

NOVELTY Ltd.
Douglas Eynon & Erwan Mahéo

BRUSSELS
FROM JANUARY 18 TO MARCH 25, 2017

CURATOR
GUILLAUME DÉSANGES

BALLISTIC POETRY SEASON

NOVELTY Ltd.

Douglas Eynon & Erwan Mahéo

EXHIBITION FROM JANUARY 18 TO MARCH 25, 2017

PRIVATE VIEW TUESDAY JANUARY 17, 2016, FROM 6 P.M. TO 9 P.M.

As part of the *Ballistic Poetry* (« Poésie balistique ») season launched at La Verrière in April 2016, curator Guillaume Désanges invites British artist Douglas Eynon (b. 1989) and French artist Erwan Mahéo (b. 1968) to devise an unprecedented, collaborative exhibition.

Entitled “NOVELTY Ltd.”, their exhibition centres on a large, embroidered canvas that transforms the topography of La Verrière. The structure orchestrates effects of surprise, playing on a specific world and its double, staging the discovery of the exhibition as a whole - a strange space to discover and explore.

Beyond its deliberately ‘tertiary-sector’ title, *NOVELTY Ltd.* offers an itinerary coloured with a surreptitious hint of dreams and fantasy, visualising the materialisation of mental space, whose organisation appears to conform to some unstated programme.

NOVELTY Ltd. is the third exhibition in the *Ballistic Poetry* season, devoted to an examination of the distance between a programme and its outcome, or more precisely, the disconnect between intention and perception in certain forms of radical abstraction. The show presents a second experiment in collaboration between an invited duo of artists at La Verrière, after Ann Veronica Janssens and Michel François in 2015. Douglas Eynon and Erwan Mahéo are friends who have already exhibited together. Both are part of a close network of artists at the core of the contemporary Belgian scene. Their joint show at La Verrière reflects Brussels’ cultural dynamism. As curator, Désanges has identified strong links of form and content between their respective practices and the energy of the European capital, which has become home to numerous practising artists and other, pivotal art world figures. Chief among these links is their emphasis on collaborative working processes and knowledge-sharing: values shared by the Fondation d’entreprise Hermès, as reflected across the full range of our activities.

LA VERRIÈRE, BRUSSELS (BELGIUM)
50, BOULEVARD DE WATERLOO
TUESDAY TO SATURDAY, 12 A.M. - 6 P.M.
FREE ADMISSION
WWW.FONDATIONDENTREPRISEHERMES.ORG

INTERNATIONAL PRESS DIRECTOR,
HERMÈS INTERNATIONAL: **INA DELCOURT**
PRESS CONTACT: **ANNELISE CATINEAU**
+33 (0)1 40 17 48 07 / ACATINEAU@HERMES.COM



Cover visual:
Erwan Mahéo, *Anatomies de la pensée (en feu)*, 2016
Video, 50', film still
Courtesy of the artist

NOVELTY LTD.

Douglas Eynon & Erwan Mahéo

“Quietly, over a number of years, Brussels – like Berlin before it – has established itself as a favoured destination for artists and other art professionals from across Europe and beyond: people for whom the city offers a fertile context for work on a different timescale, drawing on different impulses, all of which has contributed to the city’s fascinating, hybrid contemporary art scene. The gradual formation of this creative archipelago is not driven solely by the now widespread impulse of ‘gentrification’¹; it is an ecosystem both open to change, and preserved, characterised by a mindset rather than a single aesthetic, and by ecologies rather than economies of work. A tight-knit network of personal and professional relationships, free and chaotic, echoing the urban structure of the city itself.

¹ - ‘Gentrification’ is a phenomenon observed worldwide: an urban movement involving the encroachment of wealthier classes into former working-class areas, transforming their economic and social profile. For economic reasons, artists are often seen as pioneers in these processes of transformation.

I mention this because the relationship between Douglas Eynon and Erwan Mahéo, two distinct personalities on the Brussels international art scene, is resonant with these economic issues, and because their project for La Verrière is not unconnected to this powerful if indeterminate social, urban and cultural context – the fictional and administrative ‘hub’ which the European capital represents.

This unprecedented collaboration as part of the ‘Ballistic Poetry’ season at La Verrière is organised around an architectural installation *in situ* that turns the space’s topography, and the visitors’ senses, on their heads: a sort of musical score in space, an agglomeration of their parallel artistic worlds. Under the deliberately ‘tertiary’, not to say corporate title *NOVELTY Ltd.*, the work is a strange, poetic space waiting to be explored; active though not in itself a space for activity – a space that works, rather than a workspace. More than an exhibition in the traditional sense, it offers a series of contingent situations, playing on replete forms and voids, areas of high and low tension, the intrusion of fantasy into the workings of immanence, of nature into functionality. Though devoid of directly legible references, its sources of inspiration are found in fairy tales, film and fantasy literature. But this arrangement conceals a hidden agenda, a ‘programme’ in the sense of an algorithm: one that is simultaneously determining, illegible and inaccessible. A way to follow a scenario of sorts, but with no story. And so this unreality, so close to reality, as concrete as any dream or nightmare, resonates with the march of the contemporary world, between virtuality and anxiety, comfort and danger, economy and affects. A confused state in which temporal hierarchies are turned upside down, the future is referenced as a past concept, and the present cannot be located.



Douglas Eynon, *Until the Next Bell Rings*, 2015
Photographic print, variable dimensions
Courtesy of the artist



Erwan Mahéo / Gijs Milius, Erwan Mahéo / Gijs Milius, exhibition view *La ligne droite est le plus court chemin d'un point à un autre uniquement si les deux points sont bien en face l'un de l'autre*; BAD (Brussels Artistic District asbl), Brussels, 2015

After Ann Veronica Janssens and Michel François in 2015, this proposition is a new experiment for an invited artist duo at La Verrière. As before, the pairing is intuitive rather than rational, based on invisible connections, fertile tensions and potential rather than the proven capital of past collaborations. In short, a more speculative than logical approach. The artists are friends, and have exhibited together before, as part of a close network at the heart of a Belgian art scene that is famously open to collaboration. Each knows the other's work well, yet their respective practices have little in common at first sight. Breton artist Erwan Mahéo has developed a formal and highly erudite practice, beginning in the 1990s, shaped by the history of forms and deliberately referencing connected fields such as architecture, graphics and design. Mahéo's work embraces sculpture, photography and video, but also large-scale needlework pieces, on textiles. Based on a topographical analysis of the spaces in which Mahéo is invited to work, the textile pieces seek to copy, underscore or re-draw the essential, defining lines of their setting, creating two-dimensional, abstract and geometric outgrowths from its existing fabric. A simplification of the world, imitated and set to rights through the medium of art. British painter, draughtsman, sculptor and video artist Douglas Eynon seems to seek redemption in the immediate, and in matter. In a kind of romanticism modelled on modernity, which draws equally on the sources of Surrealism, his work promulgates the irruption of fantasy in the midst of the prosaic. His often figurative world seems rooted in the tradition of allegorical or Symbolist painting, with a coating of punk culture, though the keys to its reading seem to have been erased. The result is a set of situations that are invariably unsettling, part myth, fable and futuristic film.

I have invited the two artists together because Douglas Eynon's practice is poetic, while Erwan Mahéo's programme is ballistic. But also because Erwan Mahéo is poetic in his de-realisation of the world, and because Douglas Eynon is ballistic in his capacity to touch the heart without words. At the time of writing, the *NOVELTY Ltd.* project remains an aggregate in the making, of mixed intentions and intuitions. I glimpse the outcome nonetheless: a kind of reverse logic, a paradoxical experience whose voids will be more replete than its forms, where embarking on the journey is as important as looking, and where perspectives will be more precisely defined than particular details. I see tensions between the familiar and strange, between radical abstraction and the seeds of narrative, between a garden and office space. I see a radical, uncontrolled programme, and a hint of poetry shining through the brutality of the real.

A dream? Absolutely."

Guillaume Désanges

BIOGRAPHY



Douglas Eynon, DR

Douglas Eynon

Born 1989 in Lewisham, United Kingdom
Lives and works in Brussels, Belgium

Douglas Eynon was born in 1989 in Lewisham, London, England. He studied sculpture in London at Wimbledon School of Arts, and later at ENSAV, La Cambre, and Brussels (Belgium), where he has lived and exhibited since completing his studies, while also working further afield in Europe. His work is not restricted to a specific discipline, embracing sculpture, installation, video, and drawings of dreams. Fictive landscapes and surrealistic situations are recurrent motifs.

“Domestic environments and habitats that humans create for themselves, and the notion of décor, play a large part in the scale or placement of the objects I create. I will often push the basic function or essence of a well-known object to try to distort it, or render it absurd. This process may be explored through material, light, or perhaps a repetition or collection of objects brought together to represent one overall mass. Recuperating and re-using a particular material is also often present; casting a candle, melting it, gathering it up, casting it again etc. etc., until the wax is black and the mould is destroyed.”

Education

- 2013 Bachelor Degree in Sculpture, Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Arts Visuels de La Cambre, Brussels, Belgium
- 2011 BA (Hons) Fine Arts: Sculpture, Wimbledon College of Arts, London, UK
- 2009 Foundation Diploma, Fine Art City College Brighton, UK

Solo Exhibitions

- 2017 Rodolphe Janssen, Brussels, Belgium (forthcoming)
La Verrière / Fondation d'entreprise Hermès, Brussels, Belgium (forthcoming)
- 2015 *The Last Word In Lonesome Is Me*, BAD, Brussels, Belgium
- 2011 *Inside Out*, Abilene, Brussels, Belgium

BIOGRAPHY



Erwan Mahéo, photo: Sébastien Reuzé

Erwan Mahéo

Born 1968 in Saint-Brieuc (France)
Living and working in Brussels.

Erwan Mahéo was born in 1968 in Saint Brieuc, France. From 1988 to 1994 Erwan studied art at the École Régionale des Beaux Arts de Rennes, and at Université UHB, also in Rennes. In 2003 he founded the artist-in-residence program Le Centre du Monde, on the island of Belle-île (France). Work produced as part of the project was exhibited in Brussels at Établissements d'en Face in 2008, in Rennes at Centre Culturel Colombier in 2009, and at the FRAC Bretagne in 2014. When the project ended, the work produced entered the collection of the FRAC Bretagne. Erwan Mahéo co-founded a publishing project under the title Herman Byrd in 2013. Between 2009 and 2015 he taught sculpture at ENSAV, La Cambre in Brussels. Erwan has exhibited extensively worldwide, including 'La Grandeur Inconnue' at Domaine de Kerguéhennec (France) in 1993; 'Permis de construire' at Cetinje Art Biennale, Montenegro in 1997; 'Laboratorium' at the Antwerp Open in 1999; 'Storage & display' in Mexico City in 2003; 'Nameless swirls, an unfolding in Presence' at Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven in 2003; 'Mathématiques' at the Kunsthalle Fri-Art, Fribourg, in 2004; 'Episode' at the Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens, Deurle in 2006; 'Who is there?' at MMCA Thessaloniki Biennale in 2007; 'Anachronism' at Argos Art Center, Brussels in 2007; 'La Grande Image' at Galerie Vidal Cuglietta, Brussels in 2011; 'Erwan Mahéo/Bernard Voïta' at C.C Strombeek in 2012, and 'TRACK, a city conversation', in Ghent in 2012.

Recent exhibitions

- 2017 La Verrière / Fondation d'entreprise Hermès, Brussels, Belgium (forthcoming)
- 2016 Wave IX, Herman Byrd, Island, Brussels.
- 2015 *La ligne droite est le plus court chemin d'un point à un autre uniquement si les deux points sont bien en face l'un de l'autre*, Erwan Mahéo/Gijs Milius, Brussels Artistic District, Brussels.
- 2012 *Erwan Mahéo/Bernard Voïta*, C.C. Strombeek, Strombeek-Bever.
- 2011 *La Grande Image*, Galerie VidalCuglietta, Brussels.
- 2009 *Where I'm going from*, FdC Satellite (Galerie Les filles du calvaire), Brussels.
Le Centre du Monde, Centre culturel Colombier, Rennes (France).

PRESS IMAGES

High-res images are available at:
<http://www.fondationentreprisehermes.org/Phototheque>
(password available on request)
Views of the exhibition will be available after the preview



Douglas Eynon, *Until the Next Bell Rings*, 2015
Photographic print, variable dimensions
Courtesy of the artist



Douglas Eynon, *The Last Word In Lonesome Is Me*, 2015
Installation view
Image courtesy of Isabelle Arthus



Douglas Eynon, *Untitled*, 2016
Installation view, table, pump, bricks, pool, interior plants, palettes, black plastic
Courtesy of the artist



Douglas Eynon, *Current*, 2014
Photographic print
Courtesy of the artist



Douglas Eynon, *Big Train Even Bigger Man or Small Train Big Man, no Recollection*, 2014
Photographic print
Courtesy of the artist

PRESS IMAGES CONTINUED

High-res images are available at:
<http://www.fondationentreprisehermes.org/Phototheque>
(password available on request)
Views of the exhibition will be available after the preview



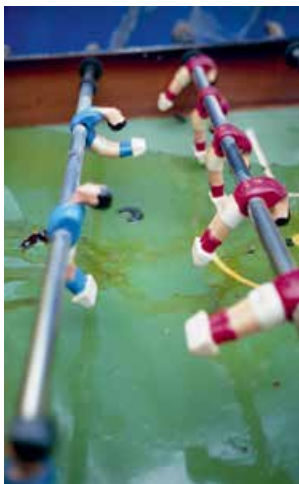
Douglas Eynon, *Raft*, 2013
Photographic print, dimensions
variables
Courtesy of the artist



Douglas Eynon, *Shepards Delight*, 2016
Oil on canvas, 2200 × 1460 mm
Courtesy of the Gallery Rodolphe Janssens



Douglas Eynon, *Decades*, 2013
Concrete, plant, metal
Courtesy of the artist



Douglas Eynon, *Untitled*, 2013
Photographic print
Courtesy of the artist



Douglas Eynon, *Skin Trade*, 2015
Pencil on paper
Courtesy of the artist



Douglas Eynon, *Autoportrait*, 2013
Black and white photographic print
Courtesy of the artist

PRESS IMAGES CONTINUED

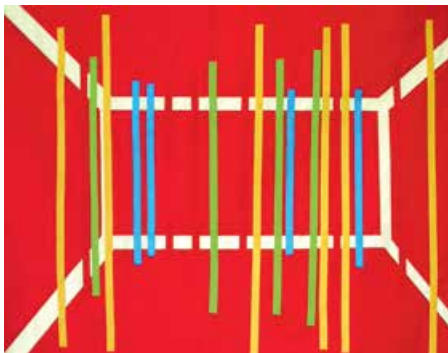
High-res images are available at:
<http://www.fondationentreprisehermes.org/Phototheque>
 (password available on request)
 Views of the exhibition will be available after the preview



Erwan Mahéo, *Anatomies de la pensée (en feu)*, 2016
 Video, 50', film still
 Courtesy of the artist



Erwan Mahéo, *Erewhon*, 2013
 Concrete, embroidery on fabric, dimensions variables
 Courtesy of the artist



Erwan Mahéo, *Sans titre*, 2005
 Fabric, strips, 140 x 90 cm
 Courtesy of the artist



Erwan Mahéo, *Vanité froissée (Philippe de Champaigne)*, 2007
 Photographic print mounted on aluminium, 60 x 80 cm
 Courtesy of the artist



Erwan Mahéo, *Les gardiens du secret*, 1993
 Bookcase, formwork planks, books
 Collection Frac Bretagne



Erwan Mahéo / Gijis Milius, exhibition view *La ligne droite est le plus court chemin d'un point à un autre uniquement si les deux points sont bien en face l'un de l'autre*; BAD (Brussels Artistic District asbl), Brussels, 2015



Erwan Mahéo, *Sometime, somewhere*, 1991
 Photographic print, variable dimensions

PRESS IMAGES CONTINUED

High-res images are available at:
<http://www.fondationentreprisehermes.org/Phototheque>
(password available on request)
Views of the exhibition will be available after the preview



Erwan Mahéo, *Episode*, 2006
Embroidered fabric, 1500 × 350 cm, exhibition view Dhondt-Dhaenens Museum
Private collection



Erwan Mahéo, *Homage*, Fri Art, Fribourg, Suisse, 2004
Wood, metal, paper, paint, fire, 300 × 300 cm
Courtesy of the artist



Erwan Mahéo & Gijs Milius, *Sans titre*, 2015
Wood, coasters, polyester
Courtesy of the artists



Erwan Mahéo, *Mer vertical (Donnant)*, 2016
Photographic print, variable dimensions
Courtesy of the artist

FORTHCOMING EXHIBITION AT LA VERRIÈRE

TRIS VONNA-MICHELL

FROM APRIL 22 TO JULY 1, 2017

PREVIEW FRIDAY APRIL 21, 2017

GUILLAUME DÉSANGES



Art critic and exhibition curator Guillaume Désanges is director of the independent production unit Work Method. He was artistic coordinator at the Laboratoires d'Aubervilliers from 2001 to 2007, and has produced exhibitions including *Pick-Up* at Public> (Paris), *Intouchable*, *l'Idéal Transparence* at the Villa Arson (Nice) and the Patio Herreriano museum (Valladolid), '*Jiri Kovanda vs Reste du monde*' (galerie gb agency, Paris/De Appel Amsterdam/La Passerelle, Brest/ Santa Monica art centre, Barcelona), *Child's Play* (Biennale Periferic, Iasi, Romania/Nam June Paik Center, South Korea), *Michel François, Plans d'évasion* at SMAK (Belgium), and 'Erre' at the Centre Pompidou-Metz. In 2007-2008 he was guest curator and programme director at La Tôlerie art centre, Clermont-Ferrand. In 2009-2011, he was guest curator at Le Plateau-FRAC Île-de-France art centre (Paris), for the two-year season *Érudition Concrète*. In 2013, he produced the exhibition *Amazing! Clever! Linguistic! An Adventure in Conceptual Art* (Generali Fondation, Vienna, Austria). Guillaume Désanges has curated a number of performance-based projects including *Une histoire de la performance en 20 minutes* (*A history of performance in 20 minutes*, at the Centre Pompidou, Paris/De Appel, Amsterdam/Artists Space, New York/MacVal, Paris/U-Turn, Copenhagen, etc.), *Vox Artisti, la voix de ses maîtres* ('Vox Artisti, his masters' voices'), at Halles de Schaerbeek, Brussels/University of Chicago/Bétonsalon, Paris), and *Signs and Wonders* (Tate Modern/Centre Pompidou). In 2013, he premiered a new play, *Marcel Duchamp*, with Frédéric Cherboeuf. Désanges is a member of the advisory committee of 49 Nord 6 Est - FRAC Lorraine (regional contemporary arts fund).

SELECTED HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE FONDATION D'ENTREPRISE HERMÈS (SELECTION)

EXHIBITION SPIRIT OF THE BAUHAUS

LES ARTS DÉCORATIFS, PARIS, FRANCE
OCTOBER 19, 2016 – FEBRUARY 26, 2017

PROGRAMME IMMERSION, A FRANCO-AMERICAN PHOTOGRAPHIC COMMISSION:

EXHIBITION SYLVAIN COUZINET-JACQUES

APERTURE FOUNDATION, NEW YORK, USA
NOVEMBER 17, 2016 – JANUARY 19, 2017

EXHIBITION ALESSANDRA SANGUINETTI

APERTURE FOUNDATION, NEW YORK, USA
SPRING 2017

EXHIBITION CLAUDE IVERNÉ

WINNER OF THE PRIX HCB 2015
FONDATION HENRI CARTIER-BRESSON, PARIS
MAY 11 – JULY 30, 2017

EXHIBITION OVER THE RAINBOW

LA GRANDE PLACE, MUSÉE DU CRISTAL SAINT-LOUIS
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH 49 NORD 6 EST - FRAC LORRAINE
SAINT-LOUIS-LÈS-BITCHE, FRANCE
DECEMBER 15, 2016 – MAY 22, 2017

EXHIBITION LIAISONS AMBIGUËS

BERNHARD SCHOBINGER,
ANNE LAURE SACRISTE, NILE KOETTING
LE FORUM, TOKYO, JAPAN
DECEMBER 15, 2016 – FEBRUARY 26, 2017

MANUFACTO, SKILLS FACTORY

PILOT YEAR IN SIX SCHOOLS
NOVEMBER 2016 – JUNE 2017

SKILLS ACADEMY 3 METAL

PUBLIC LECTURES
JANUARY 28 – JUNE 24, 2017

PRIX ÉMILE HERMÈS INTERNATIONAL DESIGN AWARD PLAY

ONLINE EXHIBITION
WWW.PRIXEMILEHERMES.COM

PUBLICATION CAHIERS DE RÉSIDENCES

IO BURGARD, CÉLIA GONDOL, DH MCNABB
CO-EDITION WITH ACTES SUD
AUTUMN 2016

PUBLICATION SAVOIR & FAIRE: LA TERRE

CO-EDITION WITH ACTES SUD
AUTUMN 2016



The Fondation d'entreprise Hermès supports men and women seeking to learn, perfect, transmit and celebrate the creative skills that shape our lives today and into the future.

The Foundation operates nine major programmes with a combined focus on skills, creativity and transmission: New Settings for the performing arts, exhibitions and artists' residencies for the visual arts, Immersion for photography, the Prix Émile Hermès for design, Manufacto – the Skills Factory and our Skills Academy for the discovery and perfection of artisan

trades. H³ is the Foundation's worldwide programme of support for organisations whose work reflects these central aims. Our Biodiversity programme enacts a core commitment to protect fragile ecosystems for future generations.

The Foundation's diverse activities are governed by a single, over-arching belief: Our gestures define us.

www.fondationentreprisehermes.org