

**GBE
291 GRAND STREET
3rd FLOOR
NY NY 10002**

**JOS DE GRUYTER AND HARALD THYS
XANAX FILM FESTIVAL**

FEBRUARY 25 – APRIL 30, 2017

OPENING RECEPTION: FEBRUARY 25, 6 – 8 PM

**FINISSAGE: APRIL 30, 6 – 8 PM
WITH CLOSING REMARKS BY ROBERT SNOWDEN AND THE ARTISTS**

GBE presents *Xanax Film Festival*, a selection of films by Jos De Gruyter and Harald Thys made between 1988-2014 and on view at the gallery from February 25 – April 30, 2017.

The earlier films in the series such as *Mime in the Videostudio (1988)*, reflect the struggle of the artists to survive the rules of the St. Lukas Academy they both attended in Brussels. Set in the basement of the school, the short functions as a statement against a pedophile ex-priest who was responsible for the upkeep of the studio and had developed an unhealthy sexual obsession for the video equipment. The work doubly functions as a provocative statement against European society at the end of the Cold War. During their time working in psychiatric hospitals in the 1990s, the artists continued to make their films as a way to counter the daily trauma of these state-run centers in Brussels.

In *The Bucket (2001)*, the artists' workplace continues to play an important role. The film was shot in Ten Weyngaert, a utopian community center built in the 1970s, where they had both worked as clerks. Similar to their old school, the building's basement was host to strange sexual behavior by its staff, which was made up of locals from the outskirts of Brussels. The brutal architecture of the building, in combination with its absurd union rules, triggered a perverted kind of creativity in the minds of De Gruyter and Thys that resulted in various films, drawings, photographs and sound works.

The Brown of Mechelen (2014), the most recent and perhaps most depressing film included in the *Xanax Film Festival*, shows us a European society in decay – society of leisure in which the civilians have lost their way and, like Nazis in the 1930s, start to openly discuss euthanasia as a possible “solution.”

Xanax.

When taken as prescribed, the short-term effects of Xanax are beneficial to many individuals. It has the potential to reduce the physical tension, restlessness and feelings of unease common with anxiety.



FILM SCHEDULE:

Wednesdays

The Brown of Mechelen (2014), 55 minutes
A portrait of the city of Mechelen, its history and its toy museum.

Thursdays

The Curse (1999), 16 minutes
A woman marries the wrong man. They have a baby and the woman gets severe depression.

The Spinning Wheel (2000), 18 minutes
Two boys and a woman are locked into a little chamber and perform magical acts.

The Yellow of Ghent (2005), 9 minutes
A portrait of the city of Ghent through the eyes of two men in bathrobes.

Fridays

Chaplin (1992-1996), 5 minutes
Chaplin plays in a public park with a pink balloon.

Mime in the Videostudio (1988), 3 minutes
A man performs a dance in a video studio using objects he found there that inspire him.

The Bucket (2001), 18 minutes
A couple wants to renovate a room while two creatures dressed up like birds invade their house at night.

The Riddles of Saarlouis (2012), 18 minutes
Two identical woman with glasses recite a number of insoluble riddles.

Saturdays

The Bomb (1995), 5 minutes
A man makes a bomb, puts it in a toy car with stuffed animals, makes it explode and carefully watches the result of his actions.

The Experiment (1995), 1 minute
A stuffed animal undergoes an experiment to test his resistance at high speed.

The Deserter (1997), 9 minutes
A silent man is found in the woods by the authorities. An intense investigation to find out his identity begins.

Sundays

Parallelogram (2000), 18 minutes
A creature is taken out of a pit by a man and two helpers. The man brings the creature to his wife.

Parallel Worlds (2009), 26 minutes
A didactic video on the existence of a parallel world and its relationship to the real world.

Triumph des Willens (2015), 14 minutes
A skeleton man sits next to the window and watches Nazi troops pass by in the street. His best friends visit him.

