

# Extra City\_\_\_\_\_Kunsthall Antwerpen

press release



Josef Dabernig, *excursus on fitness*, 2010, courtesy Andreas Huber Vienna and Wilfried Lentz Rotterdam

## Museum of Display

**With works and interventions by Neïl Beloufa, Isabelle Cornaro, Josef Dabernig, Nico Dockx, Kris Kimpe, Jill Magid and Metahaven.**

**Opening Thursday, the 19<sup>th</sup> of May at 19h**

20/05 – 03/07/2011

address:

Extra City Kunsthall Antwerpen  
Tulpstraat 79 – BE 2060 Antwerp  
tram 12, stop Gasstraat

opening hours:

Wednesday – Sunday 14h-19h  
Thursday 14h-20h  
closed on public holidays  
guided tours on request

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*Museum of Display is the second of three presentations articulating the story of a fictional museum, an interplay of definitions of 'art' and the 'institution' in an accelerated scenario of rise, self-interrogation, fall, and possible rejuvenation. These presentations bring together works that make specific claims to how they want to be seen and understood, that project specific notions of the institutional space that would accommodate them. These demands and positions intersect throughout the series in distinct images of the 'museum', in models of how art can be shown and experienced.*

*The first episode, Museum of Speech, mapped out the model of a porous institution, traversed and resonated by the 'voice' of the artist, a de-centred and deregulated space for spontaneity and divergence. The last episode, A Slowdown at the Museum (2.9 - 23.10.2011), will see the 'real world' return in the form of a strike that interrupts the continuous history-writing that upholds the 'museum' and puts political disturbance centre-stage. In between, Museum of Display asks what is being shown when art is exhibited. The works and practices here take the showing of art as medium, as object of negotiation or contention, as a constitutive split between neutrality and fabrication – the fabrication of criteria, perspectives and frames.*

Museum of Display presents works and interventions by **Nico Dockx, Josef Dabernig, Metahaven, Jill Magid, Isabelle Cornaro, Neil Beloufa, Kris Kimpe** and a 'script' by **Helmut Draxler**.

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What would a 'museum of display' exhibit? Itself, perhaps, as a densely populated hall of mirrors, or as a sequence of negotiations and immaterial transactions, revolving around progressively nebulous (artistic) objects. On display, there would be exfoliating layers of analysis, framing and extrapolation, the production of synonyms and antonyms, of separation and symmetry between objects and subjects. Were these operations, demarcating the presence of art and the presence of the art institution, to intersect in something almost palpable, it would be a near tangible screen for the projection of sociability and its cultural branding, of belonging and its political ownership. Such a space could be imagined as a parable of order and disorder, a discursive process wherein they measure and demonstrate each other, allowing the 'museum' to pose as one of the primary sites for the manifestation of civic society, for the rehearsal of unanimity or indignation. A 'museum of display' would be both a metaphor and a fragment of ideological consonance, the permanently staged accord between what we can imagine and who we are, with *identity*, defined and composed from a multiplicity of perspectives or 'negatives', as rhetorical hinge.

*Museum of Display* is the second episode in a series of presentations that look at definitions of 'art' and the 'institution' within the scenario of a fictional museum, accelerating from rise to self-interrogation, to collapse and possible renewal. It was preceded by *Museum of Speech*, which engaged – or museified – the model of the art institution as a site of declamation where divergent claims compete for a position of centrality, as a space of polyphonic spontaneity and symbolic deregulation. It will be followed by *A Slowdown at the Museum*, which pairs the model of the institution that sees itself as continuous with – or indistinct from – the 'real world' and the hypothesis of a strike, resulting in a delay in art-historical time, a breach in the archive of the present. *Museum of Display* returns to the long-established critical point that display is never innocent, that it speaks of itself in the third person, in relation to undisclosed criteria and purposes. Rather than confirm an indictment, or propose to de-construct display into an anterior, 'natural' state, the exhibition at Extra City engages display as a stage for the performance and regulation of identities. A stage shared by the generic selves that find in the 'museum' their allegorical, reversed portraits, and the pliable non-self of the institution, by two forms of organizing the intangible – encoding, decoding and seeking to contain one another.

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The exhibition frames divergent processes in a categorical quid-pro-quo where the drive to personify the artist is hardly distinguishable from that to personalize the institution, transgression from what is being transgressed, artistic intention from institutional trompe l'oeil. *Museum of Display* thinks through these questions in relation to visual practices that break what display mends, that embody the insufficiencies display diagnoses. Whether this translates into inversions, refusals or interruptions, identity persists as the boundary across which oppositions are played out, as a trope for their presumed reconciliation or as the residue of mutual corrosion. If a condition of identity unrest corresponded to a mode of *indisplay*, where no coherent entities can yet be presented, where – in their stead – there are pauses, blanks, interludes of uncertainty about 'who' is 'what' and about the fictions that normally link the 'who' to that 'what', then identity would become auxiliary, a prosthesis between fragments and imaginary wholes. The relation between the auxiliary and the constitutive, and the chameleonic mutations uniting the two, are examined in works where display becomes convoluted or cluttered, where it shows.

**Josef Dabernig's** sculptures and films depart from the geometry that structures disciplinarian spaces, the 'grids' that allow these sites to invoke order, but also to disguise their modalities of control into axes of circulation and systems of inventory, to fuse coercion and serviceability. Dabernig's functionally versatile grids are here installed in a figure/ ground relationship: a set design for a disciplinarian psychodrama, to which the artist's recent film *Excursus on Fitness* is a disquieting prelude. **Jill Magid's** *Becoming Tarden* is the provisional conclusion of a work commissioned by the AIVD – the Netherlands Intelligence Service, to inaugurate a new headquarters for the agency. The Service gains the status of co-author of the work: its heavy-handed redaction of the conversations between artist and secret agents and the confiscation of the manuscript paradoxically function as a gradual activation of the complexity of the project. **Isabelle Cornaro's** *Landscape with Poussin and Eye-Witnesses (part 3)* collapses artifice – that of landscape painting – and the idea of a judicial testimony, perhaps on the dissemblance between reality and representation. The installation compresses a collection of disjointed viewpoints and distances, a hypertrophy of nuances and ad hoc criteria.

A foreword to the artist's participation in *A Slowdown at the Museum*, **Nico Dockx's** intervention reconsiders the events – museological, rhetorical and political – of May 1968 at Palais des Beaux Arts in Brussels: the occupation of Victor Horta's building did not result in a proposal for an anti-museum, but in a display structure to accommodate revolutionary polemics and political pathos. In conversation with writer **Douglas Park**, Dockx revisits a series of projects and proposals in which he reflected on the posterity of that moment and its possible contemporary translations. **Metahaven's** uncommissioned identity proposal for Extra City treats the 'image' of the institution as a form of adherence, rather than purification – instead of essentializing an artistic mission, the visual communication picks up and incorporates clues to the political context where it unfolds, it is coproduced by factors beyond institutional control and submerged in contingency. The 'logo' becomes an aggregate of determinations, and the 'brand' – a historical record of sorts. **Neil Beloufa's** films do not deconstruct cinematic conventions, but un-build them, transcribe them in sculptural forms and terms and proceed to cut or tear them apart. In the two works presented here, French teenagers and (the ghosts of) Algerian terrorists inhabit unstable stages, assembled to obstruct or extend the movements of the camera, and not to accommodate narratives of transformation. Panning shots, dialogues, traces, segmented or cloned scenographies fictionalize each other to a point of filmic self-display, the artist's proposed equivalent for the expectation of a climactic moment. The exhibition also includes the second episode in **Kris Kimpe's** architectural project for the series, which divides the space of the 'museum' into competing perspectives, each treating the other's vanishing point as a blind spot, and a text by theorist and curator **Helmut Draxler**.

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## Selection of works in the show:

(images available on request)



1. Neil Beloufa, *Untitled*, 2010, courtesy the artist

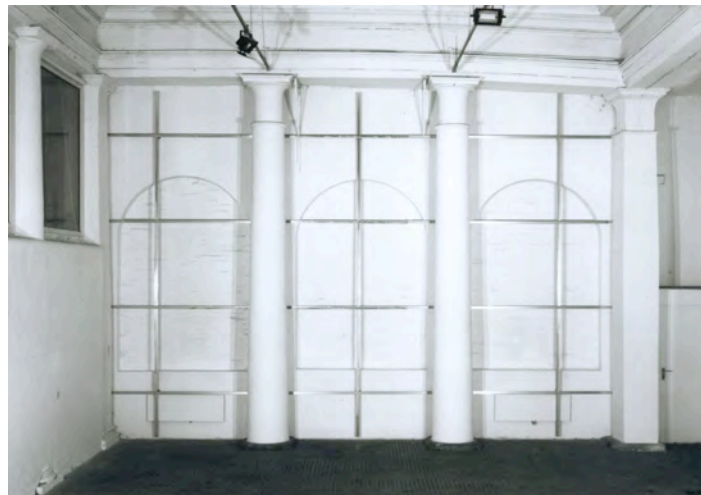


2. Neil Beloufa, *Brune Renault*, 2009, courtesy the artist

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3. Josef Dabernig, *excursus on fitness*, 2010, courtesy Andreas Huber and Wilfried Lentz



4. Josef Dabernig, *Salle de Bal, Institut Francais de Vienne*, 1995, courtesy Andreas Huber and Wilfried Lentz (photo: Wolfgang Reichmann)

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5. Isabelle Cornaro, *Landscape with Poussin and eye witnesses (III)*, 2009, courtesy the artist



6. Jill Magid, *Auto Portrait Pending* (gold ring with empty setting, ring box, corporate and private contracts, dimensions variable), 2005, courtesy the artist and Yvon Lambert

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## Artist Biographies:

**Neïl Beloufa** (°1985, France) studied Fine Arts at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts and Decorative Arts at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs in Paris, at Cooper Union in New York and at CalArts in Valencia (USA). Beloufa's work has been exhibited and screened at events including: ITCA 2008 - Prague International Triennial of Contemporary Art (Prague), 12th Biennial of Moving image (Geneva), Palais de Tokyo (Paris), White Box (New York), The Soap Factory (Minneapolis) and NCCA - National Centre of Contemporary Arts (Moscow). Neïl Beloufa received several awards, among others the ARTE prize for European Short Film at the Oberhausen Film Festival (2008), the Grand Prix at the Courtisane Festival, Ghent (2008) and the Short Film Grand Prize at the IndieLisboa Filmfestival (2009).

**Isabelle Cornaro** (°1974, France) lives and works in Paris. She studied Art History and Museology at the Ecole du Louvre (Paris), and has a degree in Visual Arts at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts (Paris). Recent solo exhibitions include Galerie Balice Hertling, Paris (2010), Centre d'Art Contemporain de Troyes, Paris (2010), Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, Düsseldorf (2009) and Galerie Air de Paris (2007).

**Josef Dabernig** (°1956, Austria) lives and works in Vienna. He graduated in sculpture in 1981 and works as a filmmaker since 1994. He participated at Manifesta 3, Ljubljana in 2000 and at the Venice Biennial in 2001 and 2003. Recent solo exhibitions include the Wilfried Lentz Gallery, Rotterdam (2011), Galerie Andreas Huber, Vienna (2011 and 2007), National Museum of Contemporary Art Bucharest (2006), Museum of Contemporary Art, Leipzig (2005), and BAK - basis voor actuele kunst, Utrecht (2003). Film festival participations include the London Film Festival (2009), the International Short Film Festival Oberhausen (2006, 2009), the International Film Festival Rotterdam (2000, 2011) and the Toronto International Film Festival (2006, 2009).

**Nico Dockx** (°1974, Belgium) lives and works in Antwerp. He works out of a fundamental preoccupation with archives and structural processes such as data, memories, information, distribution and management. Often outcome of collaboration with other artists, his installations, publications, soundscapes, texts and videos investigate the relationship between perception and remembrance, allowing multiple interpretations to emerge. Nico Dockx has been awarded with a DAAD grant in 2005 and showed in *Utopia Station* (50th Venice Biennial/ Haus der Kunst, Munich), *Monopolis* (Witte de With, Rotterdam), *Through Time & Today* (Musée des Beaux Arts de Nantes), *'daybyday & another day'* (le centre d'art de l'île de Vassivière), and *CRYPTICCRYSTALCLOUD* (CCA, Kitakyushu).

**Helmut Draxler** (°1956) is an art historian, art critic, curator, and Professor of Art Theory at the Merz Academy in Stuttgart. He was the director of the Kunstverein Munich from 1992 to 1995. He writes extensively on contemporary art and theory for a variety of international magazines and artists' catalogs. Recent publications include: *Film, Avantgarde, Biopolitik* (with Sabeth Buchmann and Stephan Geene) (2009); *Gefährliche Substanzen. Zum Verhältnis von Kritik und Kunst* (2007); *Coercing Constellations. Space, Reference, and Representation in Fared Armaly* (2007); and *Shandyismus. Autorschaft Als Genre* (2007). Draxler lives and works in Berlin, Stuttgart, and Vienna.

**Kris Kimpe** (°1963, Belgium) is an architect who works mainly in the field of contemporary art. His practice involves designing exhibitions, public art and artist studios. Since 1999 he is the international assistant of Dan Graham. He has worked with/ for artists like Nico Dockx, Philip Metten, Willem Oorebeek and Luc Tuymans. Recent exhibition designs include the national pavilion of the United Arab Emirates at the Venice Biennale in 2009, *Animism* (M HKA & Extra City, 2010, Antwerpen) and *Ana Torfs: Album/Tracks A* (K21, 2010, Dusseldorf). Since 2006, he publishes the architecture-fanzine *UP* together with Koenraad Dedobbeleer.

**Jill Magid** (°1973, USA) lives and works in New York. She received her Master of Science in Visual Studies at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge and was an artist-in-residence at the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten, Amsterdam, 2000–2002. Magid has exhibited in various institutions around the world including Tate Liverpool (2004), the Stedelijk Museum Bureau Amsterdam (2005), Gagosian Gallery, New York (2007), Sparwasser, Berlin (2007), Centre D'Arte Santa Monica, Barcelona (2007) and Yvon Lambert, Paris and New York (2009).

**Metahaven** is a studio for design, writing and research based in Amsterdam. Vinca Kruk and Daniel van der Velden founded it in 2006. **Vinca Kruk** (°1980, The Netherlands) is a graphic designer and writer. After graduating from the Willem de Kooning Academy in 2003 Kruk became a researcher at the Sealand Identity Project at the Jan van Eyck Academie's design department in 2003 where she remained a researcher until late 2005 working on various projects such. Kruk has been a tutor of editorial design and design critique at ArtEZ Academy of Arts in Arnhem since 2007, and was a mentor at Valence Academy of the Arts, France (2009) and the IM Master programme at Design Academy Eindhoven (2010). **Daniel van der Velden** is a

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graphic designer and writer. He graduated from the Willem de Kooning Academy, and studied in Maastricht at the Jan van Eyck Academie. He is a Senior Critic at Yale University and a tutor at the Sandberg Institute in Amsterdam.