

FILIP GILISSEN  
*Shine Bright Like A Star*

For his first solo exhibition in Belgium, Filip Gilissen (°1980) occupies the gallery's upper floor with an installation inviting to enter a corridor made of golden specks. The artist places the visitor straight away in an ambiguous position. While entering this installation called *The Best Is Yet To Come* (after Felix Gonzales Torres), the visitor dives into a space with no landmarks, oppressive and pleasant at the same time, leading to an exit opening towards an exhibition space that seems to have become a clothing store.

Hundreds of T-shirts are hanging on a golden rod, unfurling throughout the whole space. The T-shirts all carry the same slogan, written in gold: *JUST KEEP Living*. The alternation of block letters and italics provides a notion of both order and lightness, with we find back in the picture hanging on the wall, made by a professional commercial studio. Wandering from one room to another, visitors realise they are spectator of another hallucination; of mass production, an individualistic consumer mode depending on a catching hedonism, and of values taking the form of advertising slogans.

The ambiguity of Gilissen's work becomes material thanks to a hybrid crossing of conceptual artistic practices and magician's effects. While sounding the drifts of our capitalist society, he flays the contemporary art's codes (sense and showing of an artwork). Can one not see in the installation a comparison between excesses of the contemporary art world and the fashion world? The artist, as well as the gallery owner, presents a new exhibition like the dress designer presents a new collection. Gilissen cares about the codes and the vocabulary used to create the illusion (of love, beauty, wealth...) to the masses through short and striking slogans. Gilissen is both a magician and a tightrope walker. By walking on the border of kitsch and flashy art, and criticism of the strengths that enslave modern man, he takes the risk in a paradoxical movement to both denounce and make an apology. The whole installation is for sale in variation according to the number of T-shirts and of running meters according to the standard sizes XL - L - M - S.