

Press release

Aernout Mik | *A swarm of two*

27th January - 10th March 2018

Opening: Friday, January 26, 2018, 6-9 pm

carlier | gebauer is pleased to announce a solo exhibition of new work by Aernout Mik. This will be the artist's 7th solo exhibition at carlier | gebauer and his first exhibition in Berlin since *Speaking in Tongues* at Haus der Kulturen der Welt in 2013.

Mik's film installations often address moments of social order and disorder, troubling the distinction between fiction and documentary. He cultivates a sense of disorientation in his work, a feeling that is heightened by the scale of his video screens enfolding the viewer while the spatial arrangement of the projection changes the conditions of the very act of viewing itself.

Aernout Mik has taken bankers, religious evangelists, truck drivers, refugees, or earthquake victims as the subject of past videos. Yet, as curator Ralf Rugoff notes, "None of these mute figures is ever delineated as a distinct character or a psychological subject. Instead, Mik's camera regards them all with a leveling gaze that diminishes and blurs their differences, leaving us to consider the collective identity of those who, under different conditions, might appear as discrete individuals."

In his most recent work, *A swarm of two*, Mik directs his attention towards a duo. In this silent, two-channel video two police officers roam the streets of Ostend at night. Heavily armed and uniformed, they undertake a seemingly never-ending trek through deserted shopping areas. Their costuming nods towards the visual codes that symbolize "security" during times of terror. However, their nocturnal wanderings emphasize the ambivalence of security rather than its brute force.

In the darkness of the city, the order of swarms takes over. The policemen partially shed their uniforms—an armor of unwavering authority—to reveal something darker, more indistinct. Order breaks down and the act of "policing" gives way to a dynamic interplay between the two officers, gestures that fluidly veer between the sexual and the hostile, the amicable and the disaffected. Cast adrift, whether hand in hand or prostrated on their knees, they improvise a choreography of power, subservience, attraction, fear, suspicion, and turmoil.

Aernout Mik (b.1962, Groningen) lives and works in Amsterdam. He represented the Netherlands in the Dutch Pavilion at the 52nd Venice Biennale, 2007. He has had solo exhibitions at venues such as Art Sonje Center, Seoul; MoMA, New York; BAK, basis voor actuele kunst, Utrecht; Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin; Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; Jeu de Paume, Paris; Museum Folkwang, Essen; and CA2M Centro de Arte Dos de Mayo, Madrid. Mik has participated in numerous international biennials, including the Venice Biennale, Sao Paulo Biennial, Tirana Biennale, Art Focus - Israel Biennial, Istanbul Biennial, and the Berlin Biennale.

A swarm of two was commissioned by Mu.Zee for "The Raft", Ostend and co-produced by Argos, Brussels.

Aernout Mik

A swarm of two, 2017

Performers: Ashley Chen, Olga Dukhovnaya, Mani A. Mungai, Jolie Ngemi
Co-director: Marjoleine Boonstra
Director of Photography: Benito Strangio
2nd camera: István Imreh
Production designer: Elsje de Bruijn
Producer: Chantal Nissen
Weaponhandler: Rick Wiesenhaan
Camera assistants: Erik Wiedenhof, Henry Vrijssen
Location manager: Edward Bosschem
Set manager: Francis Bosschem
Electricals: Jasper Keymeulen, Jens Callewaert
Production Employee de Zee: Mirthe Demaerel
Production intern de Zee: Nele Thorrez
Handler & dog: Ivan Dury & Jona
Volunteers: Karine de Gendt, Yves Willems
Image Post production: Ruud de Bruyn/Loods Lux & Lumen
Picture vehicle: Jan Wijnakker
Electrical equipment: Het Licht
Camera equipment: Cam-a-lot
Security: Salus group
Crowd control: Radarwerk
Color Grading: Petro van Leeuwen

Thanks to Boris Charmatz, Musée de la danse, Rennes and Jan Fabre.