

Michaël Borremans *Fire from the Sun*

January 27 – March 10, 2018

Opening reception
Saturday, January 27, 6–8 PM



Michaël Borremans, *Fire from the Sun*, 2017. Oil on Panel. 20x22.5cm. © Michaël Borremans

David Zwirner is pleased to present an exhibition of new paintings by Michaël Borremans, inaugurating the gallery's space in Hong Kong. This will be the artist's first solo show in Hong Kong and his sixth overall with David Zwirner.

Fire from the Sun includes small and large scale works that feature toddlers engaged in playful but mysterious acts with sinister overtones and insinuations of violence. The children are presented alone or in groups against a studio-like backdrop that negates time and space, while underlining the theatrical atmosphere and artifice that exists throughout Borremans's recent work. Reminiscent of cherubs in Renaissance paintings, the toddlers appear as allegories of the human condition, their archetypal innocence contrasted with their suggested deviousness. Other paintings in the exhibition depict obscure machines, whose enigmatic presence appears foreboding in the context of the toddlers and suggests an element of scientific experimentation.

Borremans has gained worldwide recognition for his innovative approach to painting. Combining technical mastery with subject matter that defies straightforward interpretation, his charged canvases address universal themes with a specifically contemporary complexity. As Michael Bracewell argues in new scholarship on the artist, published in the accompanying exhibition catalogue, viewers are "caught in a strange time loop, in which the nobility of execution ascribed to Old Masters—the re-creation in painting of human presence, caught both stilled, in a particular instant of its being, and for eternity—is placed in the service of vertiginous modernist vision." As Bracewell further notes on these works, they portray psychological states that are not intended to be decoded: "the scenes depicted by the majority of paintings comprising *Fire from the Sun* show a state of being or society in which the primal is uncontrolled, without bearings, in a state of anarchy—the Id of Freudian primary process run riot, with no Ego to mediate between instinctual behavior and 'reality.' The art of Michaël Borremans seems

always to have been predicated on a confluence of enigma, ambiguity, and painterly poetics—accosting beauty with strangeness; making historic Romanticism subjugate to mysterious controlling forces that are neither crudely malevolent nor necessarily benign.”

Michaël Borremans was born in 1963 in Geraardsbergen, Belgium. In 1996, he received his M.F.A. from Hogeschool voor Wetenschap en Kunst, Campus St. Lucas, in Ghent. David Zwirner has represented the artist's works since 2001. Previous solo exhibitions at the gallery include *Black Mould* (London, 2015) *The Devil's Dress* (New York, 2011), *Taking Turns* (New York, 2009), *Horse Hunting* (New York, 2006), and *Trickland* (New York, 2003).

Borremans's work has been the subject of solo exhibitions at many prominent institutions. Most recently, *Michaël Borremans: Fixture*, was presented at the Centro de Arte Contemporáneo de Málaga in 2015-2016. A major museum survey, *Michaël Borremans: As sweet as it gets*, which included one hundred works from two decades, was on view at the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels in 2014. The exhibition traveled later in the year to the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, followed by the Dallas Museum of Art in 2015. The previous year, *Michaël Borremans: The Advantage*, the artist's first museum solo show in Japan, was on view at the Hara Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo.

In 2011, *Michaël Borremans: Eating the Beard*, a comprehensive solo show was presented at the Württembergischer Kunstverein Stuttgart, and traveled to the Múcsarnok Kunsthalle, Budapest and the Kunsthalle Helsinki. In 2010, he had a solo exhibition at the Kunstneres Hus in Oslo, as well as commissioned work on view at the Royal Palace in Brussels. Other venues which have hosted solo exhibitions include the kestnergesellschaft, Hanover (2009); de Appel Arts Centre, Amsterdam (2007); Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst (S.M.A.K.), Ghent (2005; traveled to Parasol unit foundation for contemporary art, London; and the Royal Hibernian Academy, Dublin); Cleveland Museum of Art, Ohio (2005); Kunsthalle Bremerhaven, Germany (2004); and Museum für Gegenwartskunst, Basel (both 2004).

Work by the artist is held in public collections internationally, including Art Institute of Chicago; Dallas Museum of Art; High Museum of Art, Atlanta, Georgia; The Israel Museum, Jerusalem; Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris; Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst (S.M.A.K.), Ghent; and the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota. Borremans lives and works in Ghent.

For all press inquiries, contact

Dylan Shuai, +852 5984 6846, dylan@davidzwirner.com

Ashley Tickle, +1 212 727 2070, atickle@davidzwirner.com