

MARIANNE BOESKY GALLERY

509 West 24th Street, New York, NY 10011

Hans Op de Beeck: The Girl
April 26 - June 9, 2018

Marianne Boesky Gallery is pleased to present Belgian artist Hans Op de Beeck's third solo exhibition with the gallery. The exhibition marks the first public presentation of Op de Beeck's perception-bending animated film, "The Girl," which he completed in late 2017 in collaboration with the Flanders AudioVisual Fund. For the presentation, which will be open from April 26 through June 9, 2018, the gallery will transform its 507 W. 24th street location into a black box space.

The film opens with a view of a stately, colonial-style home in an unspecified place and era. A 14-year-old girl appears within, seemingly sleeping as a light breeze gently rustles her hair. Then time progresses in an instant; the once fine home is dilapidated, and the girl is thrust into a solitary existence, living in a shabby caravan in the forest. Scenes of deep woods and meadows are juxtaposed with elements of industry—a gas station, a factory billowing smoke into the air, and a highway running through tall trees. In moments, the girl looks on to these man-made intrusions into nature; in others, her presence is felt through a fire left crackling or her parked cargo bike. The viewer is drawn deep into this quiet narrative—the eye compelled by the lush, realistic scenes and subtle flickers of fluorescent lights and movements in the wind.

The sense of melancholia is intensified by the frequent fog and rain, and the mournful tones of the soundtrack, with a woman's voice gently calling out, "There, there..." It is unclear whether the lyric is an invitation to us to look more closely or a voice of comfort to the girl in this desolate place. As the film progresses, so does the damage done by humanity, as the girl finds herself at a landfill, the air hazy with smog. She has not aged, but the world around her has changed in devastating ways. As the film draws to an end, she is once again seen in repose, seemingly surrendered to her circumstances, floating away on a lake. The soundtrack intones, "water invites reflection."

The film's highly atmospheric views, rich landscapes, and poignant music—composed by Tom Pintens in collaboration with the artist—penetrate the psyche and stimulate the senses, encapsulating Op de Beeck's uncanny ability to create visual fictions that deliver moments of wonder, silence, and introspection. His wide-ranging oeuvre, which includes large-scale installation, sculpture, film, painting, drawing, photography, and texts, reflects on the tragi-comic ways in which humans stage and organize their lives. Utilizing simple, everyday images, Op de Beeck raises universal questions about meaning and mortality, finding a delicate balance between the serious and the absurd, between the banal and extraordinary.

In "The Girl," art historical traditions of the panorama, landscape painting, and German-Romantic notions of melancholy and the sublime converge with the technological advances of cinema to create a powerful work that both unsettles and inspires. As with his acclaimed installations, including "The Collector's House," Op de Beeck's ambiguous characters and unidentified locales serve to highlight the universality of emotion and experience. With "The Girl," the viewer is left in thoughtful reflection on the impact of industry and innovation on our daily lives and the world in which we exist.

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Hans Op de Beeck (b. 1969) creates large-scale installations, sculptures, films, drawings, paintings, photographs and texts. His work has been the subject of solo exhibitions at the Smithsonian's Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington D.C. (2010); MIT List Visual Arts Center, Cambridge, MA (2014); Museum of Contemporary Art Cleveland, OH (2014); Sammlung Goetz, Munich, Germany (2014); Screen Space, Melbourne, Australia (2015); Espace 104, Paris, France (2016); Kunstraum Dornbirn, Dornbirn, Austria (2017); Museum Morsbroich, Leverkusen, Germany (2017); and Kunstmuseum Wolfsburg, Wolfsburg, Germany (2017), among many others, and has been shown extensively across the world in group presentations. He has been invited to participate in Art Basel: Unlimited; the Venice Biennale; Shanghai Biennale; the Aichi Triennale; and the Singapore Biennale, and other major artworld events. Over the past few years he started to write and direct theater plays as well as several operas for which he did the stage design. Op de Beeck was born in Turnhout, and lives and works in Brussels, Belgium.

For more information about Hans Op de Beeck, please contact Gallery Partner Adrian Turner at adrian@boeskygallery.com or 212-680-9889. For press inquiries, please contact Alina Sumajin, PAVE Communications and Consulting, at alina@paveconsult.com or 646-369-2050.

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