × 36 cm

Vallende appel (*Falling Apple*), 1996
Felt-tip pen on paper
27 × 36 cm

Kapittelzaal in Abdij van Park, Leuven (*Chapter Hall in Park Abbey, Leuven*), 2000
Felt-tip pen on paper
21 × 28.2 cm

8, 2001
Felt-tip pen on paper
21 × 28.2 cm

Gat (*Hole*), 2001
Felt-tip pen on paper
25.4 × 17.3 cm

Tafereel met pot en hoofden (*Scene with Pot and Heads*), 2001
Felt-tip pen on paper
17.3 × 25.4 cm

Yes Master, 2001
Felt-tip pen on paper
21 × 28.2 cm

Ondier (*Beast*), 2002
Ink, felt-tip pen and coloured pencil on paper
25.2 × 20.1 cm

Vegetatieve toestand (*Vegetative Condition*), 2002
Ink on paper
19.5 × 17 cm

Lateral Flexion, 2003
Ink and coloured pencil on paper
25.5 × 20.5 cm
Collection of Elisabeth and Johannes Lörcher, Munich

Shock and AWE, 2003
Ink and coloured pencil on paper
26.8 × 20.7 cm

Geslachtsverkeer en samenhang (*Sexual Intercourse and Sense of Belonging*), 2004
Ink, felt-tip pen, coloured pencil and acrylic on paper
27 × 36 cm
Private collection, Antwerp

The Relative Specialisation of the Nerve Elements, 2004
Ink, felt-tip pen, oil pastels and oil stick on paper
27 × 36 cm
Collection of Gabi and Wolfgang Schürmann, Herzogenrath/Berlin

I Scare You, You Scare Me, We Scare Ourselves, 2005
Ink, felt-tip pen, watercolour and oil pastels on paper, stapled onto handmade paper
26.4 × 35.2 cm
Mandala, 2005
Ink on paper
27 × 36 cm

Mensachtige 1 (*Humanoid 1*), 2005
Felt-tip pen on paper
21 × 13.2 cm

Mensachtige 2 (*Humanoid 2*), 2005
Felt-tip pen on paper
21 × 13.2 cm

Mensachtige 3 (*Humanoid 3*), 2005
Felt-tip pen on paper
21 × 13.2 cm

Mensachtige 4 (*Humanoid 4*), 2005
Felt-tip pen on paper
21 × 13.2 cm

Vrijheid bestaat in het verlaten van het huis (*Freedom Consists in Leaving the House*), 2005
Ink and felt-tip pen on paper
27 × 36 cm

Berliner Strassen: Helmstedter Strasse, 2006
Ink, oil pastel and coloured pencil on paper
20.5 × 14.5 cm
Collection of Gabi and Wolfgang Schürmann, Herzogenrath/Berlin

Berliner Strassen: Hohenzollerndamm, 2006
Ink, oil pastel and coloured pencil on paper
20.5 × 14.5 cm
Collection of Gabi and Wolfgang Schürmann, Herzogenrath/Berlin

Berliner Strassen: Uhlandstrasse, 2006
Ink, oil pastel and coloured pencil on paper
20.5 × 14.5 cm
Collection of Gabi and Wolfgang Schürmann, Herzogenrath/Berlin

Berliner Strassen: Siegessäule Love Parade, 2006
Ink, oil pastel and coloured pencil on paper
20.5 × 14.5 cm
Collection of Gabi and Wolfgang Schürmann, Herzogenrath/Berlin

Berliner Strassen: Kottbusser Tor, 2006
Ink, oil pastel and coloured pencil on paper
20.5 × 14.5 cm
Hauser & Wirth Collection, Switzerland

Berliner Strassen: Krumme Lanke, 2006
Ink, oil pastel and coloured pencil on paper
20.5 × 14.5 cm
Collection of Gabi and Wolfgang Schürmann, Herzogenrath/Berlin

Berliner Strassen: Potsdamer Platz, 2006
Ink, oil pastel and coloured pencil on paper
20.5 × 14.5 cm
Collection of Gabi and Wolfgang Schürmann, Herzogenrath/Berlin

Berliner Strassen: Gleisdreieck, 2006
Ink, oil pastel and coloured pencil on paper
20.5 × 14.5 cm
Hauser & Wirth Collection, Switzerland

Berliner Strassen: Tegel, 2006
Ink, oil pastel and coloured pencil on paper
20.5 × 14.5 cm
Hauser & Wirth Collection, Switzerland

Ich Habe Photosynthese (I Have Photosynthesis), 2006
Collage, ink, felt-tip pen, gouache and oil pastels on paper, glued onto handmade paper
25.5 × 35 cm

Tanz im August (Dance in August), 2006
Ink, felt-tip pen, oil pastels and watercolour on paper
20.5 × 14.5 cm

The Beauty of Depth, 2006
Ink, felt-tip pen and watercolour on paper
24 × 31 cm

Vrouwenfiguur 1 (Woman Figure 1), 2006
Ink, felt-tip pen and pastel on paper
14.8 × 10.5 cm

Vrouwenfiguur 2 (Woman Figure 2), 2006
Ink, felt-tip pen and pastel on paper
14.8 × 10.5 cm

Vrouwenfiguur 5 (Woman Figure 5), 2006
Ink, felt-tip pen and pastel on paper
14.8 × 10.5 cm

Vrouwenfiguur 7 (Woman Figure 7), 2006
Ink, felt-tip pen and pastel on paper
14.8 × 10.5 cm

Vrouwenfiguur 8 (Woman Figure 8), 2006
Ink, felt-tip pen and pastel on paper
14.8 × 10.5 cm

Le Discours mystique (The Mythical Discourse), 2008
Ink, pastel, crayon and felt-tip pen on paper
24 × 31 cm
Collection of Marc Vandecandelaere, Belgium

XYZ, 2008
Ink, oil pastels and felt-tip pen on paper
24 × 31 cm

Hybrid Media Plot, 2009
Ink, pastel, crayon and felt-tip pen on paper
27 × 36 cm
Collection of Piet Van Cauwenberghe, Belgium

Hyperincubus, 2010
Oil pastel, markers, pencil and collage on paper
30 × 31 cm
Collection of Mu.ZEE Kunstmuseum aan Zee, Ostend

Radikaliteit en transcendentie (Radicality and Transcendence), 2010
Ink, felt-tip pen, oil pastels and oil stick on paper
29.5 × 41.5 cm

Het krachtenveld der wereldeconomie (The Power Field of the World Economy), 2011
Mixed media and collage on pastel card
39.5 × 59.5
The Black Flag Collection

American Myth?, 2013
Collage, acrylic, oil pastels and ink on paper
35.6 × 27.7 cm
Collection of Marc Schepers, Antwerp

Ne jamais banaliser Sade (Never Trivialise Sade), 2015
Felt-tip pen on paper
29.5 × 21 cm

Blowing, Cursing & Repeating, 2016
Ballpoint pen, pencil, coloured pencil, pastel and charcoal on paper
32 × 21 cm

Het bovenstaande model (The Above Model), 2017
Ballpoint pen, pastel and charcoal on paper
21 × 28.1 cm

Moslima (Muslim Woman), 2017
Felt-tip pen and pastel on paper
30.3 × 22.8 cm

CHAPTER TWO

SPACE, ELEMENTAL POWERS AND RELIGION 1980–2003

My installations deal with topical problems of contemporary artistic survival related to the restoration of impaired functions of the central nervous system. The fundamental principles underlying the work of the brain, which enabled it to function for many years without interruption, today command the interest of experts not only in medicine, biology and science, but in art as well. This is because these principles can be utilised to make survival mechanisms more reliable.

1. = *Basic*, 1980

Installation: plastic curtain, plastic flooring, phosphorescent water, black lights and various painted elements on Plexiglas, Darvic and PVC (Displayed in purpose-built volume, 360 × 360 × 300 cm)

This is an installation made of 17 pieces of PVC and Plexiglas that I found in the waste container of the factory where I worked from the late 1970s to the mid-1980s. I painted abstract symbols and idioms on them, fragments of science and human signs. The painted things hung in a plastic spiral in the middle of the room. The texts on the wall that I connected to each other in a criss-cross fashion by means of electricity wire seemed to float in space because I used black light. I had made my first computer animation in 1977 using BASIC, one of the first consumer computer languages. So I chose = *Basic* as the title. The installation was a thinking machine – an idea you could enter.

Wall texts:

1. How reliable is the brain?
2. Can a brain grow limbs?
3. Timing = event which requires the movement of electrical signs.
4. Man must strive for self-improvement/truly intelligent lifelike machines are being built.
5. Stupidity = lovely to look at, delightful to eat.
6. A softer look at a brighter future.
7. The world of thinking = naked.
8. The variety of computer systems can create considerable confusion in the

- mind of the computer consumer.
9. Basic = building blocks from which more complex techniques may be constructed.
 10. Accidents are rare but they happen.
 11. Simply send me the title of your innovation.
 12. What would you do in orbit?
 13. The nature of reality = a multiplicity of universes
 14. Humans constantly need to remember.
 15. Individual elements of complex systems do not possess the properties of the systems!
 16. Everything = light + no-silence.
 17. Brain speeds up with the heart.

2. *Indépendance*, 1981

Painting: house paint, acrylic and polyester on Plexiglas
200 × 147.5 × 0.5 cm

This painting was first shown in the exhibition 'Industriële Typen' ('Industrial Types') in 1982, my first at Zeno X Gallery in Antwerp. After the decolonisation of Belgian Congo in 1960, many Congolese men thought that the word *indépendance* meant 'a beautiful blonde woman'. That was what they had fought for. The pyramids are African, too. What is knowledge? In this work, I started using figurative elements, whereas before there were only texts, signs and symbols in my paintings.

3. *De mens in het dier* (*The Human in the Animal*), 1983

Three double-sided collages/paintings:

acrylic, adhesive foils on Darvic
Each: 100 × 150 × 0.2 cm (total: ca. 100 × 450 cm)
The Black Flag Collection

1A. *Kop van man/Hypnose met kip*
(*Man's Head/Hypnosis with Chicken*)

1B. *Nonnen met kind/Interieur*
(*Nuns with Child/Interior*)

2A. *Hypnose met kip/Centaur met vrouw*
(*Hypnosis with Chicken/Centaur with Woman*)

2B. *Hypnose met vrouw/Kop van man*
(*Hypnosis with Woman/Head of Man*)

3A. *Interieur/Hypnose met vrouw*
(*Interior/Hypnosis with Woman*)

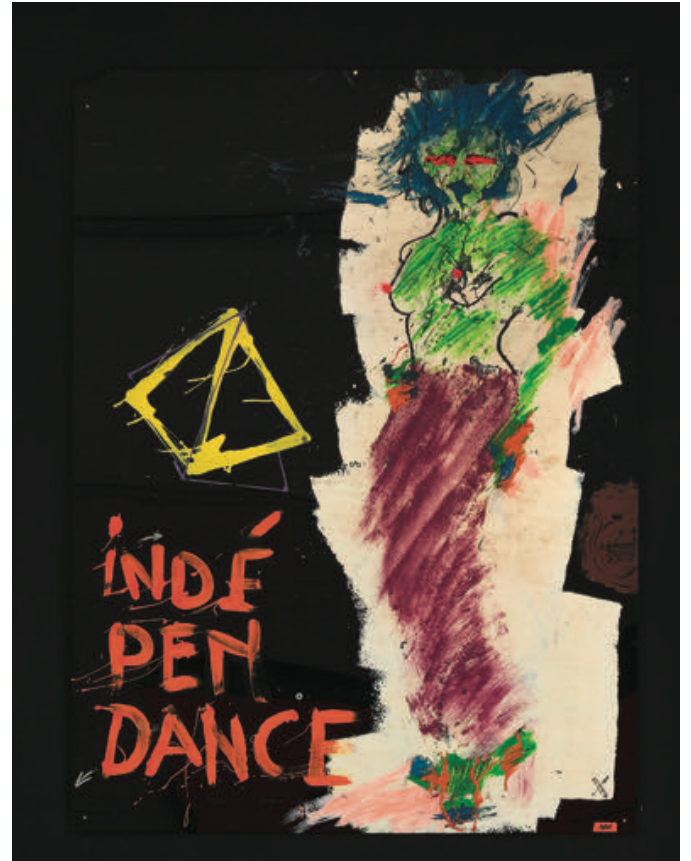
3B. *Centaur met vrouw/Nonnen met kind*
(*Centaur with Woman/Nuns with Child*)

Three panels in plastic Darvic are installed next to each other in the middle of the room. On the front and back two by two the images of six subjects are cut out and/or painted in intense colours and put in different relations to each other. We have a nun with a child, an interior in perspective, a centaur with a child, a bold man's head, a doctor hypnotising a woman, a doctor hypnotising a chicken. Later, texts were added.

4. *Witte zon/Zwart vierkant* (*White Sun/Black Square*), 1988
Painting: silkscreen paint on Trovicel with iron hinges



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4

400 × 400 × 0.5 cm
Zwarte zon/Wit vierkant
(Black Sun/White Square)
 1988

Painting: silkscreen paint on Trovicel
 with iron hinges
 400 × 800 × 0.5 cm

These are elements from the sliding decor for *Ballet in Wit* (*Ballet in White*), a production by choreographer Marc Vanrunxt from 1988 in which five dancers perform cosmic rituals. The hand-painted mandalas on PVC express notions such as melancholia, God and time. The alternation between day and night, the subdivision of a day into 24 hours, the duality of dark and light: those were the themes.

I designed the images in the laboratory for artificial intelligence at the Free University of Brussels (VUB), with a *Symbolics, Inc.* programme on a Lisp machine, the first commercial workstation. I have greatly increased the computer output, which makes the pixellation almost friendly, and then hand-painted it on PVC with silkscreen paint. My work at VUB inspired me to

attend an evening course in animated film at the Academy of Merksem, in 1983, which then led to the film *De 4 uitersten* (*The 4 Extremes*), based on Marc Vanrunxt's four short dances.

5. Atman/Wombman, 1988
 Collage/painting: plastic foil and silkscreen paint on Trovicel with iron hinges
 370 × 244 × 0.5 cm
 The Black Flag Collection

A work in three parts connected with iron hinges. Here, the woman manifests herself as an elemental force. Two books were an inspiration for this work: *Pure Lust: Elemental Feminist Philosophy* by Mary Daly from 1984, and a recruitment booklet of The Order of the Great Companions, in which I discovered the Sanskrit word *ātman* (self, soul).

6. 3 Altaren (3 Altars), 1989
 Collages/paintings: silkscreen paint and plastic foil on Trovicel with iron hinges, mounted on wood

Each 127 × 245 × 127 × 4 cm
 Private collection, courtesy Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp

A series of three, each divided into two parts connected to each other with iron hinges, which allows one part to lean against the wall while the other lies on the floor.

The first altar is made for the moon, the second for the sun, and the third for the earth. The moon altar shows an image of a woman offering her breasts, like Dea Nutrix in antiquity. She looks down. Her right breast is yellow, her left breast grey: an allusion to how the moon is illuminated by the projection of sunlight onto its surface. The woman figure on the sun altar looks out of the negative, with golden hair, laughing, right into your face. When you look into the sun you become blind. On the third altar there is a stirring couple, over which a swastika is shedding its edges, becoming a cross. The depictions are made in such a way that they seem to detach themselves from their medium when you observe them from a certain point.

7. Dieper (Deeper), 2003
 Multi-media installation: two projections and turning table
 Dimensions variable, 44'04"
 Collection of Museum Abteiberg
 Mönchengladbach

Dieper is a computer film made around and together with dancer Marc Vanrunxt: a numerological, existentialist portrait in 19 successive scenes. With the number 19, the philosopher's stone is encountered. Lead becomes gold. The scenes are separated from each other by five fundamental forces, so the solution in the end becomes 24. The 24 dorsal vertebrae are the 24 hours of the day.

The anti-strategy of every modernistic rule of reduction loses its power in the inevitable confrontation with the abstract systems of radical negation and refusal. *Deeper* uses that modernist rule of reduction as an element of style to descend into the essence of matter by use of some kind of anti-evil – and therefore also to descend into thought, searching for the immoral, the anti-matter. Deeper into the substance, further away from hell, along with symbolism, into the abysses of the human, that is the intention.



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6

CHAPTER THREE

ART/SCIENCE = LOGIC/FUTURE

1976–1991

Human perception is by necessity complex. Insight into the evolution of visual perception shows that the evolving nature of art forms is interwoven with human patterns of behaviour. Collage, montage, manipulation, indoctrination, information – these five words are, for me, the twentieth century in a nutshell. They are concepts that defined me as a person born in 1951 – but listing them, and their interchangeability, also had an effect. Brainwashing, education, upbringing... I always felt they were one and the same thing. As a human being, I feel obliged to push through it with eyes wide open, to use, transcend and handle it.

1. 7 stripverhalen (7 Cartoons), 1976
(Displayed in vitrine)

These are the original drawings for seven silkscreens on Velin d'Arches paper, in an edition of 100, each 20 × 26 cm, in a white Cromcote cover and with an 'adstruction' by linguist Marc Verreckt.

This was my first act as a conscious artist. Every comic strip shows a position I take. About overpopulation, craving for the good that might fall from heaven, friendship, the utopia of emigrating to space, regret, betrayal and deception, and recuperation of someone else's misfortune.

The series encompasses the following elements:

1. Andermans ongeluk laaft
(*Schadenfreude*)

Drawing: ink on paper
16.3 × 27 cm

2. De vrijheid wenkt in de lucht
(*Freedom Beckons in the Air*)

Drawing: ink on paper
15.7 × 25.3 cm

3. Een nieuwe; slechts als er 1 afvalt...
(*A New One; Only if 1 Disappears...*)

Drawing: ink on paper
21.1 × 28.4 cm

4. Het leger waakt
(*The Army Wakes*)

Drawing: ink on paper
19.7 × 27 cm

5. Leve de non-konformisten!
(*Long Live the Non-Conformists!*)

Drawing: ink on paper
16.7 × 27 cm

6. Uit de lucht komt het geluk
(*From the Air Comes Happiness*)

Drawing: ink on paper
17.2 × 26.9 cm

7. Waarom nog mannen?
(*Why Still Men?*)

Drawing: ink on paper
19 × 27 cm

**2. Kunst/Wetenschap = Logica/
Toekomst (Art/Science = Logic/Future),
1978–1981**

I started to work with Plexiglas and PVC because it was a societal trend in the 1970s to reject synthetic materials, since they didn't perish. So I decided plastic was the ideal medium to make art, precisely because of its perpetuity. I have always loved plastic, and I used it in an urge to make another kind of beautiful things. There is anger and protest in these works. I use signs that bear the future within themselves, I use new ways of thinking and representing, things which are autonomous. The notions of shape and colour, as separate entities, are being replaced. This is the beginning of a research on information.

The series encompasses the following elements:

Handtekening (Signature), 1978
Painting: acrylic and felt-tip pen on Plexiglas

52.2 × 55 cm
Courtesy Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp,
and Galerie Barbara Thumm, Berlin

Arts Imitate Science, 1979

Painting: acrylic and felt-tip pen on Plexiglas
60 × 79 cm
Courtesy Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp,
and Galerie Barbara Thumm, Berlin

Black Hole, 1979

Painting: acrylic and felt-tip pen on Plexiglas
41 × 79 cm
Courtesy Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp,
and Galerie Barbara Thumm, Berlin

**De leegte waarom (Emptiness Why),
1979**

Painting: acrylic and felt-tip pen on Plexiglas
56.5 × 102 cm
Courtesy Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp,
and Galerie Barbara Thumm, Berlin

Mechanochemistry, 1979

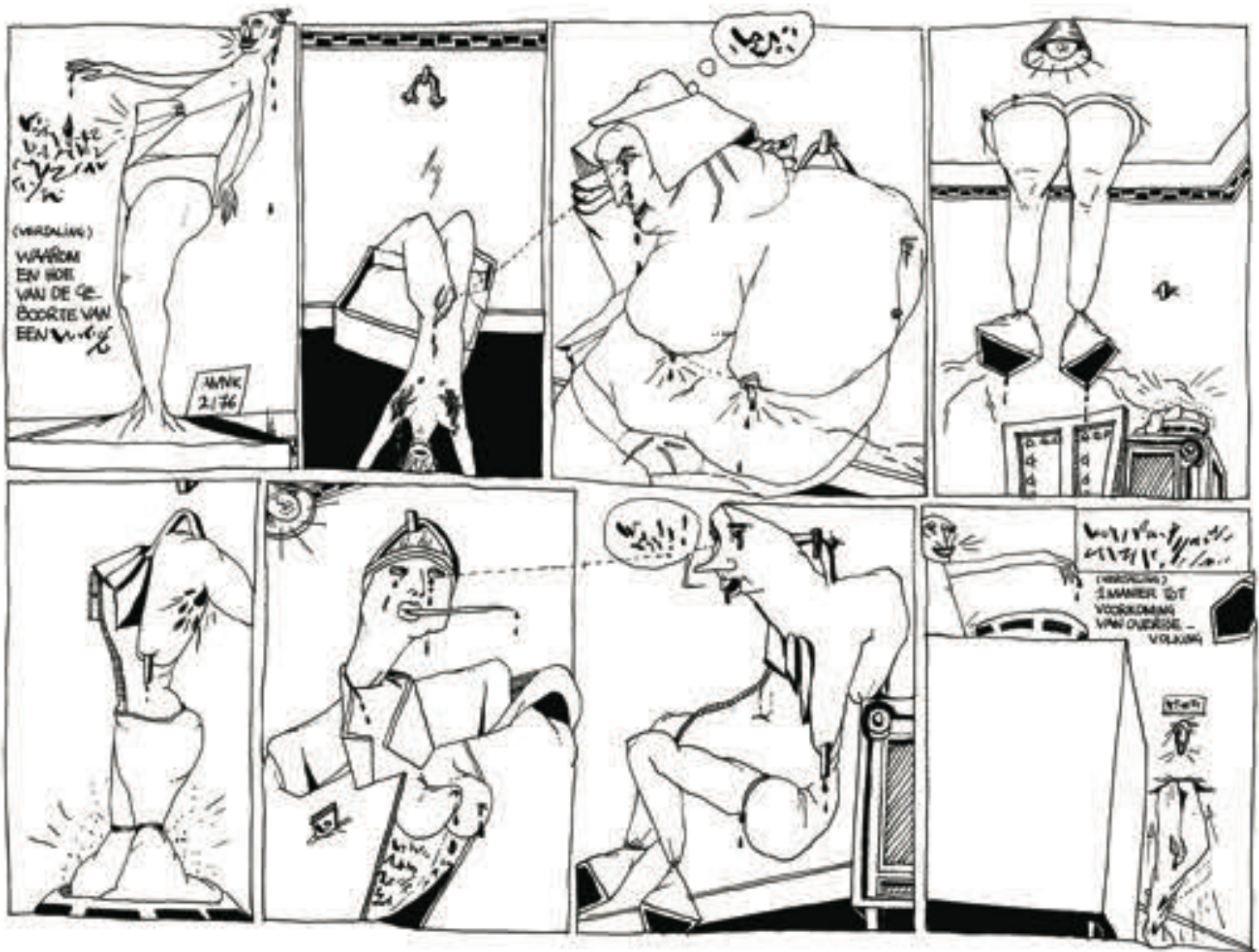
Painting: acrylic and felt-tip pen on Plexiglas
52 × 73.6 cm
Courtesy Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp,
and Galerie Barbara Thumm, Berlin

(Sagt W) 1 ((Says W) 1), 1979

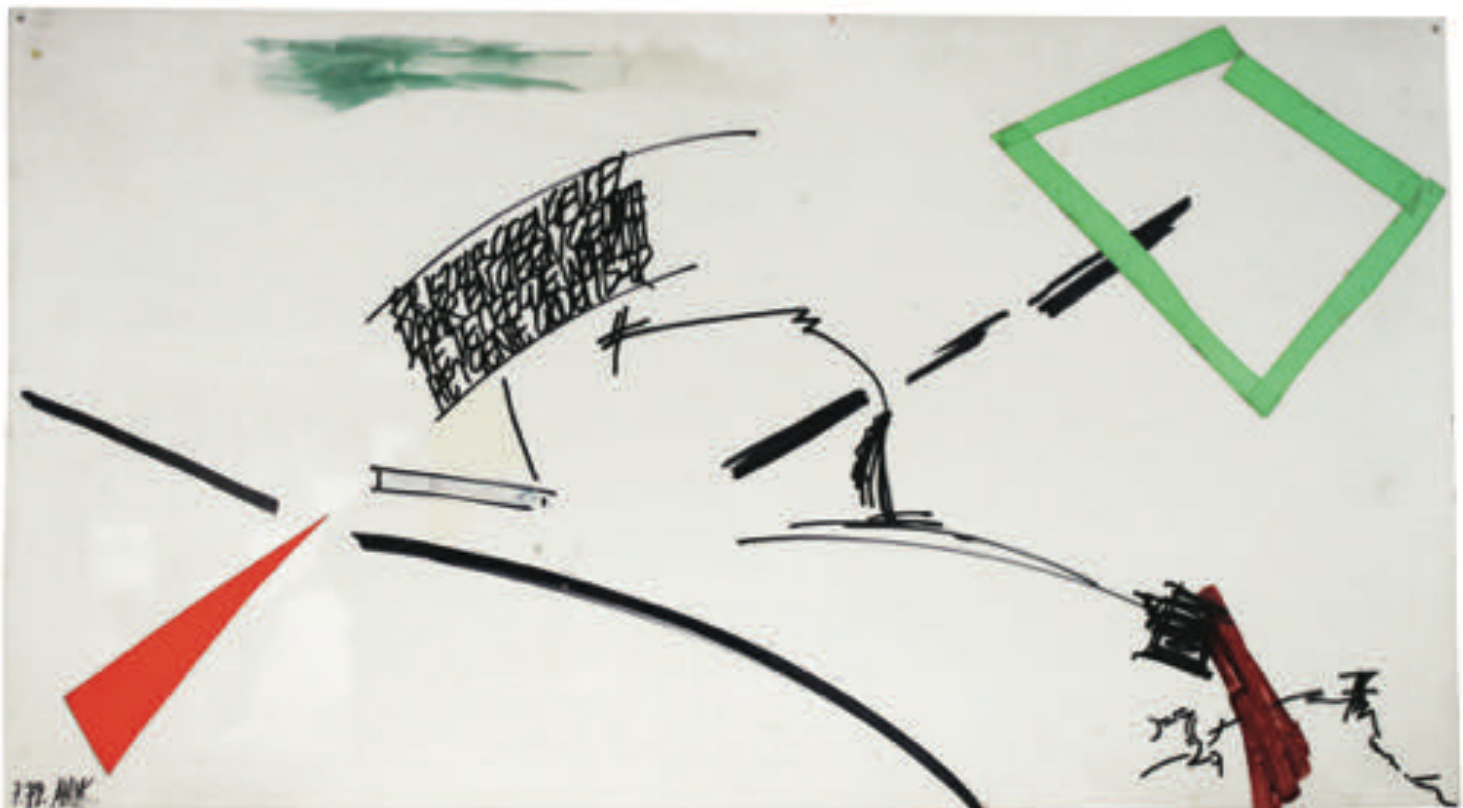
Painting: acrylic and felt-tip pen on Darvic
40.5 × 36 cm
Courtesy Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp,
and Galerie Barbara Thumm, Berlin

(Sagt W) 2 ((Says W) 2), 1979

Painting: acrylic and felt-tip pen on Darvic
40.5 × 36 cm



1



2

Courtesy Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp,
and Galerie Barbara Thumm, Berlin

Zonder titel (Untitled), 1979

Painting: acrylic and felt-tip pen on
Plexiglas
49 × 51 cm

Blauw abstract (Blue Abstract), 1980

Painting: acrylic and felt-tip pen on
Plexiglas
33 × 43 cm

Life Is 3.5 Billion Years Old, 1980

Painting: acrylic and felt-tip pen on
Darvic
27.8 × 42.4 cm
Courtesy Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp,
and Galerie Barbara Thumm, Berlin

Toestand met zwarte rechthoek

(*Situation with Black Rectangle*), 1980
Painting: acrylic and felt-tip pen on
Plexiglas
50 × 85 cm
Courtesy Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp,
and Galerie Barbara Thumm, Berlin

OK, 1981

Painting: felt-tip pen on Plexiglas
15 × 15 cm

Zonder titel (Untitled), 1981

Painting: acrylic and felt-tip pen on
Plexiglas
28 × 47.5 cm

Zonder titel (Untitled), 1981

Painting: acrylic and felt-tip pen on
Plexiglas
30.4 × 49.2 cm

3. Photographic Documentation of Installations, Late 1970s – early 1980s
(Displayed in vitrine)

4. 26 Artist's Pages, 1979–1991

Digital prints

The selection encompasses the
following elements:

Arts Imitate Science, 1979

Centrefold for *Artzien*, Amsterdam

Identified Flying Colonialists, 1980

Proposal for *Soldes/Fin de série* No.7,
Brussels

Future/Logics + Arts/Science, 1980

Statement for exhibition at Art
Something, Amsterdam

A Woman Looks at a Man's World, 1980

Back cover of self-published booklet,
Antwerp

**Place = Intelligence + Colour/
Consciousness/Time, 1980**

Sketch about the meaning of a city, New
York

**Komfort über Alles! (Comfort above
All!), 1980**

P.12 from self-published manual for
exhibition at Salon O, Leiden

**Komfort über Alles! (Comfort above
All!), 1980**

P.13 from self-published manual for
exhibition at Salon O, Leiden

1st Neocolonialistic Operation, 1981

Exhibition manual for Art Garden
Show, Kassel

2nd Neocolonialistic Operation, 1981

Contribution to *Schvantz*, Frankfurt am
Main

3rd Neocolonialistic Operation, 1981

Exhibition manual for Echelle 1,
Brussels

4th Neocolonialistic Operation, 1981

Exhibition manual for installation
at the 'Kleines Ausstellungsraum' at
Künstlerhaus Hamburg

Pseudo-Exposit, 1981

Exhibition poster, Antwerp

5th Neocolonialistic Operation, 1982

Exhibition manual for installation in
Usine de Pali Kao, Paris

La Prospective, 1982

P. 53 of *Hersens met Horens*, self-
published book

**Hoeren and profeten (Whores and
Prophets), 1982**

Exhibition manual, Brussels

**Ons vervolgverhaal A (Our Serialised
Novel A), 1982**

Page in *Force Mental* No.1, Antwerp

**Ons feuilleton, episode nr 2 (Our
Serialised Novel No.2), 1982**

Page in *Force Mental* No.2, Antwerp

**Ons feuilleton, episode nr 3 (Our
Serialised Novel No.3), 1982**

Page in *Force Mental* No.3, Antwerp

**Ons feuilleton, episode nr 4 (Our
Serialised Novel No.4), 1983**

Page in *Force Mental* No.4, Antwerp

**Ons feuilleton, episode nr 5 (Our
Serialised Novel No.5), 1983**

Page in *Force Mental* No.5, Antwerp

**Ons feuilleton, episode nr 9 (Our
Serialised Novel No.9), 1984**

Page in *Force Mental* No.9, Antwerp

**Ons feuilleton, episode nr 10 (Our
Serialised Novel No.10), 1984**

Page in *Force Mental* No.10, Antwerp

**Ons feuilleton, episode nr 12 (Our
Serialised Novel No.12), 1985**

Page in *Force Mental* No.12, Antwerp

**Ons feuilleton, episode nr 14 (Our
Serialised Novel No.14), 1986**

Page in *Force Mental* No.14, Antwerp

**Ons feuilleton, episode nr 15 (Our
Serialised Novel No.15), 1987**

Page in *Force Mental* No.15, Antwerp

What–Where Connection, 1991

Contribution to the catalogue for the
Wetware Convention at De Melkweg,
Amsterdam

**5. Komfort über Alles! (Comfort above
All!), 1980**

Elements from installation at De
Warande in Turnhout, Belgium:
four paintings, from a series of five

The rational solution of problems puts
people in a pleasant state, which from
a psychological point of view is a result
of the desire for submission and has
nothing to do with one's own person.
The so-called therapeutic effect,
which the work of art has for the artist,
does not consist in aesthetic pleasure
but in discomfort and in an intended
assertion of influence. Viewers go
through the same stages, and for them
they lead to enrichment.

I divided the large playroom at De
Warande into five fields, corresponding
to the five steps that are necessary
for resolving a problem. These five
steps are five machines, five works on
Plexiglas that derive their therapeutic
function from their suspension, their
colour, their material and their images,
which all create a paranoid, confused
and completely unpleasant situation.

In connection with experimental
theories on the elasticity of solid
bodies, I weighted the images in
such a way that they ranged from full
condition (1) to a perfectly balanced
harmony between colour, material,
form and number (5). The number five
stands for the Hierophant or master.

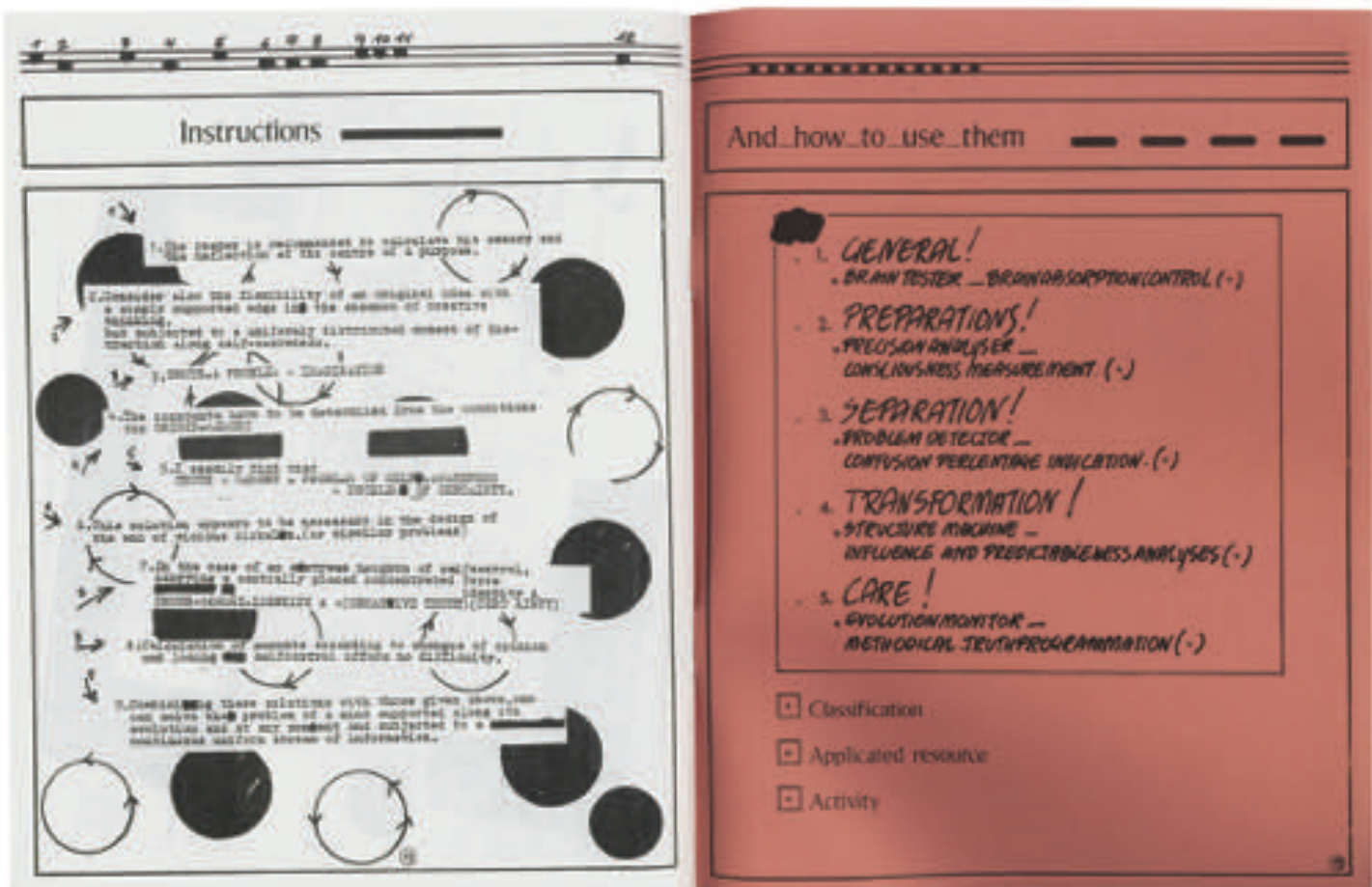
On the floor there were carefully
drawn instructions on how to walk.
There were chairs to rest in and a
booklet with explanations. It was a
dissection of every single obsession
that would soon be observed in
ultraviolet and later in halogen
light. The exhibition was videotaped
according to my instructions.



3



4



4

The series encompasses the following elements:

1. *Brain Tester*

Painting: acrylic, silkscreen paint and felt-tip pen on Plexiglas
105 × 120 × 0.3 cm
Courtesy Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp, and Galerie Barbara Thumm, Berlin

2. *Precision Analyser*

Painting: acrylic, silkscreen paint and felt-tip pen on Plexiglas
95 × 120 × 0.3 cm
Courtesy Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp, and Galerie Barbara Thumm, Berlin

3. *Problem Detector*

Painting: acrylic, silkscreen paint and felt-tip pen on Plexiglas
95 × 120 × 0.3 cm
Courtesy Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp, and Galerie Barbara Thumm, Berlin

5. *Evolution Monitor*

Painting: acrylic, silkscreen paint and felt-tip pen on Plexiglas
95 × 129 × 0.3 cm

6. *Self-Published Books and Pamphlets*, 1980–1983 (Displayed in vitrine)

The selection encompasses the following publications:

A Woman Looks at a Man's World, 1980
Self-published pamphlet, Antwerp
27.5 × 21.5 cm

Antibodies, 1980
First digital AMVK text on LISP, digital print
30 × 24,8 cm

Future/Logics + Arts/Science, 1980
Manual for exhibition at Art Something, Amsterdam
29.7 × 21 cm

Komfort über Alles! (Comfort above All!), 1980
Manual for exhibition at De Warande, Turnhout
29.7 × 21 cm

Komfort über Alles! (Comfort above All!), 1980
Manual for exhibition at Salon O, Leiden
19 × 14.6 cm

Public Annemy Nr 1, 1980
Self-published pamphlet, Antwerp
24.5 × 20.8 cm

Force Mental No.1, June 1982, Antwerp
42 × 30 cm

Hersens met horens (Brains with Horns), 1983
Personal survey of six years of creation, Antwerp
29.7 × 21 cm

7. *Stress = (Proviand + Politiek) × (Jugend + Poison)*, 1981
Installation: silkscreen paint on 15 Plexiglas panels, marker on five artificial leather pieces, seven accolades, etc. in plastic tape on Plexiglas, five blueprints on paper
Dimensions variable, central text piece ca. 60 × 250 cm
The element *Proviand*: collection of L.J. De Schutter, Belgium; the elements *Politiek* and *Jugend*, private collection, Belgium

This installation was first shown at the 'Kleines Ausstellungsraum' in the Künstlerhaus Hamburg and consists of paintings of women and Esperanto words thematising five different concepts. The intention was to conjure up a visual field of information and association, to disconnect reality from the place where consciousness is not present by raising awareness; it is in itself awareness of the now, and this by causing overstimulation, relying on the personal inhibition limit of each spectator separately.

The original installation can be described as follows:

A. From the ceiling, along the wall, I presented five relations between concepts:

1. On Plexiglas panels (each 13.5 × 28 cm): sex, numbers (in acrylic and markers).
2. On Plexiglas panels: images (of pin-ups), each connected to a concept (stress, provisions) of which the sum total was as large as the wall (in tape, acrylic and marker).
3. On five Plexiglas panels (black) and five fluorescent sheets of artificial leather: drawings and texts in German and Esperanto on the elementary principles of 'life'.
4. On the floor: five blueprints (100 × 150 cm), printed from lighter to darker, with five identical presentations of developments in politics, economics and industry.
5. Also on the floor: five white cards, also with a combination of 'stress' and 'provisions'...

B. These elements should be understood as series, both horizontally and vertically.

C. Yet I connected the vertical series to each other with black electric cabling, to create a confusing division of the space.

D. From the other side of the wall I was shouting out explanatory texts, which didn't directly relate to the series but followed a similar basic pattern of thought.

E. There was an information sheet for visitors.

8. *Zelfportretten en andere (Self-Portraits and Others)*, 1981

These are attempts at idea formation on waste scraps of Plexiglas, and this via the abstract feeling around words and images, their outer forms, their meaning, their sound; my attempts to squeeze myself into all that.

The series encompasses the following elements:

1+3 Elementen (1+3 Elements), 1981
Painting: acrylic and marker on Plexiglas
32 × 32.3 cm

System/Problem, 1981
Painting: acrylic and marker on Plexiglas
27.5 × 37 cm

Zelf-portret 1 (Self-Portrait 1), 1981
Painting: acrylic and marker on Plexiglas, plastic letters
30.5 × 30.5 cm

Zelf-portret 2 (Self-Portrait 2), 1981
Painting: acrylic and marker on Plexiglas
27 × 37 cm
Courtesy Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp, and Galerie Barbara Thumm, Berlin

Zelf-portret 3 (Self-Portrait 3), 1981
Painting: acrylic and marker on Plexiglas
27 × 37 cm
Courtesy Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp, and Galerie Barbara Thumm, Berlin

Mind, Antimatter and Mine, 1981
Painting: acrylic and marker on Plexiglas mirror
29.5 × 40.5 cm
Courtesy Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp, and Galerie Barbara Thumm, Berlin



6



7



8

Ben ik een systeem? (Am I a System?),
1981
Text engraved into Darvic
38 × 25.6 cm

9. *De 4 uitersten/Story Board (The 4 Extremes/Story Board)*, 1984
56 images for animated film: different techniques such as felt-tip drawings, photocopies and collages
Each 29.7 × 21 cm
Private collection, Belgium

De 4 uitersten (The 4 Extremes), 1984
16mm animated film, digitised, sound, 5'57"
Shown on Sony monitor on plinth

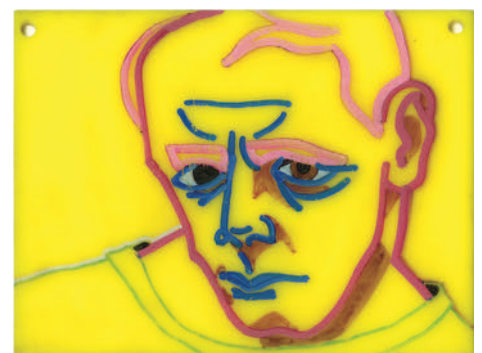
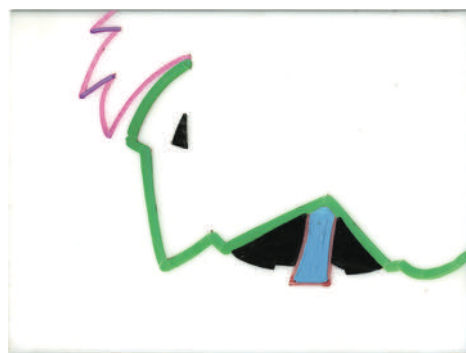
You can reach a certain state of glory when following the *Spiritual Exercises* by St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Jesuit Order. Death, Judgment, Heaven and Hell are the Jesuits' Four Extremes. These are the stages that must be followed to reach that state of grace in which sin – Evil – is constrained. I made my own extremes in which, through banality and repetition, sacrifice and devotion, I concluded that Evil only exists by the grace of Good, and vice versa.

The 16mm animation matches the four big works that are my own extremities: *Ad Nauseam*, *O Altitudo Divinitatis*, *Homo Bulla* and *Unde Malum?* *Homo Bulla* is the one that particularly deals with the Jesuits, who regard life as a soap bubble, to be lived but nothing more. *Unde Malum?* is a rhetorical gnostic question which means: but where does evil come from in spite of the fact that we all know that good is the right way? The film, based on the *Spiritual Exercises*, ends with a centaur weeping for the loss of mythical consciousness.

10. *Artificiële intelligentie/Een kwestie van hormonen (Artificial Intelligence/A Question of Hormones)*, 1985
Ten paintings, acrylic and felt tip pen on Plexiglas
Each 15 × 20 cm
(Displayed in vitrine, with poster from AI Conference in Brighton)



9



10

CHAPTER FOUR

ON WOMEN IMAGES

1980–2018

Keeping records on images of women and on words from particular fields made me at a certain point combine them – much in the same way that car dealers present their newest products with the help of barely dressed females.

I use my computer to collect these images, to create systems in order to reveal things while working on them. Thus the information becomes the form, a tool; it becomes the canvas on which I work. The information, the data, becomes the paint, a mixed storage of past, present and future intelligence.

My systematic use and re-use of images of women from the nude press up until the Sexual Revolution shows a highly important dichotomy of the mass media: the contemporary, aesthetic fascination for evil and negative information versus the commercialisation – and thus abstraction – of desire.

FORERUNNERS: BRAINS WITH HORNS 1980–1995

1. *Why It's Better at Databank*, 1980/92

Monoprint and painting: acrylic on two layers of Plexiglas with magnetic back
44.5 × 40 × 0.4 cm

A text that I wrote in New York in 1980, and on top of it a self-portrait. Different materials and techniques glued to a piece of waste Plexiglas. A work about the individual's relationship to the database. Green is the colour of peace and comfort. A tribute to the database. It is so calming to be in the database.

2. *Girl Illustrated*, 1981

Painting: acrylic and silkscreen paint on Plexiglas
40 × 28 cm

3. *Callas*, 1981

Painting: acrylic, felt tip-pen and marker on Plexiglas
30.0 × 48.0 cm

Part of 'Industriële Typen' ('Industrial Types'), my first exhibition at Zeno X Gallery in Antwerp in 1982.

4. *Woman with Green Hair*, 1982

Painting: acrylic and silkscreen paint on Plexiglas
40.5 × 42.5 cm

Painting made for the installation *39 Steps vs 18 Keys* in the space Production Hair in London in 1983.

5. *Akute rheumatische myocarditis*

(*Acute Rheumatic Myocarditis*), 1992
Collage/painting: acrylic, photography and Plexiglas on Trovicel, mounted in wooden box
68 × 53 × 0.4 cm
Collection of Mia Van Hool, Belgium

A fragmented heart patient with a Belgian street in the background. In 1993 I found a book in Vienna with faces of people suffering from heart conditions. The diagnoses are made on the basis of the colours appearing on diseased people's faces. A related way of interpreting things is provided by schizophrenia. We live, simultaneously, on several levels, but also isolated from each other. Our direct environment falls into pieces. We alienate from the objects around us. Shifts occur between dimensions that normally remain separated from each other.

6. *Roze borsten* (*Pink Breasts*), 1993

Series of 18 digital prints on Diasac with Plexiglas and PVC, with magnetic back
Each 20.7 × 29.7 × 0.4 cm

Digital drawings of variations of women's breasts in relation to their own hands.

7. *On the Nature of Beauty and the Constitution of the Intellect*, 1993

Five paintings on Plexiglas
Displayed in a row: 350 × 65 cm

Concerning elimination, reduction, certain methods of abbreviation, interpretation, and the conditions of

a certain solution. Five paintings on Plexiglas with images of women for concepts borrowed from the book *An Investigation of the Laws of Thought* (1854) by philosopher-mathematician George Boole. The five works served as a structure for *Moses und Aaron*, my installation based on the opera by Arnold Schoenberg for the exhibition 'Wunschmaschinen' at Fotogalerie WUK in Vienna.

The series encompasses the following elements:

1. *Over eliminatie* (*On Elimination*)

Painting, acrylic, silkscreen paint and marker on Plexiglas
36 × 50.5 cm

2. *Over reductie* (*On Reduction*)

Painting: acrylic, silkscreen paint and spray paint on Plexiglas
49 × 65.5 cm

3. *Over bepaalde methodes van verkorting* (*On Certain Methods of Abbreviation*)

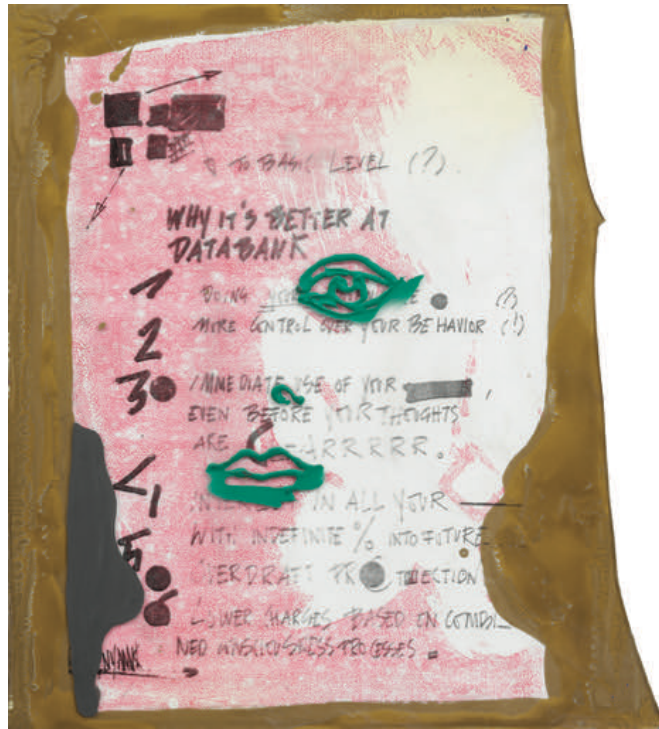
Painting: acrylic, silkscreen paint and marker on Plexiglas
35 × 65.5 cm

4. *Over interpretatie* (*On Interpretation*)

Painting: acrylic, silkscreen paint and marker on Plexiglas
60 × 60 cm

5. *Over de voorwaarden voor een oplossing* (*On the Conditions for a Solution*)

Painting: acrylic, silkscreen paint, marker and spray paint on Plexiglas,
34.6 × 51.4 cm



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8. *Attributen en substantie* (*Attributes and Substance*), 1993

Painting/engraving/collage: Plexiglas mounted on painted wooden box
99.5 × 150 × 6 cm

Collection of M HKA/Flemish Community, Antwerp

The painted engraving shows the improvised 'scaffolding' upon which my live model at Royal Academy of Fine Arts Ghent (KASKG), at a given moment, had to pose during the drawing classes I gave there. On top, I glued three painted panels: one shows a bourgeois interior with ambiguous impact, the others a divided female figure with texts. These I smashed and reconstructed. The upper part reads 'shape and control' and the lower part 'barriers and openings'.

**HEADNURSE: SEX AND TECHNOLOGY
1995–2005**

Between 1995 and 2005, I made a number of 'HeadNurse' exhibitions using a structure that I adapted to every space in which my work was shown. The multi-layered wooden display made it possible to show works in layers, like meta-data. All works made on Plexiglas or PVC had magnetic backs and were affixed to panels of metal sheeting, so that things could be easily arranged and rearranged.

HeadNurse came about at a time when I wanted to know why I was so fascinated by artificial intelligence and naked women. The whole project started in 1995 as an 'incubation project' in Bruges, at the invitation of Kunsthalle Lophem. I decided to make a combination of 96 images and 96 words, and send them to Guido Gezelle – this 'holy' poet who hated women and loved words. So I sent him 96 faxes, one every day. At the same time I was reading Mary Daly's *Pure Lust*, in which she proposed that, to remake the world, you have to remake the language we use to construct the world.

I wanted to give new value to words that had been used to promote prejudice and discrimination against the female gender. I was making the computer film *Moral Rearmament*, and at the same time I created a structure, a theory, for which I invented the name HeadNurse, a nursing specialist for the soul, an assistant for Nietzsche, a counterpart to Big Brother. As HeadNurse I want to liberate both

men and women from their mental slavery and attach aberrations and perversities in contemporary society. In the works that all this generated, I presented phenomena from our everyday reality as machines fighting, liberating and neutralising each other.

In 1991 I had bought my first home computer and started making maps, scanning and digitising images from my collection of pre-sexual revolution soft-core pornographic images of women, from the 1940s, '50s and '60s. I have too many to do them all, but I started making series. The two scans come from the scrapbooks I used to determine the series I would digitise, so the drawings relate to a certain pose, and the x, xx, xxx, or xxxx relate to this too – they are codes and ciphers, personal mnemonic devices.

In the margins of the *HeadNurse* project, I have made many separate works that have ended up being magnetically, and therefore rearrangeably, attached to the frameworks of the specially built structures. The project with the under-title *Elasticity at Home!* was dedicated to Baubo, obscene goddess of the past, looking through her nipples, speaking through her vulva, dancing in such a dirty way that all melancholic and depressed women were filled with joy again. I thought: 'Let's make an installation to fill everyone, men and women, with joy again, and this by redefining many heavy-duty words to give people a pleasant mental massage.'

***De HeadNurse structuren*
(*The HeadNurse Structures*)**

I invented the HeadNurse Structures for three reasons. First, to suggest the levels and semi-transparent meta-levels on which ideas and concepts reach us in the digital era. The magnetism has to do with the curing effect it can have on the body but also with the use of magnetism in the storing of information nowadays.

Second, I didn't want to hang my works directly on the walls of Zeno X Gallery and other art institutions anymore. This was in 1996 and the whole art market paradigm had been getting on my nerves for years.

This way of hanging gave me the possibility to feel more sovereign and in charge, and to transcend the fixation on the 'unique piece'. I wanted everybody to be able to buy my works, not only a happy few. The fact that most of the images were made in an edition of five made them rather cheap to buy. The buyer could also make a personal choice of different pieces and thus construct a new whole, to hang on

the private wall at home. I also wanted the audience, if they had a better idea, to readjust the different magnetic-backed pieces on the iron supports in the show.

The third reason: I wanted to be able to show my Sex and Technology Project in different places, and according to the stage in the whole, and to the circumstances in which I was invited, to alter and differentiate in a very practical way the outlook of the actual installation.

***Morele herbewapening. Variatie*
Fridericianum (*Moral Re-Armament: Fridericianum Variation*)**

The display encompasses the following elements:

1. *Morele herbewapening* (*Moral Rearmament*), 1996
Computer animation, sound, 12'

This film is a computer animation in five stages. Through the systematic use and reuse of women images from the nude press before the sexual revolution, an alchemic process is started. Five probes investigate a theme in five different ways and present important dichotomies to the mass media: the aesthetic fascination with evil and bad news versus commercialisation, in other words 'abstraction of desire'.

**2. *96 geërotiseerde concepten* (96
Eroticised Concepts), 1995–2000/2018**
96 digital prints on paper in Diasac (Plexiglas and PVC), with magnetic back
Each 25.2 × 34.2 × 0.8 cm

In the context of an undercover cultural project in Bruges townhouses, a space was assigned to me in the Gezelle quarter, where the poet-priest Guido Gezelle lived in the nineteenth century. The house dated from the fourteenth or fifteenth century and there was a large window in the façade, like a shop window in a red-light district. That neighbourhood needed to show more female-friendliness.

I have always felt an intrinsic connection between the use or abuse of images of women in the mass media and things that are going wrong in society. I knew from my school days that Gezelle hated women and that he kept words he found interesting in a Ling card system. Every day for 96 days I sent, by fax, a picture of a naked woman from my database, coupled with a word or notion from thermodynamics or artificial intelligence.



The women visualised are:

1. Showing their breasts without looking the viewer in the eye (36 images)
2. Completely nude except for a belt (29 images)
3. About to take off their knickers (15 images)
4. In various states of undress (9 images)
5. Touching their breasts and sex simultaneously (4 images)
6. With their dress wide open like a butterfly (3 images)

These 96 woman images became the basis of my *Moral Rearmament* project. I linked them to terms from books about the capacity for internal self-organisation within systems, about thermodynamics and knowledge representation, about methods of organisation within systems in a state of imbalance, about connectionist networks and about the possibilities to represent concepts and associations.

3. Bureau (Desk), 1997
Monoprint on PVC with magnetic back
50 × 48.5 cm

4. Fashion (f) Perversity, 1997
36 paintings: acrylic and marker on carpet samples with magnetic back
Each 24 × 15.5 × 0.5 cm
(Displayed in metal cupboard)

A series of 36 paintings on small, thick samples of floor carpet. I derived the title from the newly released biography of punk legend Vivienne Westwood. I copied 36 recent fashion silhouettes from *Vogue*, each inspired by a word from the biography, in which fairly frank language is used. Each word in this collection of drawings is also part of the figure's outfit. The 36 figures were given a magnetic back and were shown in and on an open iron industrial locker. As such, they form part of the third cycle of my 'HeadNurse' exhibitions, which carry the title 'The Required Particular'.

5. 2 Meettoestellen (2 Measuring Instruments), 1998
Two paintings, acrylic and silkscreen paint on PVC with magnetic back
Each 25 × 13.5 cm

6. 3 weegschalen (3 Pairs of Scales), 1998
Three paintings: acrylic and silkscreen paint on PVC with magnetic back
Two 18.5 × 26 cm, one 26 × 18.5 cm

7. De geest/De spoken (The Spirit/The Phantoms), 1998
Painting: acrylic and silkscreen paint on Plexiglas with magnetic back
21 × 25 cm

8. In mijn salon (In My Salon), 1998
Painting: acrylic and silkscreen paint on Plexiglas with magnetic back
23 × 28 cm

9. Perplex, 1998
Painting: acrylic and silkscreen paint on Plexiglas with magnetic back
19.5 × 20 cm

10. Prober, 1998
Painting: silkscreen paint and felt-tip pen on PVC with magnetic back
Selection of four from a series of five, each 50 × 50 × 0.2 cm

11. Prober 5, 1998
Four of five
Monotypes on PVC with magnetic back
Each 50 × 50 × 0.2 cm

12. Filosofische ruimtes (en 3 variaties) (Philosophical Rooms (and 3 variations)), 1998–2003
19 digital prints on paper in diasec (Plexiglas and PVC) with magnetic back
Each ca. 20 × 45 × 1 cm

Each *Philosophical Room* is a computer interpretation of an existing interior, in which I redefine the visual aspect according to a philosopher's mental impact. The philosopher's name becomes a presence in space in the form of a word. Each space is given a different appearance, based on the philosopher's theory. It is me, the avatar, who welcomes the specific theory in an interior that is adapted to the circumstances.

At the start of this series I put an old image of myself in the scene, always manicured towards the overall atmosphere of the transformation. By aiming in a pictorial way at an equilibrium between the mental impact of a theory, the interior that works as a hardening and glorification of the theory, specific colours and very literally the name of the philosopher, and by confronting this all with my own figure, transformed by the given mental architecture, I end up with an image that transforms inert non-life into happy relativation.

I take the liberty to relate very precisely each philosopher

with my personal evolution as a human being. In the Descartes image I am an art student; in Spinoza I am 28 in 1979. In Leibniz the 1971 image returns, but as a ghost, semi-transparent. These three transformations were part of the exhibition 'Nursing Care, in Melancholy Stupor' at M HKA in Antwerp in 1999, the fourth instalment of my 'HeadNurse' exhibition cycle.

13. Overeenkomst van onbekenden (Prada) (Similarity of Strangers (Prada)), 1998
Print on graph paper on Diasec (Plexiglas, PVC) with magnetic back
29 × 20.6 cm

These four images are from the same exhibition at M HKA and are interpretations of a then recent Prada collection. Images of machines were adjusted to each of the women. I printed out the computer imagery directly onto graph paper, with scanned imagery. The image on the left is from Zeno X, from my *HeadNurse* series.

14. HeadNurse onderverdelingen (HeadNurse Subdivisions), 2000
Laminated computer prints
Series of five, each 42 × 29.7 cm

The five steps of my *HeadNurse* project made visible in different ways on one page each.

15. Maeterlinck, 2003
Tufted woollen rug
160 × 237 cm

The design is the computer print *Maeterlinck*, one of my 19 *Philosophical Rooms*. It was executed as a 'tufted' carpet. This depicted interior is one of the salons in my parental home that for decades served as a banquet hall for the Antwerp well-to-do bourgeoisie. We, children, could hear and smell the feasts, it was part of our daily existence. We lived as a family above this specific part of the banquet halls. I'm hanging from the ceiling, together with two friends from a later stage in my life.



16. *Cumulator*, 2004

Computer animation, sound, 55'22"
Camera, editing, animation,
soundtrack: AMVK

A film compilation of all sub-animations in the interactive installation *Rorty, The Headroom*, that was made for the exhibition 'Dream Extensions' at S.M.A.K., Ghent.

17. *Morele herbewapening, gestoffeerd* (*Moral Rearmament, Upholstered*), 2005

Four upholstered chairs
Each 94 × 50 × 55 cm
One upholstered armchair
94 × 58 × 63 cm

Following a jubilee exhibition at the Industry, Labour and Textile Museum in Ghent, there was the possibility to design fabric that was to be woven on historic industrial textile machines from their collection. As part of my *HeadNurse* project, I chose to make upholstery in green and black, laced with gold lurex. I had the oak chairs that I inherited from my grandmother upholstered with it. The kaleidoscopic result, when combined with some of my 96 *Eroticised Concepts*, became an allusion to the *prima materia*, the essence out of which women live and work.

**AFTERMATH:
REVERSIBLE MODELS
OF SEDUCTION
2005–2018****1. *I'll Rob You*, 2012**

36 computer prints on Steinbach,
mounted on painted MDF
Each 36 × 27 × 1.8 cm

The originals of this series of drawings made in 2005 combine the writings of Christian mystic Marguerite Porete (burned at the stake in Paris in 1300) with those of cosmologist/scientist Giordano Bruno (burned at the stake in Rome in 1600) and philosopher/theorist Herbert Marcuse (who championed the sexual revolution in his 1955 book *Eros and Civilisation*). Learning about their convictions, I noticed how each of them was dealing with a profound, intellectual, lived pain of their own particular time and place in history: 'What happens to me when my heart and brain are no longer one?' Combined in a three-way dialogue, these three thinkers add to each other, recalling universal love for everyone and everything, and for reality itself.

2. *Determinism, Occult (Divine Proportions)*, 2009–2011

Collages/drawings on paper
Selection of eight from a series of ten,
each 40 × 30 cm

In these works I replaced the heads of models of a Berlin magazine with moons of Saturn and Jupiter. To this I added scientific schemes of optical perspective control and psychological mastering of images and gave titles in a self-made esoteric dimension.

Determinism, occult, or how I transcend, while working on found footage and quasi-provocative magazine sheets, while deliberately making a hash, and grotesquely juxtaposing strange-zoned phenomena and appointed personal dadas, a mixed feeling of erotic appropriation and artificially aroused indignation (fashion, perversion, spending power, sex) into the possibility to communicate universal values and conclusions? By means of old ritual subdivisions (numerology, numbers) I put each of the amalgams of meanings in a universal frame.

The selection encompasses the following elements:

1. *Multi-stabiliteit* (*Multi-Stability*)

Collection of Patrick Gillon and Rubenda Foubert, Belgium

3. *Determinism, Occult*

Collection of Patrick Gillon and Rubenda Foubert, Belgium

4. *Absorber*

Collection of Patrick Gillon and Rubenda Foubert

5. *Quasi-Verbinding* (*Quasi-Connection*)

Courtesy Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp, and Galerie Barbara Thumm, Berlin

7. *Model als Mediator*

Courtesy Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp, and Galerie Barbara Thumm, Berlin

8. *United States of Europe*

Courtesy Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp, and Galerie Barbara Thumm, Berlin

9. *Quasi-Centaur*

Collection of Mu.ZEE Kunstmuseum aan Zee, Ostend

10. *Non-Locality*

Collection of Mu.ZEE Kunstmuseum aan Zee, Ostend

3. *Contextual Playmates*, 2012

4 digital prints on paper, glued onto wall
Selection from a series of 7, each 75 × 114 cm

Seven pages from the magazine *French Playmate*, published in Copenhagen in 1968, supplemented by seven variations of a central abstract image. It's about elimination and censorship. They all contain a mandala that adds energy and strength to the sex-laden message of giving and taking. With each work, there's an explanation of three or four steps on what mental action you have to perform with this image – for your own wellbeing.

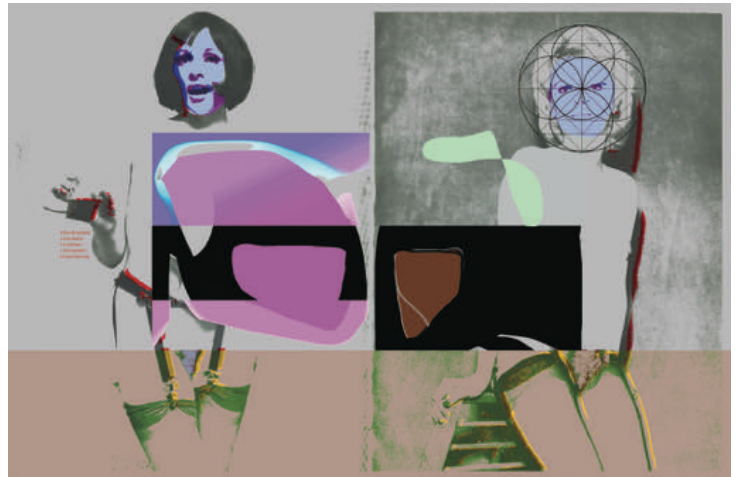
The series consists of the following elements:

1. *Arabian Star***2. *Palace of the Nine Ways*****3. *Sioux Symbol*****4. *Tiefen, dir zugekehrt* (*Depths, Turned towards You*)**

4. *Orakel* (*Ornament*), 2016–2018

Digital prints on two layers of Plexiglas, mounted on painted wooden box
224 × 157.3 × 5.5 cm
Courtesy Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp, and Galerie Barbara Thumm, Berlin

This woman is a mediator between the digital and the analogue, a contemporary oracle.



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CHAPTER FIVE

DUALITY, INERTIA AND PERVERSION

1987–1998

I use images to change concepts, to turn around beliefs, to stimulate new worlds into becoming. Any bit of information, be it visual, musical or written, is an emanation, a vapour and residue of intelligence, and thus sublimated progress. Placed in a new, experimental context, any testament to culture – even a television program or newspaper article – can be used as a door to new worlds. The ongoing growth of such elements leads to constant repositioning

within society. Limited space leads to a natural power and tendency towards degeneration. Each incremental step forward leaves the same amount of negativity in its wake. Artists live in this field of tension – it is their biotope. Philosophical social politics created exact science, which in turn is responsible for the monster we now call contemporary society.

1. *De Profundis* (From the Depths), 1987
 200 × 250 × 0.2 cm
 Painting/collage: silkscreen paint on PVC with iron hinges.

Dancing is a ritual from the depths.

2. *Spiegel* (Mirror), 1987
 Collage, plastic foil and photocopy on Darvic with aluminium strips
 200 × 200 × 0.3 cm
 Collection of Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp

An image made during the preparation for *De 5e kracht* (The 5th Force), an enlargement of a drawing that I made of an SS soldier I found in the magazine *Paris Match*. He is a beautiful soldier opening his cloak to show that he is not carrying any weapons. Next to it hangs a photocopied still from the animation for my *Video Clock L'Age d'Or No.2 + 3*. Anaked DDV as part of time towards the sun. About power, fate and fascination.

3. *Die Loreley*, 1987–1990
 Painting: acrylic and silkscreen paint of Plexiglas, mounted on aluminium
 32 portraits selected from a series of 54, each 36 × 30 cm (unless stated otherwise)
 (Displayed on four shelves)

The series *Die Loreley* consists of 54 portraits of acquaintances, friends and family members who spontaneously visited me during the period 1987–1990. I let chance decide, and asked them to come

back, to give me two hours of their time. That was the average time I needed to paint the portrait, in two 45-minute sessions. The natural light in my studio was only optimal between 11 am and 1 pm. I prepared a customised piece of Plexiglas as support and started with the white of the eyes. From there I painted the rest of the face. During the sitting, people had to look me straight in the eye.

I painted the subjects in chronological order, in the order in which they visited me, and I gave each person a line from the poem *Die Loreley*. There are nine people per stanza, and the poem has six stanzas. The intention was to link a high-quality photo print of each portrait to the specific words. In this project, the portraits are only the first step to the final work. The second phase was stopped at a certain moment because it took too long to collect enough portraits.

Heinrich Heine's nineteenth-century poem is about melancholy and inevitability – destiny in its most fatal form.

First Stanza, 1987
 Michael Moynihan, Dirk Paesmans, Jack Stevenson, Spanking Housewife No. 1, Spanking Housewife No. 2, Marc Vanrunxt

Second Stanza, 1987–1988
 Bertolt Brecht, Roger D'Hondt, Hugo Durieux (45 × 60 cm), Franz Feigl, Annie Gentils, Frank Heirman, Greet Van Broeckhoven, Chris Van Camp, Danny Van Looy

Third Stanza, 1988

Sam Gorts, Philippe Leonhard, Raf Bauwens, Karel Simons, Stef Viaene, Luc Tuymans (private collection, Antwerp), Jos Van den Bergh (private collection, Antwerp)

Fourth Stanza, 1988–1989
 Pacifique 213, Luc Steels (45 × 68 cm), Bob Swijzen (45 × 60 cm), Toni

Fifth Stanza, 1988
 Marc Ruyters, Julie Sureda (45 × 60 cm)

Sixth Stanza, 1988–1989
 Danny Devos, Dirk Pültau (private collection, Belgium), Ritt Van Kerckhoven, Ward De Belser

Die Loreley, by Heinrich Heine, 1988
 Collage: varnished paper on Plexiglas
 24.4 × 40.6 × 0.2 cm

4. *De Heilige Drievuldigheid* (The Holy Trinity), 1989
 Collage on PVC
 114 × 154 × 0.2 cm
 The Black Flag Collection

In these two works, the images of three main protagonists of the London SM scene, tied together with their penis piercings and nose piercings, served as my models for the male-protecting art world, as I experienced it in the 1990s: a sex-obsessed, self-contained pseudo-religion.

5. *De Goddelijke 3–heid* (The Divine Trinity/Sex/Art History 1900–45), 1989
 Painting and collage on Trovicel
 122 × 244 × 0.3 cm



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6. *The Devil Is a Busy Man*, 1990
 Painting/collage: plastic foil and silkscreen paint on Trovicel, mounted on painted wood
 244 × 122 × 3 cm

A portrait of the businessman as a dandy-like Mephistopheles figure, inspired by a 1948 blues song with the same title by Sunnyland Slim. I really like blues. With the wordplay 'the devil is a businessman' in mind. He does have something very tempting, such a businessman.

7. *HDTV*, 1991
 Painting: acrylic and silkscreen paint on Trovicel in painted wooden frame
 Selection of six from a series of ten, each 82 × 138 × 2.5 cm

This series was made at the time when a new TV format, HDTV, was being launched at the Photokina fair in Cologne, Germany. The wooden frames of the works match the TV screen's dimensions. Each image shows the interaction between two elements: the street and a woman, my father and my aunt Rita, my two grandmothers, Captain Zeppos and Ariane Despinal, David Lynch and Isabella Rossellini, a criminal couple killed in a taxi... images from my personal life and from the mass media are treated in the same way.

The selection encompasses the following paintings:

2 *Grootmoeders* (2 *Grandmothers*)

***Bal* (Ball)**

***Kapitein Zeppos en Ariane Despinal* (*Captain Zeppos and Ariane Despinal*)**

***Koppel in auto* (*Couple in Car*)**

***Lynch en Rossellini* (*Lynch and Rossellini*)**

***Vrouw in straat* (*Woman in Street*)**
 Private collection, Belgium

8. *Met o.a. een Hard Lichaam* (*With, amongst Other Things, a Hard Body*)
 1991
 Paintings/sculptures: silkscreen paint and collage on Trovicel on wooden doors with iron hinges
 Four of a series of five

The series encompasses the following elements:



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Alter Ego
 202 × 80 × 4.4 cm

Ectoplasma
 2 × 202 × 80 × 4.4 cm
 Private collection, courtesy Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp

Resistir
 2 × 202 × 80 × 4.4 cm

The Word Became Flesh (A Door to Nowhere)
 202 × 80 × 4.4 cm

This is a striptease in five steps, from hard to soft. Aside from the systematic unveiling of the flesh, the works embody an increasing ecstasy that gives insight into the reality of existence. Life enhanced by *l'expérience intérieure*, as suggested by Georges Bataille.

9. *Principia Cybernetica*, 1991
 Painting: silkscreen paint and collage on Trovicel mounted on painted wood
 Series of three, each 244 × 122 × 3 cm
 Collection of France Lejeune, Mechelen

The series encompasses the following elements:

Principia Cybernetica 1. Alecto

Principia Cybernetica 2. Megaera

Principia Cybernetica 3. Tisiphone

The unstoppable and ever-growing presence of computers and the powers attributed to them have given the academic world cause to consider a *Principia Cybernetica*, a kind of analogue to the *Principia Mathematica*. A team of researchers at Vrije Universiteit in Brussels tried to establish a system of cybernetic philosophy related to (1) epistemology, (2) metaphysics and (3) ethics, dealing with the highest human values.

Alecto, Megaera and Tisiphone are *Erinyen* (also known as *Moirai*). Like furies or Gorgons, they are instruments of divine revenge for human mistakes. They impersonate the human conscience, which at first defends and prevents, then judges and destroys. When revenge goddesses become *Moirai* they more specifically deal with destiny, earning them the name 'the fates' in English.

10. 5. *Effect*, 4. *Factor*, 3. *Reflex*, 2. *Instrument*, 1. *Principle*, 1991



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Painting/collage: plastic foil and silkscreen paint on Trovicel, mounted on painted wood
122 × 244 × 0.3 cm

The original is a found image of a naked woman from a soft porn magazine. She is an odalisk, waiting at the telephone. I have doubled the image on itself and added abstract elements: coloured, highlighted areas. The numbering has been inverted, going from five) to one). Normally, you produce *instruments* from a *principle*, which after a while become automatic *reflexes*, which then become a *factor* of your identity, which ultimately has an *effect* on the outside world. Those steps alight when as a woman you show stereotypical behaviour. This way, unconsciously, you serve as a hatch for certain assumptions.

11. *L'Intelligence des Fleurs* (The Intelligence of Flowers), 1993
Painting: acrylic and marker on upholstery fabric samples
Series of ten, each 41.5 × 32.5 cm

Paintings inspired by the chapters of the book by Maurice Maeterlinck with the same title from 1907.

The series encompasses the following elements:

1. *L'Intelligence des Fleurs* (The Intelligence of Flowers)
Collection of Gabi and Wolfgang Schürmann, Herzogenrath/Berlin
2. *Les Parfums* (Perfumes)
Collection of Gabi and Wolfgang Schürmann, Herzogenrath/Berlin
3. *La Mesure des Heures* (The Measuring of Hours)
4. *L'Inquiétude de notre Morale* (The Anxiety of our Morals)
5. *À Propos du Roi Lear* (Concerning King Lear)
6. *Les Dieux de la Guerre* (The Gods of War)
7. *Le Pardon des Injures* (The Pardon of Injuries)
8. *L'Accident* (The Accident)
9. *Notre Devoir social* (Our Social Duty)
10. *L'Immortalité* (Immortality)

12. *Theory of Stress*, 1993

Painting: felt-tip pen and acrylic on terrycloth fabric
Series of 45, each 33.5 × 26.9 cm
(Displayed in vitrines)

This visual array shows combinations of text and image on terrycloth. I found the words in the table of content for M. Filonenko-Borodich's *Theory of Elasticity* from 1963, a book with standard methods to solve elasticity problems. The content of this book work deals with love and struggle in relationships.

13. *Verkopen* (Selling), 1995

Painting: marker and acrylic on woollen upholstery samples
Series of nine, each 39.5 × 30.5 × 0.3 cm

My own account of the chapters from a marketing study book, with an overview of the psychological steps for convincing a client, enlivened with a coloured drawing of the accompanying scene. The use of colour shows the idea of the sales process: sometimes blue, sometimes orange, sometimes gold. Made on a sample book of expensive upholstery fabric.

CHAPTER SIX

EXPERIMENTAL FILMS

1980–2014

Already when I was finishing my studies at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Antwerp, back in the mid-1970s, I wanted to immerse myself in animated film. Animation attracted me as a medium in which I can be fully myself. As a child of the 1950s, I was also, consciously or subconsciously, aware of how montage works as a direct connection to the unconscious; how it becomes a direct perception of time. Sergei Eisenstein wrote about this back in the 1920s and 1930s.

Montage – in theory and practice – is very much a part of my filmmaking, but so is collage, like the play with coincidence that may bring us to serendipity. I also think about the various cut-up techniques of twentieth-century

Modernism. From the mid-1990s onwards, I work only in the Premiere programme, which is perhaps somewhat dated but allows me to cut and stretch and squeeze images, or reverse them, or layer them over each other. This programme enables me to work with a certain crude directness that reflects how I am.

Filmmaking also allows me to be atavistic, to go against the logic of evolution. The spiral is a fundamental idea behind many of my films. There is no plot; only a beginning and an end, and sometimes not even that. My films become waves, rhythms, interference and oscillation. Therefore, they may come across as theories, as representations of abstract meaning, rather than as stories.

1. *Komfort über Alles!* (*Comfort above All!*), 1980

Video (U-Matic), digitised, sound, 16'19"

Camera: AMVK, DDV

Editing: AMVK

Soundtrack: Willy Tielemans

Actor: AMVK

Produced by: AMVK, Club Moral, De Warande

Courtesy Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp, and Galerie Barbara Thumm, Berlin

AMVK's 'tour' of *Komfort über Alles!* at De Warande in Turnhout in 1980. The installation consisted of five paintings on fluorescent Plexiglas, functioning as machines for problem-solving: a brain tester, a precision analyser, a problem detector, a structure apparatus, an evolution monitors. There was also a pamphlet guiding visitors through the installation.

2. *De mens in het dier* (*The Human in the Animal*), 1985

Video (U-Matic), digitised, sound, 16'04"

Camera: AMVK, Paul Willems

Editing: AMVK, Lu-Group

Soundtrack: AMVK

Actors: Wouter De Ryck, DDV, Marc Vanrunxt, AMVK

Produced by: ICC Antwerp, Club Moral

On interpretation and reinterpretation. The laws of thought, moral strength, the power of the image... In the installation where the film was first presented, at the ICC in Antwerp, a central screen showed a personal visual interpretation of Aristotle's laws on being and non-being. On each side

was a smaller monitor with surveillance footage of people viewing three double-sided paintings in another room.

3. *Hier woont mijn huis* (*Here Lives My House*), 1985

Video (U-Matic), digitised, sound, 24'29"

Camera, acting: AMVK and DDV

Editing: AMVK, Lu-Group

Soundtrack: Club Moral

Produced by: Beursschouwburg, Club Moral

A tribute to my childhood home, a townhouse in Antwerp where my family organised banquets and balls for other people for 50 years. It is now a theatre. A film about my incapacity to undergo change over which I have no control. I exorcise my nostalgia and grief by sharing it with you. This film was mostly shown as a Club Moral performance with live music.

4. *Maybe This Time I Win*, 1989

Computer animation, sound, 6'2

Animation: AMVK

Editing: AMVK

Soundtrack: Distorted Lisa Minelli song from the film *Cabaret*

Produced by: ICC Antwerpen, Club Moral

A 15-minute animation in which keywords from a paper on knowledge representation in artificial intelligence are combined with the faces of 15 heart-disease patients. The colours on the patients' faces indicate what kind of disease they suffer from. The

film is an investigation of the intrinsic connection between abstract and concrete cult places, on the one hand as surviving mechanisms, on the other hand as diseases of progress and civilisation.

5. *Terezin*, 1995

Computer animation, sound, 1'49"

Image, editing, animation: AMVK

Soundtrack: Johannes Sebastian Bach,

Wer nur den lieben Gott lässt walten,

sung by Inès Verhoye

Produced by: Club Moral

Beginning of the project *Sex and Technology* where I reuse the image of women in one particular mass medium: the nude press.

Terezin uses women who cover their sex whilst looking at the one that looks. These images are connected with photos made in Theresienstadt, Czechia. I confront the aesthetisation of past terror with an insinuation of temptation, two undercover numbing systems that maintain distance and marginalisation of deep human stirrings of the soul in favour of some kind of *profitariat* of desire. I asked a friend to sing a J. S. Bach cantata of Georg Neumark's *Trostlied*: 'Wer nur den lieben Gott lässt walten' three times, and I mixed these three versions with each other.

6. *Eclips* (*Eclipse*), 1996

Computer animation, sound, 3'37"

Image, editing, animation: AMVK

Produced by: Club Moral

The film uses distorted fragments from

Michelangelo Antonioni's classic film *L'Eclisse*, 1962: close-ups of the actress Monica Vitti. The image contrast is exaggerated, which appears to exorcise her. Vitti's male opponent becomes an almost unrecognisable shadow in a layered sequence, where close-ups of fish appear. The image of the fish serves as the oldest symbol to unite both the male and the female. Who obscures whom in the eclipses made by meaning on meaning? Why do we have to think that there is a problem between men and women?

7. *The Abstract Isn't Sexually Stimulating*, 2001

Computer animation, sound, 2'59"
Image, editing, animation, soundtrack:
AMVK
Produced by: AMVK, Club Moral

Animation of a drawing from my subconscious. In movement, the abstract fantasy gradually yields to nature and mythology – only to disappear at the end, like a thought phantasy folding itself up. Between the inside and the outside, between good and evil thoughts, there is a place where the body, the mind and other forms of matter play their games.

8. *The Populace*, 2004

Computer animation, sound, 6'02"
Image, editing, animation, soundtrack:
AMVK
Produced by: Club Moral

Animation of a drawing of a Paris bourgeois interior around 1900. The pieces of furniture reach out for each other like growing plants. The animation evolves like a fungus, in imitation of human thinking. The drawing bears a quote from Sigmund Freud's *Das Unbehagen in der Kultur* (*Civilisation and Its Discontents*) from 1930.

9. *Let's Try to Find out What Goes on in the Male Barracks*, 2007

Computer animation, sound, 15'10"
Image, editing, animation: AMVK
Soundtrack: AMVK, Mauro Pawlowski, Raphaëlle Jamet, Paul Mennes, Bum Collar
Actors: Danny Devos, Guy Schraenen, Louis Wuytack, Mauro Pawlowski, Raphaëlle Jamet
Produced by: DAAD, Berlin/Club Moral

Symbolism is the bridge between nineteenth-century Romanticism and twentieth-century Modernism. Work

on this film began in the summer of 2004 in Antwerp. There I filmed the Symbolist, personified by painter and fortune-teller Louis Wuytack, and the Romantic, personified by musician Mauro Pawlowski. In December of that year I filmed body artist Danny Devos, as a personification of Modernism, in the Paris flat of the curator and editor Guy Schraenen. There is also footage from Berlin, Xiamen (China) and Vladivostok (Russia). The 16-year-old artist Raphaëlle Jamet completed the picture with her sparkle of young enthusiasm. My presence in the city of Berlin, during my one-year residency at DAAD, turned out to be decisive for this film.

10. *Interior with Tree*, 2007

Computer animation, sound, 6'
Image, editing, animation, soundtrack:
AMVK
Produced by: 1918 Artspace, Shanghai, and Club Moral

Film made during a one-month residency in Shanghai.

11. *Stranger Than Life*, 2010

Computer animation, sound, 6'30
Image, editing, animation, soundtrack:
AMVK
Produced by: AMVK

A commission from curators Edwin Carels and Anselm Franke for the exhibition 'Animism', as a replacement for a work by nineteenth-century Belgian artist Antoine Wiertz.

12. *Flashback*, 2013

Computer animation, sound, 2'49"
Image, animation, soundtrack: AMVK
Produced by: AMVK

I tried to evoke the withdrawn but upbeat atmosphere of latent aggressiveness, threat and upcoming change that was dominant in 1963 and felt by me as a teenager.

This animation doesn't give a smooth view. It is as though you assist someone else who clicks and looks. Recalling the atmosphere at the beginning of the sixties, it was gloomy and a strange brew of eroticism and violence was lurking everywhere, though at that time I was too young to discern the multitude of phenomena. Violence, transgression and romance... I made a collage with the Serge Gainsbourg song and clip *Les YéYé* (1962) and the interior of the house that modernist and banned Hungarian architect Marcel Breuer built for himself

when he had moved to the USA, where the Frenchman sings trendily about Lolita, a knife and Sing Sing prison, Marcel Breuer had fitted mid-European aesthetics into American standard high society. The overall relation between consciousness and place is schismatic after the Second World War.

13. *Une fontaine d'Aréthuse*, 2014
Computer animation, sound, 5'06"
Image, animation: AMVK

Based on a film from 1936 by Dimitri Kirsanoff, with Karol Szymanowski's music *La Fontaine d'Aréthuse*, 1910.

CHAPTER SEVEN

DIGITALISM, SEX AND THE MYSTIC

1992–2016

The arbitrary, the origin of every written and spoken language, connects to the unspoken and the mystical. From disgust to ecstasy – that is what the mystic in general is about. Urewut. The all-consuming yearning for life and love, union, and not feeling separated from the rest. No ego, no boundaries. Creation becomes one with its creator.

I call it the analogue. The analogue versus the arbitrary. The analogue stands for ritual, evil, mystery, desire, yearning and lust, while the digital represents control, technology, sublimation, dependence, cleanliness and transparency. The analogue plus the digital is our goal: perspective.

Information, like images, music and texts, its emanations, evaporations and residues: manifestations of intelligence and sublimated progress. Every testimony, even each television program and newspaper article, is, as a phenomenon, capable of opening worlds, when put in a new experimental context.

1. *JEM*, 2009

Digital prints on Plexiglas (double-sided), gesso and mirror in wooden frame
Selection of four from a series of nine, each 102.5 × 122 × 6.5 cm

The selection encompasses the following elements:

From Sink to Bed

Private collection, Belgium

Hi Honey

In My Maiden Form

Private collection, S. Hannecart, Belgium

Stripped for Action

The Black Flag Collection

I scan different pages from a magazine called *JEM* and start working with them. I also add texts until I have a perfect image on my computer, here in a size of one by two meters. Then I start to disassemble the image in layers. I print the parts obtained in a factory, on different sheets of Plexiglas, and paint them by hand, which changes the meaning of the colours and shapes. The rear surface is a mirror, so that all aspects of the different layers can enter the game.

2. *Playgirls*, 2014

Painting/collage: casein, acrylic and spray paint with digital prints on two sheets of PVC, mounted on painted wooden box
Selection of six from a series of 12 + 2, each 100 × 150 × 6.5 cm

The selection encompasses the following elements:

Cette âme a pris congé des vertus (Chap.21) (This Soul Bode Farewell to Virtues: Chapter 21)

L'âme ne peut rien d'elle-même (Chap.34) (The Soul Can Do Nothing by Herself: Chapter 34)

En quoi, de quoi et pourquoi (Chap.57) (Where, Whence and Why: Chapter 57)
The Collection of Danny Ilegems and Tania Bait, Antwerp

Où commencent les demandes de l'âme (Chap.107) (Where the Demands of the Soul Begin: Chapter 107)

Du cœur de son amour, de ce noble Loin-Près (Chap.136) (From the Heart of Her Love, from this Noble Far-Near: Chapter 136)

Vagina dentata (The All-Devouring Vagina)

The way I handled the material in this series of collages is inspired by Karol Szymanowski's impressionistic musical composition *La Fontaine d'Aréthuse* from 1914. Pages from the nude magazine *Playgirl* (published in Baltimore in 1958) served as my point of departure. I scanned, layered, mirrored and multiplied. The works feature texts from *Rhythmanalysis*, a collection of essays by Marxist Henri Lefebvre from 1992 and bits of the first digital text that I ever wrote, in 1980. The titles and content of the works cherish chapters from *The Mirror of Simple Souls* from 1300 by

the Hainault mystic Marguerite Porete. Her individuality and passion resonate very strongly with me. At the age of 62 she wrote the book that caused her to be burned at the stake in 1310.

3. *Three Carrels (Degenerate Customised Solutions)*

Carrel 1: Enigma, 2014

Wooden painted cabinet on wheels, with digital print/collage on the back
201 × 240 × 62 cm
(Displayed with Plexiglas mirror, 201 × 300 cm, mounted on wall)

Carrel 2: Colossus, 2014

Wooden painted cabinet on wheels, with digital print inside
201 × 240 × 62 cm

Carrel 3: The Connection Machine, 2014

Wooden cabinet on wheels, with transparent Plexiglas back
201 × 240 × 62 cm

A carrel is a kind of separate cupboard that also serves as a database – it is a moving study table. In the Middle Ages, carrels were found in monastic libraries, where monks used them to isolate themselves from environmental noise.

The first carrel I made was for a crematorium, and the next three were for an exhibition at Zeno X Gallery. They were shown together with the *Playgirl* series: large PVC collages based on quotations from the mystic Marguerite Porete and on Karol Szymanowski's composing style.

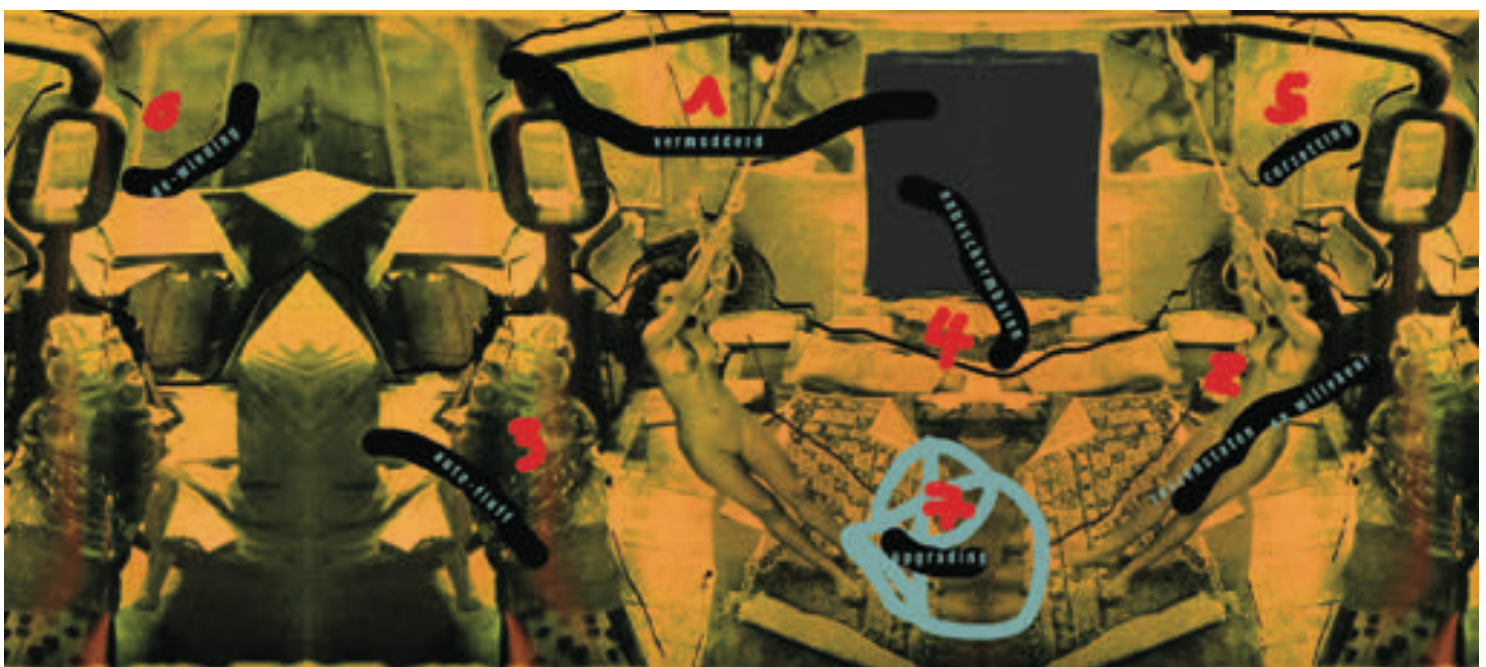
Each of the carrels stands for a step in the development of data-processing



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machines. Enigma (Germany, ca. 1920) was a coding and encryption machine. Colossus (UK, 1943) was a decoding programme, known as the first computer. The Connection Machine (US, 1983) was the first parallel data-processing unit, based on the revolutionary idea of putting the processing system (the processor) precisely where the information is stored: in the memory.

These devices invented for use in war and espionage helped carry the Digital Revolution and facilitated development into the digital society of the twentieth century. I drew a parallel to the stages of a human life. The first carrel was built to express my love for my father and the beliefs passed on to you when you were a child.

Works displayed in Carrel 3:

***Vacant*, 1989**

Engraving, acrylic and silkscreen paint on two layers of Plexiglas, double-sided
24 × 16 × 0.8 cm
(Displayed on Plexiglas stand)

The work shows on one side a golden empty chair for a privileged person and on the other side some objectified, meaningless furniture. The interior whose identity became so blurred that it became art.

Savoir, oser, vouloir, se taire

(*Knowing, Daring, Wanting, Remaining Silent*), 1992
Painting: marker and silkscreen paint on plastic dishes
Series of four, each 30.5 × 19.5 × 5 cm

Paintings on plastic trays for game pâté. These are the four steps that a wise person must remember if s/he wants to elaborate on an important insight. The point is that, after you have formulated an intention for yourself, it is best to remain silent and carry it out. These four trays usually hang in my studio as a warning to myself.

***Nostalgie en bezwering* (*Nostalgia and Exorcism*), 1993**

Painting: felt-tip pen, acrylic and silkscreen paint on plastic dishes
Series of 5, each 30.5 × 19.5 × 5 cm

The series encompasses the following elements:

***Sorteren* (*To Sort*)**

***Elimineren* (*To Eliminate*)**

***Veerkracht* (*Elasticity*)**

***Toekomst/Logika = Kunst/Wetenschap* (*Future/Logic = Art/Science*)**

Paintings on plastic dishes for game pâté. These are about the relationship between future, logic, art and science, about the physical reactions to the alienation that arises when you are too regularly exposed to unwanted abstractions. In short: this is about bodily reactions to alienating abstractions. The works were made for my installation *Belgisch Spleen* (*Belgian Spleen*) in Parbleu, Antwerp.

***Plexi bakjes* (*Plexi Holders*), 1993–1994**
Series of eight Plexiglas holders with various painted works, each 25 × 21 × 3.5 cm

The series encompasses the following elements:

***Gezicht en straat* (*Face and Street*), 1993**
Painting: acrylic and silkscreen paint and photographic reproduction on five Plexiglas sheets
Courtesy Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp, and Galerie Barbara Thumm, Berlin

***Man, vrouw, kroon* (*Man, Woman, Crown*), 1993**
Painting: acrylic on three Plexiglas sheets
Courtesy Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp, and Galerie Barbara Thumm, Berlin

***Sceance*, 1993**
Painting: acrylic, silkscreen paint and marker on six Plexiglas sheets
Courtesy Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp, and Galerie Barbara Thumm, Berlin

***Ambitie/Aliënatie* (*Ambition/Alienation*), 1993**
Painting: acrylic, silkscreen paint and marker on four Plexiglas sheets, painted on both sides
Courtesy Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp, and Galerie Barbara Thumm, Berlin

***Control Values*, 1993**
Painting: acrylic and silkscreen paint on six Plexiglas sheets
Courtesy Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp, and Galerie Barbara Thumm, Berlin

***Hope and Desire*, 1993**
Painting: acrylic and silkscreen paint on six Plexiglas sheets
Courtesy Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp, and Galerie Barbara Thumm, Berlin

***Klok* (*Clock*), 1994**
Painting/engraving: acrylic on six Plexiglas sheets
Courtesy Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp, and Galerie Barbara Thumm, Berlin

***Naaktstudies* (*Nude Studies*), 1994**
Painting: acrylic and silkscreen paint with monoprints on six Plexiglas and PVC sheets
Courtesy Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp, and Galerie Barbara Thumm, Berlin

Transparent Plexiglas holders, filled with painted semi-transparent plates with no determined order between them. A holder is a work within which the image is conditional, whose internal structure remains loose. Together, all the elements form one work, but never in a definite state. Made for my installation in the group exhibition 'Vierkant' ('Square') in MHKG Ghent in 1993, inspired by René Descartes's writings and curated by Jan Hoet.

***De waarheid en niets dan de waarheid...* (*The Truth and Nothing but the Truth...*), 1994**

Painting: acrylic and silkscreen paint on two layers of Plexiglas, double-sided
29 × 32 × 3.5 cm
(Displayed on Plexiglas stand)

A couple in states of distress

***Free Association*, 1994**
Painting: acrylic and silkscreen paint on two layers of Plexiglas, double-sided
41.4 × 39.6 cm
(Displayed on Plexiglas stand)

Inspired by Luis Buñuel's film *Le Journal d'une femme de chambre* from 1964.

4. *Defluff*, 2016
Jacquard tapestry
200 × 500 cm

This jacquard carpet shows a mirrored artist's studio scene from late-1950s Paris. I turned the entrance into a Suprematist black square, with an allusion to the *vagina dentata* (the toothed, all-devouring vagina) and the *prima materia*. As well as the Nietzschean concept of 'eternal return'.



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CHAPTER EIGHT

TIME, SADO-MASOCHISM AND ETERNITY 1987–1990

A. Located at the centre of a social universe, the abstract, which manifests itself as a symbol, tends to find embodiment in a figure. The process by which this happens is fragmented and complex. Look at the ancient gods.

B. The seventeenth century brought the Intellectual Revolution, the nineteenth century the Industrial Revolution, and the twentieth century the Sexual Revolution. Now we are living in the Digital Revolution. One and zero. Yes or no. Moralism and duality, black and white cause a lot of pain. Art lovers are attracted to the abstract, but the abstract will never be sexually stimulating.

1. *L'Age d'or Nr 2+3, videoklok*, 1987
(*The Golden Age No. 2+3: Video Clock*)
Video installation with four turning monitors
Dimensions variable
Collection of M HKA/The Flemish Community, Antwerp

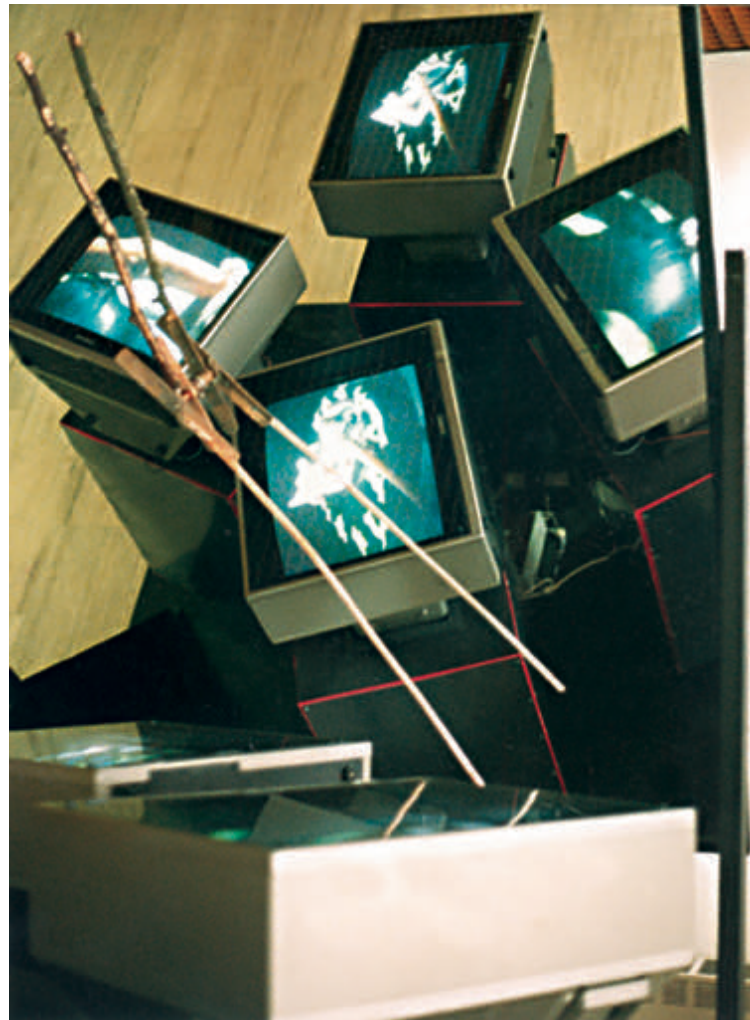
This installation is a video clock ticking to the rhythm of eternity, examining the powers of cycles and numbers by establishing contact between exact time measurement and the hidden values that procure evolution and devolution. It is a cyclic rotation, founded on the four fundamental symbols: the circle, the cross, the square and the centre.

Every ten minutes the video clock unleashes – via its four rotating monitors, for the duration of five minutes – the relational battle between the now, its past and the future. Two by two, the monitors rotate away from each other, like four swastikas: an action that can be seen in an obliquely overhanging mirror on which the hands, made of branches from a tree, show the real time.

The four monitors show two sets of images, each twice. We see Danny Devos on a dial rotating counter-clockwise, shouting 'I wanna be injured'. We also see an animation and computer animation of his action, divided into twelve parts. This is my adaptation of the myth of Prometheus.

2. *5 versus 11*, 1990
Painting: silkscreen paint on 18 PVC panels
Each 70 × 100 cm
Total: 350 × 500 cm
Collection of M HKA/The Flemish Community, Antwerp

Enlargement of two of the 12 drawings on which I based the animation for *L'Age d'Or Nr 2+3*, my video clock. I drew my husband Danny Devos in twelve different poses: one drawing for each hour of the clock. He was tied up in such a way that, together with the stick between his feet, his legs formed a triangle. To each drawing, I added the image of the consecutive number found in a book combining Kabbalah and Tarot knowledge. This is a contemporary Prometheus, being punished every day again, because he stole fire from the gods. The work is about burning life, the act of drawing, digitalism and old gnostic interpretations of the geometries in the universe.



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CHAPTER NINE

THE INTERIOR AS MIRROR AND CAGE

1989–2016

Images of interiors are like mandalas that I can change into mind maps. As plastic theories, they can temporarily come to rest in an installation or an exhibition. The anti-strategy of every modernist rule of reduction loses its power in the inevitable confrontation with abstract systems of radical negation and refusal. I like to use this reductive modernist rule as an element of style to plunge into the essence of matter by way of anti-evil. In doing so, I also descend into thought – searching for the immoral, creating the antiSade – and I go deeper into the substance of dualism. My aim is to keep driving us, along with symbolism, further and further away from hell, into the abysses of what makes us human.

1. *Close-Ups*, 1989–2004

Various smaller paintings from different years gathered in one wall installation.

Man, 1989

Painting: acrylic, silkscreen paint and spray paint on PVC
24.6 × 21 cm

Courtesy Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp, and Galerie Barbara Thumm, Berlin

A portrait of a man at the French Riviera, a gangster.

Stereotype, 1989

Engraving and painting: acrylic and silkscreen paint on Plexiglas, double-sided

33.2 × 29.8 cm

Courtesy Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp, and Galerie Barbara Thumm, Berlin

Stereotype of a lecher, of an affluent, oversexed man.

Remote Love, 1993

Painting: acrylic and silkscreen paint on two pieces of Plexiglas
35 × 29.5 cm

I saw a Medieval castle in Czechia and made a painting of it. This is related to a senseless love story, and therefore the work is cut in two. The only thing that ever connected me to that person is the pale blue of the air we breathed.

Instinct, 1994

Painting: acrylic and silkscreen paint on Plexiglas, with Plexiglas scraps attached with a nail, mounted on painted wood
60 × 60 × 2 cm

Written on scraps and nailed to the painted interior are the words 'instinct', 'insult', 'intelligence' – offering a choice as how to complete the work.

(There Is No Substitute for Salt), 2004

Painting: acrylic on Plexiglas
26.7 × 75 cm

Based on a photo of three Amsterdam lady friends at an art fair. These friends dress like men. Next to it is a scientific image of salt, and the statement that salt is irreplaceable as an element.

Callas met Echtgenoot (Callas with Husband), 1997

Painting: acrylic on Plexiglas, mounted on painted wood
60 × 60 × 2 cm

Based on a picture I found in the 1960s and kept until it served to make this work. The interaction between the diva and the older man in a kind of staged pose intrigued me. I have added a laughing satyr's head. It is about hypocrisy and play-acting in everyday life.

2. *Patient*, 1992

Painting/collage: silkscreen paint and adhesive foil on Trovicel, mounted in wooden box

120 × 170 × 6 cm

Collection of Greet Van Kerckhoven, Belgium

Enlarged drawing of the Club Moral interior with telephone, with the text: 'Patient, someone who has to show patience.' I made it when I was ill.

3. *Den Haan*, 1992

Painting/collage: silkscreen paint, acrylic and adhesive foil on Trovicel
120 × 160 × 0.3 cm

Enlarged drawing of our guest room in a friend's house by the Belgian coast.

4. *Belgisch Spleen*, 1992–1993

Selection of works from the installation with this title at Parbleu in Antwerp in 1993

The selection encompasses the following elements:

Aanbid eerst mij (Worship first Me), 1992

Monoprint and acrylic on 2 layers of Plexiglas with magnetic back
27 × 37 × 0.4 cm

Et Dieu créa la femme (And God Created Woman), 1992

Print: silkscreen paint on two layers of Plexiglas with magnetic back
37.5 × 18.5 × 2.5 cm
Private collection, courtesy Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp

Petit Mal, 1992

Monoprint and acrylic on two layers of Plexiglas, mounted on aluminium
35 × 47 × 0.4 cm
Private collection, courtesy Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp

Alle grond weg onder de voeten (Bezwering van een verhuisdepressie) (No Ground Left under My Feet (Warding off a House-Moving Depression)), 1993



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Video installation with monitor,
wooden child's desk and chair, and
framed photograph
76 × 80.5 × 49 cm

Belgian Spleen (thanks to *Spleen de Paris* by Charles Baudelaire) was first a bookkeeping diary from Brepols in which I had noted thoughts and reflections from 1974 until 1992. I had classified the notes by the day of the month, to see if the occurrence of certain spontaneous thoughts has anything to do with the time of the year. I was hoping to discover an evolution or a system in the seemingly chaotic storm of thoughts and ideas. This listing and over-writing inspired me to do a series of works on the changing relations between concept, language and self-image.

In Parbleu, I built a structure with second-hand materials and with help from the stand constructor Frank. The walls, including a door left ajar, all started 30 cm above ground level. The sound of the steps of everybody entering the room was amplified and distorted by a delay machine that was fixed under the grid of the Parbleu drain, just behind the entrance to the installation.

Most of the exhibited works – including text, paint, drawn images and monoprints – were made on plastic dishes and plates from my parents' defunct catering business. Tabletops from the company, my father's Plexiglas design table and my wooden child's desk were also used as support. My child's chair was high up on a wall. The works were mostly autobiographical, made on various layers of Plexiglas and PVC. The whole thing was an exorcism: *savoir, oser, vouloir, se taire*. Knowing, daring, willing, keeping quiet. Which means that you have to do things instead of talking about them. It concerns mostly the relation a citizen has with herself and the thoughts and to which extremes this can lead.

On the child's desk, my video *Alle grond weg onder de voeten* (No Ground left under My Feet) was playing. By ritually filming the Club Moral space where we lived and worked for 13 years, I warded off a house-moving depression and finished an important part of my life. The video was made in response to a commission, from Kunstkabel in Amsterdam, for a programme titled 'To the Beach'.

5. Grimm, 2002
Lightbox: digital image on Plexiglas
116 × 223 × 19 cm
Private collection, Belgium

A work from the series *Philosophical Rooms*. This is me as a five-year-old, inserted into a photograph I took in the ghetto of Terezin/Theresienstadt in Czechia. To my right I put my father Jerome VK as a thirteen-year old boy by the sea, and to my left my uncle Jan Cyril VK on his motorcycle. He was my best friend and confidant until I was thirteen.

6. Interior Decoration and the Supernatural, 2005
Drawing/collage: ink, felt-tip pen and oil pastels on paper, stapled onto handmade paper
Selection from a series of 16, each 25.5 × 35.0 cm

The selection encompasses the following elements:

1. Belief in the Power of Magic
Collection of Wastiau & co Architects, Belgium

2. An Entire System of Defense

3. A Transmitter of Fluid

4. Striking the Dragon

5. The Use of Horror

6. Sulphur and Mercury

7. To Exercise Willpower
Collection of Wastiau & co Architects, Belgium

9. This Image of the Human Heart

10. While Searching for Treasure
Collection of Gabi and Wolfgang Schürmann, Herzogenrath/Berlin

11. Human Levitation
Collection of J. De Vleeschouwer-Pieters, Belgium

12. Spiritualism

14. Demoniac

15. Likely Legends
Collection of J. De Vleeschouwer-Pieters, Belgium

16. Le Diable Amoureux (The Devil in Love)
Collection of Gabi and Wolfgang Schürmann, Herzogenrath/Berlin

The spirit of a room is the spirit in the room.

7. AntiSade, 2007
Painting: plastic foil, acrylic and spray paint on Trovicel
100 × 100 × 0.3 cm

On 5 October 2002, a sunny day in Berlin. I was killing time, sitting on the corner of the Dircksenstrasse reading a Belgian newspaper article on 'the archfiend of matter': at CERN in Switzerland, an international team of scientists just succeeded in creating a relatively large amount of antimatter. This breakthrough was going to open the way to exhaustive research on this enigmatic mirror picture of everyday matter, but also could wipe the floor with the Standard Model of physics.

Sunstruck, focusing on the shadow of the Funkturm, I saw the content of the article melting into a sharp and striking insight into western creative activity since 1945. An insight into what art actually is doing in society today, what society is doing with art, in spite of art and thanks to it. Two hours of concentration transformed a media-generated insight into the opposition matter-antimatter into a clear prognosis on the opposition art/antiSade. When something gets destroyed it radiates a negative energy of which the power is opposite to the equilibrium of existence itself. Is rest, then, energy-mirrored?

I titled my text *ECFK (European Centre for Futuristic Art)*. Because futuristic art is what is produced when artists create under the influence of the theory revealed in my article: 'AntiSade is the mirror picture of everyday progressive art. It doesn't occur in the art world, but it can under extreme circumstances be created. Art and antiSade supplement each other. If they come in contact with each other, the reality concept changes and they can destroy each other.'

AntiSade deals with the ugly, the perverse, the wrong, the satanic, the frightening. Two-hundred years ago Baudelaire opened the gate to what art still deals with today. Enlightenment, modernism and abstraction lead to a common western hysteria that found its climax in the explosion of the first atom bomb. Since then history has run on two or more parallel tracks.

8. Nonzero/Pastime, 2011–2012
Selection of two from series of six



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The selection encompasses the following elements:

***Fragile*, 2011**

Digital prints on two layers of Plexiglas
123 × 180 × 0.6 cm
Collection of Mu.ZEE Kunstmuseum
aan Zee, Ostend

***Still Have to Wait for*, 2012**

Digital prints on two layers of Plexiglas,
mounted on painted wooden box
123 × 180 × 6 cm

This series combines pages from the 1950s nude magazine *Man's Favorite Pastime* (published in Long Beach, California) and my text *ECFK*, about antiSade and post-war art. Scraps from the light piece *Inzichten en Vergezichten (Insights and Views)*, which I made for the new museum MAS in Antwerp the same year, are also visible here and there.

Nonzero/Pastime is based on the oppositions matter/antimatter and art/antiSade in relation to game theory. A 'non-zero-sum game' is a situation in which one's win does not necessarily mean another's loss, and one's loss does not necessarily mean that the other party wins. In his book *Nonzero: The Logic of Human Destiny* from 1999, Robert Wright states that society becomes increasingly non-zero-sum as it becomes more complex, specialised and interdependent.

Living per se as a game, as a pastime, is what I was expressing. Mixing scientific information with content from sex-oriented images, linguistics, history and economics is like playing a game that can end in art. What we see is the equilibrium between ritual undressing – the striptease performed by a beautiful woman – in combination with the emergence of a new theory. In both actions the relation with what came before and what is to be expected remains thrilling. The expectations in their state of uncertainty create a friendly complex atmosphere of equilibrium.

9. *Respecting the Eternal Balance*, 2012–2014

Light boxes: acrylic and collage on Plexiglas in wooden frames
Selection of five from a series of six, each
101 × 151 × 15 cm

These works deal with 'cityness', with urbanism, rhythm and inner nature. They all started from the 'soul' that I experienced in a certain city or place where I have been or wanted to be in the past twenty years. These light

boxes should not give themselves away immediately. Hence the three-dimensionality, the visible layering and the possibility to look in. They go from the outside to the inside. On the one hand they deal with togetherness and universalism, with collectively. On the other hand, with cities and appropriation, and also with how the pressure from the environment on the living body becomes so big that language appears. The 'soul' of a city can be linked to personal emotions but also derives its identity from the variety of measurements and divisions, the rhythms inherent in buildings and streets, in urbanisation, that define the character of a given city. It is this contemporary impact of the place on collective consciousness that I transform into transcendence.

The selection encompasses the following elements:

***Portrait of Young People*, 2012**
Gallery Barbara Thumm, Berlin
(Representing Berlin.)

***Voidoid*, 2012**
The Black Flag Collection
(Representing London.)

***Dharma Protector*, 2012**
The Black Flag Collection
(Representing Tibet.)

***Place = (Intelligence + Colour) : (Consciousness : Time)*, 2012**
(Representing Shanghai.)

***Contorted Myself Four Times, James*, 2013**
(Representing New York.)

10. *Hidden Layers*, 2014
Unique eight-colour silkscreen prints on Zerkall Litho 240gr paper and PVC, framed
Each 61.7 × 83.8 cm

***Positive Earth (Game and Air)*, 2014**
Unique eight-colour silkscreen print on Zerkall Litho 240gr paper and two layers of PVC, framed

***Banjo Bolt for Oil (Devolution, Fatigue and Sharpness)*, 2014**
Unique eight-colour silkscreen print on Zerkall Litho 240gr paper and one layer of PVC, framed

I screen-printed the twelve variations of the *Hidden Layers* series in the Masereel Centrum, an internationally renowned printmaking residency in Belgium. The image I started from is the interior of a Marcel Breuer building

from 1951, the year I was born. This is the kind of house I always dreamt of but never will be able to live in. Everything I added, all the colours and lines, reflect my lifetime as an artist. I added the words I surrounded myself with in 1980, as printed on the back of my publication *Public Annemy Nr.1*. *Hidden Layers* were printed in CMYK to make twelve experimental variations on different layers of paper and PVC, according to a logic found in a manual for repairing motorbikes. Each variation responds to a psychological theme.

11. *Transkamer*, 2015

Digital slide show on flat screen, sound, 6:29'

Images and animation: AMVK
Sound by Mauro Pawlowski

Transkamer ('Trans-Chamber' or 'Trance Chamber') was the very first production of the artist collective FERDND, established in February 2014. The concept for the performance was co-authored by Louis Van der Waal, Mauro Pawlowski, Sigrid Damen, Anja Perisic, Céline Felga and AMVK. Originally, *Transkamer* came out of a shared fascination with the all-round artist Roland Topor. His novel *Le Locataire chimerique (The Tenant)* from 1964 was the point of departure. The piece was also inspired by the work of Chilean film director and comicsartist Alejandro Jodorowsky and his chaotic universe of Christ figures, alchemists and circus artists. As background for the performance AMVK made a looped slide show, shown here in a digital animated version. The images mirror one of the constantly repeating architectures of the actors on stage.



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Colophon

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Exhibition

'AMVK'
Fridericianum
9 November 2018 – 24 February 2019

Curator: Anders Kreuger

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Danny Devos, Saar Geerts, Samyra Moumouh, Katleen Schildermans

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