

## TWICE. MARLENE DUMAS · LUC TUYMANS

We are very proud to announce our upcoming exhibition of works by Marlene Dumas and Luc Tuymans. This is the third exhibition in our new gallery space, which was renovated by the Belgian architects Coussée & Goris.

Since 1993 works by Marlene Dumas (°1953, Cape Town) and Luc Tuymans (°1958, Mortsel) have often been included in the same group exhibitions but they have never had a major presentation together. Now, for the first time ever, these two artists will be showing a complete body of work alongside each other in 'TWICE'.

Both artists have always paid special attention to the titles of their exhibitions. Currently work from 1978 until 2011 by Luc Tuymans is on view in a solo exhibition, 'NICE. Luc Tuymans', at the Menil Collection in Houston. Consequently 'TWICE AS NICE' seemed like a logical possible title for this joint exhibition. After a brief discussion the artists agreed to the title 'TWICE'. Although they are exhibiting their work together, there is no general theme that connects their works. Dumas and Tuymans decided in advance to create no more than six works each in order to keep it compact. When you look at these two solo exhibitions together certain similarities and differences become even more apparent, which, in turn, stimulates the dialogue about painting.

Dumas and Tuymans each have a very different approach. Marlene Dumas does not have a pre-established plan when she starts to work on a new series. Her main focus gradually begins to take shape while she paints. Her approach tends to be organic, leaving space and time for coincidences and her creative process is very different from Tuymans's. He clearly defines the concept for his exhibition, explores the theme and decides in advance what the paintings should look like. The actual painting process is concentrated, fast, structured and most of the work is done in one day.

Both artists have an ambiguous relation to the photographic, cinematographic or painted image and its meaning. According to Marlene Dumas:

The Artwork as Misunderstanding  
There is a crisis with regard to representation. They are looking for meaning as if it was a thing. As if it was a girl required to take her panty off. As if she would want to do so, as soon as the true interpreter comes along. As if there was something to take off.

Dumas also often refers to the notion of "couples" in art or pokes fun at male/female oppositional thinking:

I have painted more women than men I paint women for men I paint women for women I paint the women of my men

Luc Tuymans always mistrusts images because they can be easily manipulated or taken out of context. The image is just a perception, an interpretation of the reality. Tuymans explains: 'The small gap between the explanation of a picture and the picture itself provides the only possible perspective on painting. My comments refer only to its ambiguity'.

The idea for Tuymans's new group of works originated in a small painting he made in 1987 of a cook. This work remained unfinished and ended up in his archives. For 'TWICE' he reused this

old image but chose to create a large-scale painting. In 'Cook' we see a man stirring a liquid mass in a large pot. The man's face is blurry either due to the steam emanating from the pot or because of a light that shines behind him. A chiaroscuro divides the painting in a dark and light mass. The background is darker and more difficult to define. The colours Tuymans uses are warm and vibrant, contrasting with Dumas's cold and bright palette. Tuymans further explored the theme of the cook in 'In the Kitchen', 'Good advice' and 'Containers'.

All these works are close-ups of a large photo he took in the kitchen of a famous old restaurant in Warsaw. It is a very masculine subject, with chefs often being portrayed as machos. The cook is a dominant figure who controls all the operations in the kitchen and who attaches great importance to a hierarchic structure. This ensemble elicits reflections on the representation of politics, monopoly and power.

'Containers' is the only work that has a more feminine feel to it. A group of cans and bottles have been arranged together as a still-life. But questions arise about their content. Do they belong in the kitchen? Or are they cosmetics for the bathroom?'Dad's Heat' features an old heater that Tuymans received from his father. The contrast between the cool background colours and the vibrant red tones give the impression of radiant warmth emanating from the appliance.

One work, 'My Door I-VI', is more autonomous. It is a series of six watercolours in which a dark back-ground is lit up by a bright, white stain. This painting is based on several snapshots he took at home of a ray of sun falling onto a door. The painting's subtle balance between figuration and abstraction creates an ambiguous impression of a mysterious cave.

Both Luc Tuymans and Marlene Dumas have created works with references to political and historical events. While Tuymans focused on the Belgian involvement in the assassination of Congo's first president, Patrice Lumumba, in his previous series 'Mwana Kitoko: Beautiful White Man' (2000) Dumas is more interested in the apparent grief of Lumumba's wife Pauline in a news image from 1961. In 1982 Dumas used this image in a collage called "3 vroue en ek". In a new work, 'The Widow', she uses the same image again but now the woman even appears twice. Although the same scene is repeated in the diptych the mood is different. In the larger work, we zoom in closer to focus on the figure of Pauline Lumumba and the two men dressed in white on either side of her. She is bare-breasted as a sign of protest and mourning and provocative and vulnerable at the same time. In the small painting we zoom out to see the wider context. Now the relationship with the crowd and the military surroundings demand our attention. In 'The Trophy' Dumas also revisits an existing piece. It is another version of her work 'The Woman of Algiers' from 2001. The painting is based on a photo of a young naked girl held captive by two soldiers during the Algerian War of Independence in 1960. Dumas fell upon this image, which was published 40 years later in 'L' Express' with censorship bars across her breasts and pubic area. In 'Nuclear Family' a family poses naked. Only the children are wearing underpants. It is the first time that Dumas paints a family, a harmonious group portrayed against the backdrop of a landscape that is steeped in unnatural light.

In the 'The Artist and his Model' Dumas again plays with the notion of twice, the second, the double and in this sense also with the title of this exhibition. She reflects on her position as an artist and the relation between the artist and the model. Here Luc Tuymans appears as her model. In the background we see a spectre of his model, the former Queen of the Netherlands, whom Tuymans painted. The work is in the collection of the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam

and was officially presented to the public during the re-opening of the Stedelijk Museum in 2012. In 'Double' we see her daughter, who has often been featured as a model in her body of work, now as a young woman, with her reflection, look-alike or double. The only painting to feature only one figure is 'Missing Picasso'. But then again the title refers to a second presence, the master of 'the female nude'.

Currently several of Marlene Dumas's works are on show in the group exhibition 'Prima Materia' at Punta Della Dogana in Venice. In September 2014 the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam will host a retrospective of Marlene Dumas's work. This major exhibition will travel to Tate Modern in London and the Beyeler Foundation in Basel.

Doha, the capital of Qatar, commissioned a gigantic mosaic by Luc Tuymans. The inauguration is scheduled for the end of 2015. A solo exhibition of Tuymans's work will simultaneously be held at the Museum of Doha. Earlier Tuymans donated a mosaic of 1600 sq.m. for the square in front of the MAS museum in Antwerp. 'Dead Skull' is based on a memorial tablet for Quentin Massys (1466-1529), an important painter who founded the painters' guild, which can be found on the wall next to the entrance of the Cathedral of Antwerp. Tuymans used this image before in a painting dating from 2002. This mosaic is Tuymans's first public work to be permanently on display.