

OFFICE BAROQUE

JAN DE COCK: ABSTRACT CAPITALISM

14 January – 20 February 2016

Opening preview: Thursday 14 January, 18–20 h

Bloemenhofplein 5 Place du Jardin aux Fleurs
1000 Brussels

Office Baroque is pleased to announce a new solo exhibition of Jan De Cock at our downtown gallery. This is the second exhibition of De Cock in 12 months time. The artist will be presenting 18 new Abstract Capitalist sculptures as well as 9 Memorial Drawings. The exhibition's title *Abstract Capitalism*, appropriates the visual language of the "abstraktes Bild", which the artist understands as a particular stage in the development of capital.

Whereas De Cock, with his last show *Sculpturecommunism*, was tracing art and its potential as a gift to society, it is clear that *Abstract Capitalism*, is a vengeful post-script to arts embrace of society. Over the past years, De Cock has been focusing primarily on sculpture as an abstract monument, both in scale and presentation. His new series investigate a "becoming bourgeois" of revolutionary art practices. Thematically De Cock suggests romantic landscapes, pleasant interiors and scintillating conversations, evoking an earthly paradise, richly filled with the props and accessories of mythological feasts and carnal celebrations. Hovering between the self imposed limits of modernism and ornamentalist Baroque spillages, De Cock only used four colors and the four archetypal materials of sculpture: plaster, iron, wood and pigment.

De Cock projects visions of pleasure, yet provides us with ironic moral warnings. In dense, chaotic and meticulously orchestrated compositions, the themes of abundance, hubris, fall and decay are tucked away amid modernist grids and constructivist diagonals. De Cock is one of the very few artists to present the spheres of the luxurious culture and its expenditures at the end of the 20th century, merging materials, traditionally associated with cabinet making, with excessive decorum. An assured handling of a rich fund of requisites and materials, amply demonstrated in the compositional density of his sculptures, reveals De Cock's vision of avant-garde pushed forward by the market. Seen from this perspective, the recurring abstract expressionist drippings are cited as a peculiar historical marriage of capital, modernism and imperialism which De Cock already investigated in the exhibition Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis at the Staatliche Kunsthalle Baden-Baden in 2011. Here De Cock reveals precisely those qualities that are expected from a traditional sculptor on a monumental scale: those of the accomplished director. With *Abstract Capitalism*, De Cock makes a pendulum movement between a reactionary and a revolutionary portrait of our times and movements.

A series of 9 Memorial Drawings on book covers typeset by De Cock, about a fictitious public sale on 30 October 2015, at London based auction house

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Christie's, of the artists studio and goods, features, in the history of Gustave Courbet and Marcel Broodthaers, the reality of the artist's studio as an allegory for the contracts and conventions on which modern society is built. De Cock's drawings are the result of 8 years of studio practice commencing in 2008 after De Cock's exhibition at the Museum of Modern Art, New York. They are characterized by fragmentary and open compositions much like flowers growing on a ruin.

Few artists have expanded the scope of monumental sculpture and installation more than Jan De Cock. Since the early 2000's, De Cock's work has invaded the fields of sculpture, architecture, photography, film, writing and printing. His expansive installations have dealt with questioning and revisiting aesthetics in a world that has become increasingly saturated with images. Jan De Cock's production can be defined as a time-expanding enterprise in which the concepts of production and exhibition are no longer linear. His installations are characterized by intricately complicated systems of display and classification, formally referencing modernism, constructivism, as much as minimalism. De Cock often cites Auguste Rodin, Constantin Brancusi, Antoine Bourdelle, Umberto Boccioni and Marcel Broodthaers as important sources. Throughout De Cock's artistic production of the last 15 years run themes of history, deconstruction, modernism, fragmentation and labour.

Major individual exhibitions by De Cock were held at Tate Modern (London), Schirn Kunsthalle (Frankfurt), Bozar (Brussels), Staatliche Kunsthalle (Baden-Baden) and at MoMA (New York). Works by the artist are held in public collections worldwide including Stedelijk Museum (Amsterdam), Centre Pompidou (Paris), Tate Modern (London) and MoMA (New York).

De Cock was born in Brussels in 1976 and currently lives and works in Brussels. He is also the founder of the Brussels Art Institute (<http://brusselsartinstitute.org>), a place where in the tradition of the Bauhaus, a school, an artist's studio, exhibition space, café, film, music and theater come together in a former paper-making factory.

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Gallery hours:
Wednesday – Saturday, 11 – 18 h
and by appointment