

Hans Op de Beeck  
February 23 – April 6, 2019

Marianne Boesky Gallery is pleased to present *Staging Silence (3)*, a new film created by Brussels-based artist Hans Op de Beeck. The film, which will make its international premiere at the gallery on February 23, 2019, is the third and final installment in Op de Beeck's *Staging Silence* series, with prior films having debuted in 2009 and 2013. The presentation will also include a new life-sized sculpture, several smaller sculptural works, and a selection of watercolors to provide a more holistic experience of the artist's wide-ranging practice. The film, and accompanying exhibition, will be on view through April 6, 2019 at the gallery's 507 W. 24th Street location.

*Staging Silence (3)* takes the viewer on a journey through a series of desolate scenes, gradually constructed and deconstructed by a pair of anonymous hands that act as either divine creator or grand puppeteer. Ranging from hyper-realistic fictional land and cityscapes to absurd, almost surreal, dreamscapes, the various locations are connected by the sense of mystery and melancholy that pervades them. The emergence and disappearance of these interiors and views evoke a wide range of sensations, from nostalgia to tragedy to optimism, and, in some instances, even to humor. These evocations are further accentuated by the film's original score composed by Scanner.

Defying any linear progression or direct narrative, *Staging Silence (3)* offers instead a meditation on the complicated and layered relationships between humanity, nature, and our self-created and imposed societies. For Op de Beeck, the *Staging Silence* films serve in particular as an opportunity to examine the humanization of open spaces and our instinctual drive to derive meaning in and from our physical environments and in the structures of our lives. For *Staging Silence (3)*, Op de Beeck has paid special attention to the minute details of his scenes, infusing them with subtle references to cultural happenings and other works from across his diverse oeuvre. In this way, Op de Beeck utilizes a simple framework to raise universal questions about identity, reality, and humanity's capacity for both creation and destruction, finding a delicate balance between the serious and the playful, between the banal and extraordinary.

Op de Beeck's film will be presented alongside a life-size sculpture, produced in monochrome gray, that depicts a girl sleeping on a bed atop a wooden raft. Positioned on a circular pedestal, the raft appears to gently float through realistically-sculpted water, accented by reeds and lilies. The scale of the sculpture allows the viewer to physically engage with it, becoming a silent participant in the child's dream world. For Op de Beeck, the work is deeply personal as it both harkens back to his childhood imaginings of his bed as a vessel moving through lake waters and his role as a father, watching over his children as they sleep and wondering where their dreams have taken them. The sweetness of the image is also laced with an edge of danger. At any moment, the dream may become a nightmare. These competing sensations and the inherent tension in the unknown give the work its mysterious and alluring title, *My bed a raft, the room the sea, and then I laughed some gloom in me*.

The exhibition also features a series of Op de Beeck's smaller-scale sculptures. Created in grey-scale, the works consist of finely detailed miniature interiors and domestic views. Titled *The Manor House*, *The Library*, and *The Backyard*, among others, the sculptures invite the viewer to peek into these realms and imagine the life that exists within them. The experiences of daily life and the home environment have emerged as important recurring elements within both Op de Beeck's visual and performing arts practice. Scenes that feel comfortingly familiar are also laced with a sense of disconcerting voyeurism, as one peers into and moves through these spaces. With this newest group of sculptures, the role of the viewer is further complicated by the positioning of these scenes atop traditional camera tri-pods. Where the camera might capture a photograph of a real-life place, here, the image morphs into three-dimensional reality, only to give way to the imaginings of the viewer just as quickly.

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Presented together, the various works in the exhibition highlight Op de Beeck's fascination with the liminal space between the real and imagined; the experienced and the fabricated; and the present and yet to come. Considering the works in dialogue with each other, Op de Beeck has titled the presentation with a poem he wrote:

*"sleeping children  
adrift on their rafts  
a distant voice  
a sighing of draughts*

*crestfallen tulips  
in artificial light  
shadows too dark  
brightness too bright*

*nocturnal meadows  
a thought someone stole  
jet-black and shiny  
the darkness of coal*

*silent servants  
now calmly unfold  
a blanket of solace  
laid on the cold"*

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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, Cleveland, OH (2014); Sammlung Goetz, Munich, Germany (2014); Screen Space, Melbourne, Australia (2015); Espace 104, Paris, France (2016); Kunstraum Dornbirn, Dornbirn, Austria (2017); Morsbroich Museum, 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 has 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, Belgium and lives and works in Brussels, Belgium.

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