

PRESS RELEASE

BANFF FLUX-SNOWSHOE TRAVELS

Filip Van Dingenen solo show at Galerie Waldburger

May 17 – June 29, 2013

Loosely described, Filip Van Dingenen's art practice lies at the intersection of art and science. A Brussels-based multimedia artist, he investigates social, historical, anthropological and – very often – zoological issues. In the first step, he analyses and deconstructs the objects of his research before transforming his findings to a new level and format. The process's and outcomes of these transformations vary substantially, depending on the research in question, paying tribute to its specific character. It can, for example, consist of contextualization or re-contextualization, visualisation, documentation or disclosure of references and hidden meanings. Mostly, it is a playful mingling of all of these and further elements, resulting in multifaceted and multi-layered works. As way of expression he uses different techniques; installations, drawing, cabinets, dioramas, archives, videos, books, printed matter, performances, web based projects, lectures, workshops and combined activities.

One of Filip Van Dingenen's main interests lies in human-animal-environmental relations, the perception of zoological institutes in the twenty-first century and the perception of nature. In pursuit of this interest, he created a wide-ranging and ongoing project called Flota Nfumu, based on a rare albino gorilla named Snowflake who spent most of his life in the Barcelona Zoo. This project went deep into research, public memory, and souvenirs of Snowflake's life, and how he affected Sabater Pi, the scientist who brought him to Barcelona, and the people of that city who visited Snowflake in the zoo over 40 years. For an earlier extensive multimedia project, called Zonation, Van Dingenen collected memories and stories from an abandoned Belgian zoo, tracing the relocated animals around the world.

Recently, Filip Van Dingenen has been invited to the internationally well-known arts residency in the Banff Centre, Canada. This residency gave him the opportunity to study and explore the unique setting he was confronted with. Banff is a town at approximately 1'400 m elevation, located in the Canadian Rocky Mountains, within Canada's oldest National Park. The history of Banff is diverse, having been first settled in the 1880s by train workers along the Canadian Pacific Railway route, soon followed fur traders and mountaineers, amongst many more. Banff also quickly became – and remains till today – a highly popular tourist destination. At the same time, artistic creation developed in Banff. Early on, already at the end of 19th century, the mountains and the mountaineering have been heavily photographed, often in rather ambitious artistic quality. Moreover, since 1933, Banff has public arts institutions that promote progressive contemporary art. The first one was an experimental theatre school, soon followed by dance, music and visual art and the Banff Arts Centre now offers additional programmes in literature, drama, curatorial studies etc.

It is within this frame of references that Filip Van Dingenen started to explore his surroundings and in his solo show at Galerie Waldburger he will present some of his findings. A key inquiry is relating to the history and collective memory of the Rocky Mountains. The relation between humans and nature is a further main issue, as mountaineering can be seen as a symbol for conquering, appropriation and pollution of nature, but also, if conducted in another form, is a tool to learn about and appreciate nature.

In one Banff project, Van Dingenen replaced the physical mountaineering by intervening into the Banff library and extending the collective memory of Banff. In a "hiking tour" through library books, he silkscreened a selection of library maps and books about early exploration of the Canadian Rocky Mountains, thereby leaving clearly visible traces on the objects. The intervention can be seen as the damaging of property but on the other hand also as providing enrichment, referring to the ambiguity of mountaineering. In the gallery show, a newly created, compiled index of the books he intervened with at the Banff library will be on view.

Filip Van Dingenen also found in a museum of the Rocky Mountains an old c.1919 Hudson's Bay Company snowshoe. In analysing the snowshoe as important and historically rich mountaineering device, he fabricated a machine to steam ash wood and bend it into the long, tapered shape of hundred-year-old snowshoes. In this context, Van Dingenen produced a typology of old snowshoes which he will also integrate in the gallery show. He also created silkscreens of historical images of the Rockies. He will show them in a diaprojector slideshow in the gallery and use them as an instrument to approach the history and collective memories of the Rocky Mountains. Further, in a Banff library, while following his preoccupation with the history and collective memory of the Rocky Mountains, he randomly bumped into a Banff library book about the Fluxus movement that refers to a travelling exhibition called Fluxshoe. Van Dingenen immediately connected to this title as his working approach in Banff is characterized by a strong do-it-yourself attitude, mixed with a multimedia art practice and encounters on several levels the spirit of the Fluxus movement. With a tongue-in-cheek he therefore uses the Flux-element in the title for his show at Galerie Waldburger.

Filip Van Dingenen was born in Diest, Belgium, he lives in Brussels. Van Dingenen studied Fine Arts at the Provinciale Hogeschool Limburg and Cultural Sciences at the V.U.B. in Brussels. Currently, he is pursuing a Ph.D. in Arts at the LUCA School of Arts – K.U. Leuven.

The work of Van Dingenen has already been shown in many solo exhibitions in institutions and off-spaces, including Komplot, curated by Eva Bialek; Netwerk Artcentre in Aalst, curated by Paul Lagring; Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin; CC Strombeek Bever, in collaboration with Annelies Vaneycken, curated by Luc Lambrecht; HEDAH Centre for Arts, Maastricht; Humboldt University and Museum for Natural History, Berlin; Artcentre Z33, Hasselt. He further participated in numerous group shows in Belgium and abroad, as, e.g., at the Galerie für Landschaftskunst in Hamburg or the Museu da República in Rio de Janeiro.

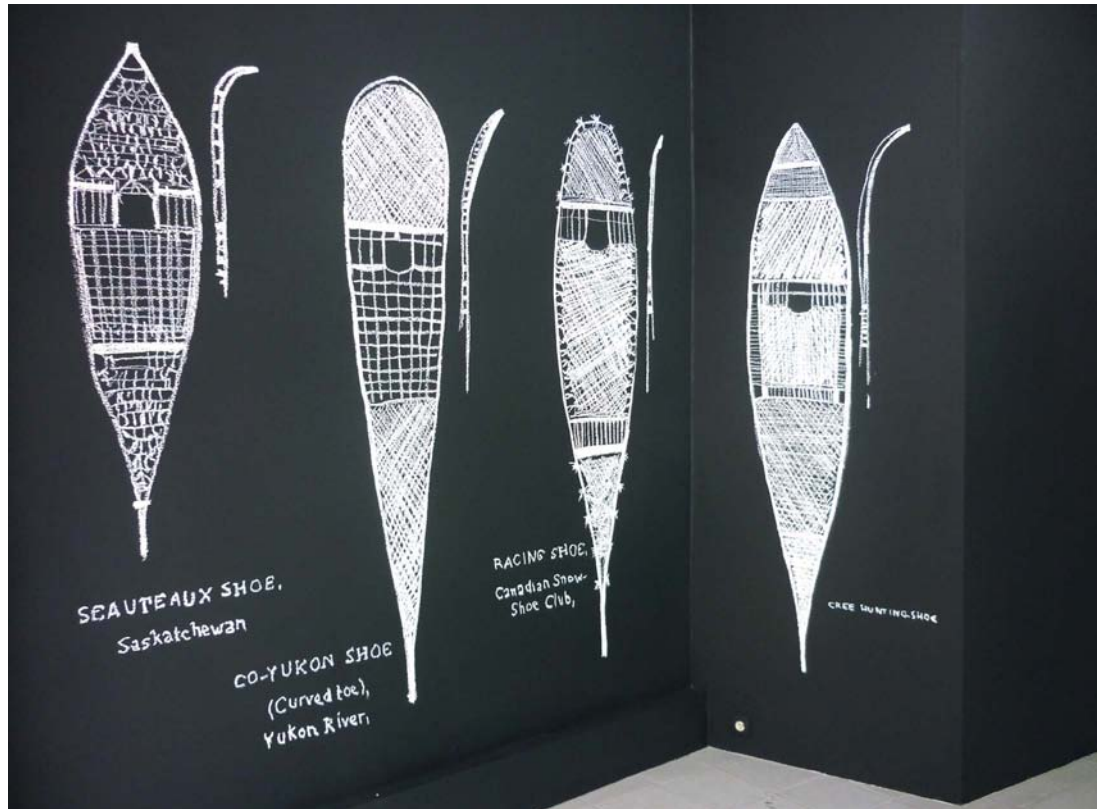
Besides the residency in Banff, he has been invited to a residency at the Wiels in Brussels as well as to residences in Barcelona, in Udinese, Italy, and several more. At the moment, Filip Van Dingenen is granted a research residency at the Jan Van Eick Academy in Maastricht.

IMAGES OF THE EXHIBITION

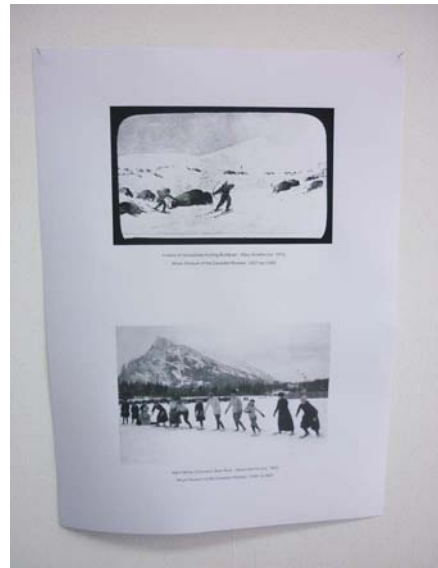


**BANFF
FLUX SNOWSHOE
TRAVELS**

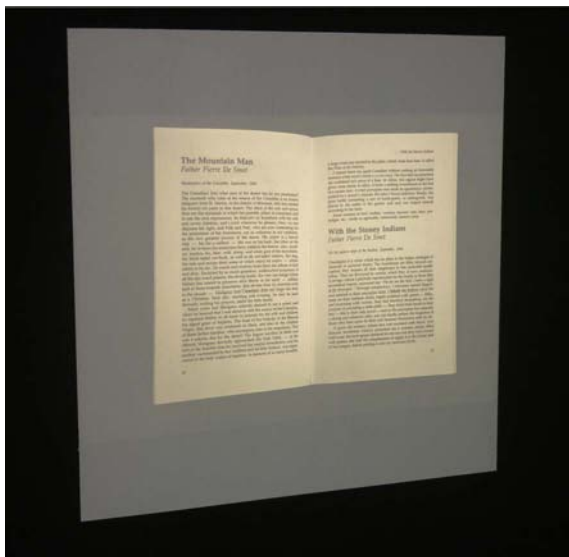
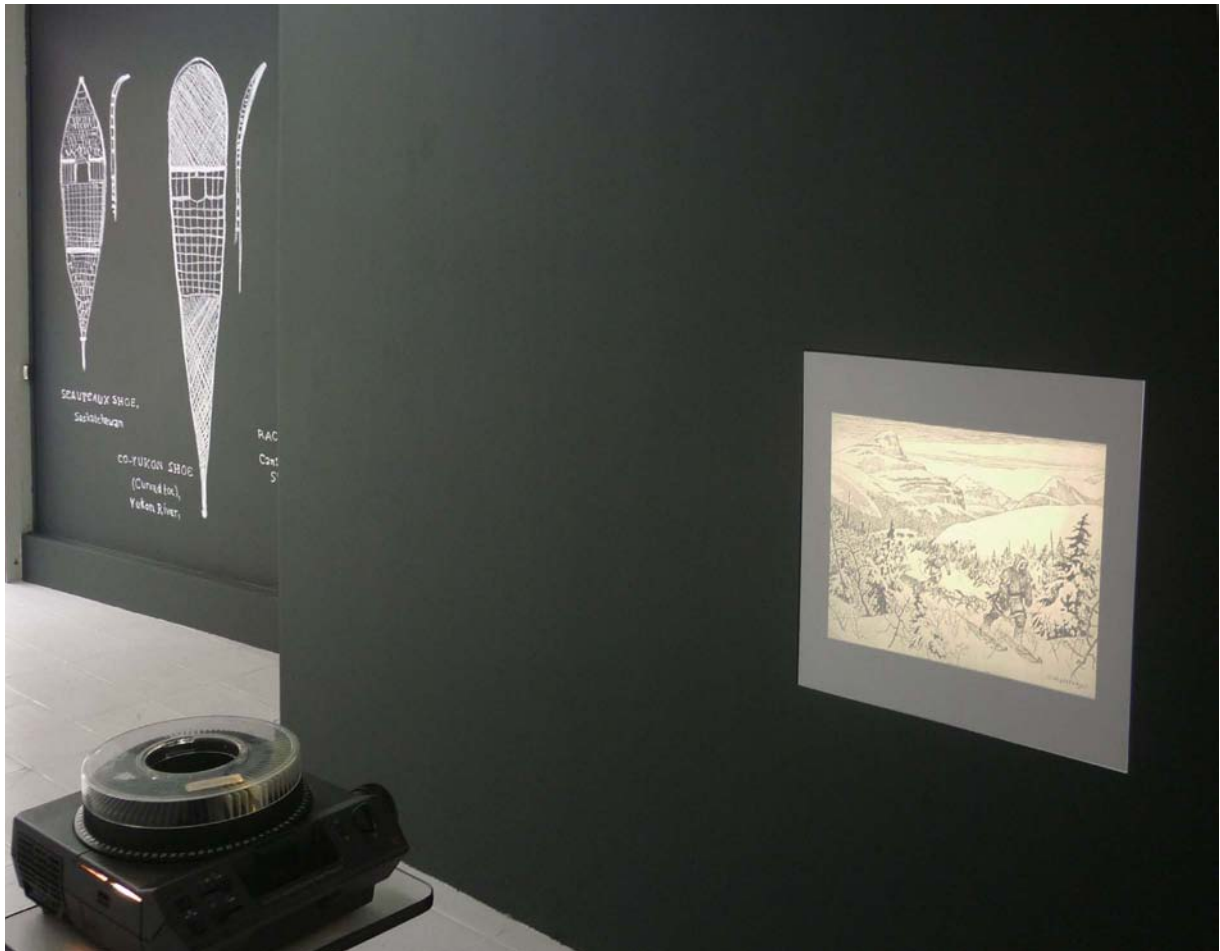
from Athabasca to Mt. Assiniboine



Filip Van Dingenen, *Genealogy of snowshoeing*, Walldrawing, dimensions variable, 2013, installation view



Filip Van Dingenen, *Index Banff Flux Snowshoe Travels*,
3 silkscreens in wooden classeur, 2013, installation view



Filip Van Dingenen, *slide show*, slide show of 18 dias, 2013, installation views

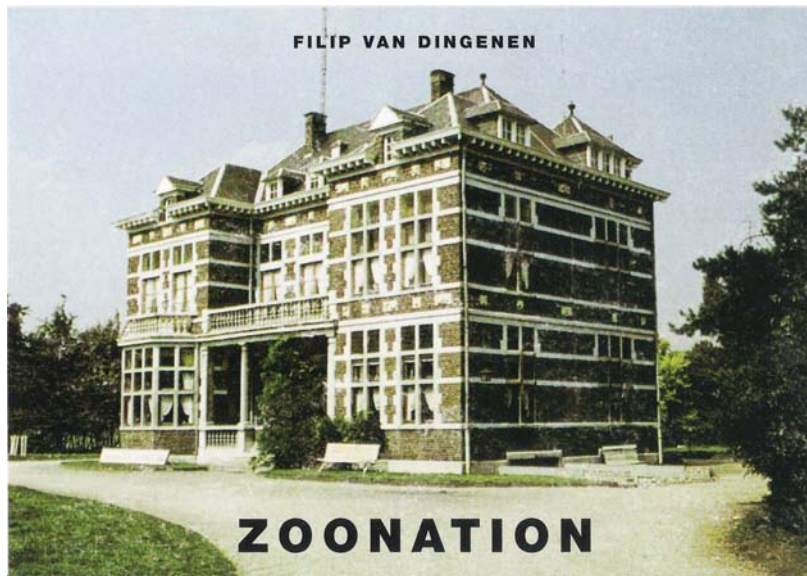
OTHER PROJECTS

ZOONATION (2006)

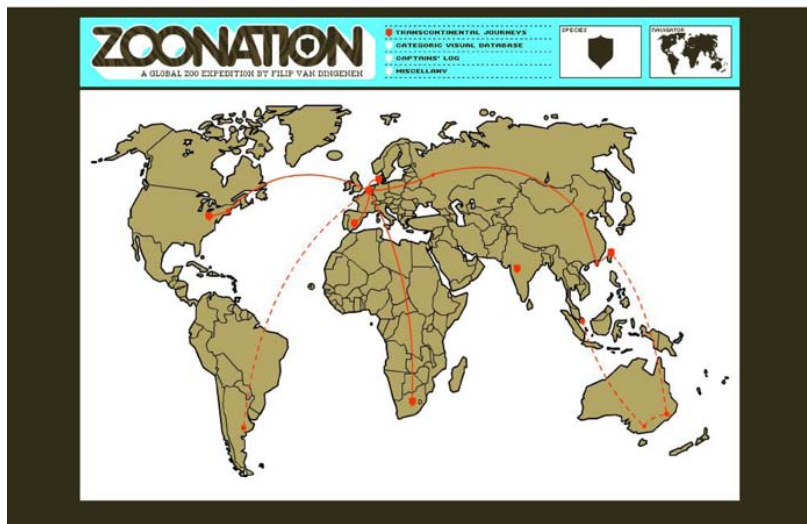
Filip Van Dingenen's "Zonation" project centers on the now-vanished Limburg Zoo in Zwartberg/Genk – the region from where the artist originates although he never actually visited the zoo. Limburg Zoo was closed at the end of the 1990s following complaints by animal rights organizations. The animals were "sold-off" to other zoos around the world and the site was completely demolished. Today, Limburg Zoo only lives in the collective memory via printed souvenirs. Filip Van Dingenen conceived a multifaceted project around the disappeared zoo and visited the many zoos around the world to which the animals were obliged to emigrate. The result is a (log)book of drawings, photographs and archive material in which the artist created from this specific story a work that deals both with the universally uniform understanding of the zoo – in its first form, as a popular/educational "product" – and as a manifestation of globalization.

Filip Van Dingenen on Zonation:

"Over the past few years I traveled to zoos all over the world (Russia, US, Southern Africa, South East Asia, Sydney, Buenos Aires and several European parks). I visited Museums of Natural History, taxidermists, collectors and authorities and was tracing the former residents/remains of the Limburg Zoo – Zwartberg Belgium. On my many travels I observed and analyzed the visual culture of the zoo from various historical, anthropological, typological and aesthetic angles. Interested in cross-fertilization and using strategies, methodologies and classifications similar to the fields I observed. In search of formats and activities between fictions and realities, on the border of tangibility and virtuality I realized the project Zonation. Zonation is a hybrid synthesis of the tourist attraction for zoo visitors, a report of cultural-botanical expeditions and a playful-zoological case study."



Filip Van Dingenen, *Zonation*, artist book,
hard copy / 176 pages / 20 x 15,7 cm, 2006



Filip Van Dingenen, *Zonation*, printscreen webproject, 2006
www.zonation.be

FLOTA NFUMU (2009)

The project Flota Nfumu (White Fleet) observes the cultural remembrance, the history and myth of the albino gorilla whose popular name was Snowflake, but also known in Spanish as Copito de Nieve, in Catalan as Floquet de Neu and in Fang (his African origin) as Nfumu. After his arrival at the Barcelona Zoo, where he was an absolute crowd pleaser and where he lived from 1966 until his death in 2003, Nfumu was renamed as Snowflake. In the last months of Snowflake's life, the Barcelona Zoo announced a campaign/homage that was presented through all types of media across Spain and a part of this homage was that children could get a free entrance ticket to the Barcelona Zoo in exchange for a drawing dedicated to the albino gorilla Snowflake. These original 4358 children's drawings now only survive in archive through a DVD called "els Nens dibuixen en Floquet" (children's drawings of Snowflake) made by the Barcelona Zoo.

Van Dingenen's Cabinet "Els nens dibuixen en Floquet" is a re-documented and reprinted collection of these children's drawings that represent the mass homage to the cult of this famous albino lowland gorilla.

On a larger scale, Van Dingenen's project handles about nature conservation, human animal relations and animal stardom, generated through media and tourism over the last 40 years from Spain, and as a consequence, Snowflake's place of origin Equatorial Guinea.

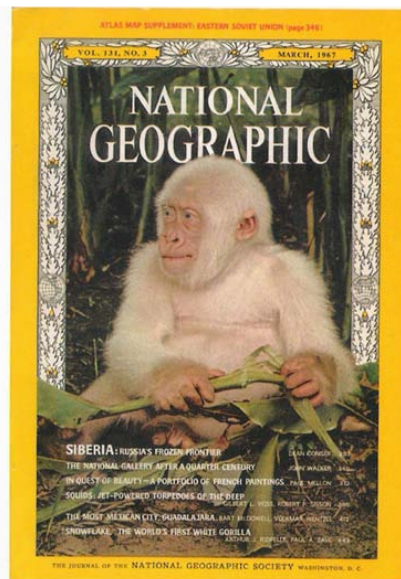
The artist zooms in on the cult to the albino gorilla whose mimicry is so human-like it gets disturbing. On the basis of the archive of children's drawings, the artist retraces Copito de Nieves' remarkable biography. His extremely rare genetic particularities generated an auction of scientific, economic, colonial and exotic complaints: a miserable tangle that seems completely embedded in the false reality of a zoo.



Filip Van Dingenen, *Flota Nfumu*, 2009, detail installation view



Filip Van Dingenen, *Flota Nfumu*, 2009, installation view, Artcenter Network Aalst



Filip Van Dingenen, *Flota Nfumu*, cover National Geographic, 2009

MEMORY GAME (2009) + FORST (2011)

“I always start from archival material, and then enlighten it from a different perspective,” says Filip Van Dingenen, who was artist in residence at Wiels in 2009. “My project interested them because they were still looking for their heritage as Wiels only opened his doors two years earlier.” Van Dingenen designed a memory game with riders from the cycling team Groene Leeuw of the 1960s which was sponsored by Wiel’s, the famous beer of the Wielemans-Ceuppens brewery. On the other side were the names of the artists who, decades later, would have a solo exhibition at the Wiels art center.

The starting point for his exploration of the relationship of a district with its heritage was Celina El Bakkali hairdressers saloon around the corner of Wiels. Her cellar was nearly a copy of Alibaba’s cave as it was loaded with Wielemans-Ceuppens souvenirs that Celina El Bakkali collected since the closure of the brewery in 1988. “It is very Belgian for a woman of Moroccan origin to go into the beer and cyclist culture. The closure of the brewery, the years of wasteland, the revival of the neighborhood thanks to the art center Wiels: she made it as a local resident all along. Out of nostalgia she started collecting. In her salon you saw a crisscrossing between its products and hundreds of glasses-labels of Wiel’s and Forst, but also lemonade glass of the brewery and wage slips of workers who worked in the brewery.”

This collection further inspired Van Dingenen for a project at Komplot, an art center in the neighbourhood of Wiels. From November 2011 to March 2012 he presented the whole of this rich collection of nearly 1,000 objects. The display, which is to say the demonstration, of Forst made reference to cabinets of curiosities as museal device but also to educational museums (of beer, bread, crafts ...). The accumulation of the disposed glasses in hypothetical towers presents an accident landscape as a metaphor of the Wielemans-Ceuppens brewery architecture.

Filip Van Dingenen took advantage of a contextual shift possible through a game that summons nostalgia and reflection on musealization. In addition, setting this collection, composed primarily of glass, for more than five months, the dust becomes a constitutive element and a metaphor of time veil that covers the objects whose meaning is tinged nostalgia. In Brussels and elsewhere, we like to remember the Good Old Days.

“With the landscape of the memorabilia that I make, I want to show the perception of the collector. That subjective processing of the past will be presented objectively again,” says Van Dingenen.

FORST is a contraction of Forest and Vorst, the names in French and Dutch of the town in which Wielemans was located. As can be seen in the installation of Filip Van Dingenen, the brewery produces several brands of beer during his period of activity but the main and far most famous were the Wiel’s and Forst. When Filip Van Dingenen began his research for this installation, he was quite astonished to discover the existence of the brewery Forst in the eponymous town

located in the Italian Tyrol. Indeed, a beer named Forst is brewed far away and without any reference to the Forst Forestoise of the twentieth century as it takes its name from the village. Filip Van Dingenen went there a few months before the show and brought several cases of beers. During the opening of Forst, the bar served exclusively Italian Forst.

“The installation Forst of Filip Van Dingenen addresses several significant topics from the field of contemporary art, including questioning the place of history in contemporary art and appropriation of context as an artistic medium. The strength of his discours extends to the more general problematic such as the treatment of industrial heritage material in urban areas and the relation by its inhabitants with the history of a changing neighborhood”.

Eva Bialek, at the time curator at Komplot



Celina EL Bakkali, Cecile Maes and Alberto Garcia del Castillo in front of the hairdresser shop at Avenue Van Volxemlaan 334 Brussels

Filip Van Dingenen, *Wiel's Memory Game*, 2009, ongoing public project, Wiels artcenter



Filip Van Dingenen, *FORST*, mixed media, 2011, installation view, Komplot, Brussels

CV OF FILIP VAN DINGENEN

Born 1975 in Diest, lives and works in Brussels, Belgium

Education

- 2010- PH.D. in Arts, LUCA School of Arts - KU.Leuven
- 1999-2000 Master in Cultural Sciences V.U.B. (Vrije Universiteit Brussel). Specialization: film & visual culture
- 1995-1999 Master in Fine Arts, Provinciale Hogeschool Limburg, Departement Beeldende Kunst Atelier Mixed Media

Solo Exhibitions

- 2013 'BANFF FLUX-SNOWSHOE TRAVELS', Galerie Waldburger, Brussels
- 2011 'FORST', curator Eva Bialek, Komplot, Brussels
- 2009 'Flota Nfumu', curator Paul Lagring, Artcentre Netwerk, Aalst
'Flota Nfumu' Process Room, Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin
- 2008 'Expedition Francka' in collaboration with Annelies Vaneycken, curator Luc Lambrecht, CC Strombeek-Bever
- 2007 'Flota Nfumu', Hedah Centre for Arts, Maastricht
- 2006 'Zonation', Cultural Centre, Genk
- 2005 'Bobby's Heaven', 7hours Haus19 Humboldt University & Museum for Natural History, Berlin
Performance "Auditions for Great Apes – Gorilla Choreography and Archaeology", Museum for Natural History, Berlin
- 2003 'Transzoo – Zonation', Artcentre Z33, Hasselt

Group Exhibitions

- 2013 'Space Odessey', Z33, Hasselt
'IN KASTERLEE', Frans Masereel Centre, Kasterlee
- 2012 Sideways Arts Festival, Turnhout
Group exhibition Parallel World CIAP, Hasselt

- 2011 'Condensation' curator Daniele Capra, Trivignano Udinese, Italy
 'Yamuna – Elbe, Freie Fluszone', curator Ravi Agarwal & Till Krause. Gallery fur
 Landschaftkunst, Hamburg
 'Small Works', Pabst Visitor Centre & Gallery, Atlantic Centre for the Arts,
 Florida
 'Global Villaging – Stories of Cosmopolitan Antropologists', Onomatopee Foun
 dation, Eindhoven, Netherlands
 '100 Drawings Against the Vietnam War', Le Commissariat, Paris
- 2010 Tulca Festival of Visual Arts, Galway Artcentre, Ireland
- 2009 'Nos', curator Daniella Geo, Museu da República, Rio de Janeiro, Brasil
- 2008 International Festival of VideoTales for the Promotion of the Territory, Cittadel
 larte – Fondazione Pistoletto, Biella, Italy
 Group exhibition 'Take the doll', curator Koen Van den Broeck, Freeman Gal-
 lery, Aardenburg
- 2007 'Old News Volume # 4' (in collaboration with Victor Palacios), curated by Jacob
 Fabricius
 Bookpresentation 'Zonation', A Symposium A Banquet, Project Arts Centre,
 Dublin
- 2006 Book + webpresentation 'Zonation' Hangar obert, Santa Monica Artcentre,
 Barcelona

Awards / Grants

- 2011 Grant Flemish Community Commission Department Culture
- 2008 Grant Joan Mitchel Foundation New York
 Laureate visual arts Province Vlaams-Brabant
- 2001 Grant Flemish Community, Department of Arts & Culture 2001-2010

Residencies / Art Related Work periods

- 2013 Researcher at Jan Van Eyck Academy, Netherlands
 Banff Artcentre, Alberta, Canada

- 2012 Frans Masereel, Kasterlee, Belgium
- 2011 Rave Residency + workshop in collaboration with Adrian Paci, Trivignano Udinese, Italy
- 2010 Askeaton Contemporary Arts, County Limerick, Ireland
- 2009 Residency program Wiels Center for Contemporary Art, Brussels
- 2008 Artist's Residency Program, Irish Museum of Modern Art, Dublin
Associate Artist in residence with Mark Dion, Atlantic Center for Arts, Florida
Work period Centro Cultural Español en Bata, Equatorial Guinea
- 2006 Residency Hangar, Barcelona
- 2005 Residency Flacc, Genk
workingperiod Columbus Zoo – Ohio

Commissions and Public interventions

- 2013 'Ganshoren', permanent public work, commission Vers Brussel - Het Beschrijf, Brussels
- 2012 'IN KASTERLEE', public intervention, Frans Masereel Centre, Kasterlee
'An Inland Voyage 2.0', canoe journey Antwerp – Brussels, Sideways
Community based project, CineRené, Magritte Museum, Brussels
- 2011 'Wiels Memory Game', ongoing public project, Extra Muros – Wiels Artcentre, Brussels
- 2007 'Ganshoren', public intervention in collaboration with Portugese poët Paulo Teixeira, commission Vers Brussel-Het Beschrijf, Brussels
- 2006 'Snorkelzone', public work commission 3OCC Leuven – Koning Bouwdewijn Stichting
- 2004 'Behind the scene – Parel der Kempen', project with prisoners, Prison Province Antwerp – Commission Film festival Open Doek, Turnhout