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Hans Op de Beeck

Works on Paper & Video

4 March – 10 April 2010

Xavier Hufkens is delighted to present *Works on Paper & Video* by Hans Op de Beeck. After *Family* (2006) and *My Brother's Gardens* (2003) the artist is now exhibiting new large-scale watercolours and the video *Staging Silence*.

Less than a year ago Hans Op de Beeck presented for the first time a solo exhibition that consisted entirely of large black-and-white watercolour paintings. In this work the artist returned to his visual-art roots, painting in particular. Since then Op de Beeck, in addition to his sculptural work and film productions, has been working on an ongoing series of large-scale watercolour paintings in which fictitious, desolate interiors and landscapes are evoked. These images refer to cinematography, with links to film noir, as well as old painting, specifically Renaissance painting, in which the frontal quality of the composition plays a central role. In the exhibition at Xavier Hufkens the artist is showing a number of new watercolour paintings from this intimate series.

The recent black-and-white video *Staging Silence* evolved around remembered places. Not existing places but instead abstracted archetypical backdrops; the kind that stick in the mind's eye as the greatest common denominator of scores of comparable public locations. A great variety of venues are materialised before the eye of the viewer. Hands appear and disappear in the image like anonymous puppet masters. Banal objects and handmade representations are manipulated at scale and in artificial light until they have created alienating but recognisable places.

The different scenes in *Staging Silence* can be called either ridiculous or serious, as can the eclectic collection of images we all carry around with us in our memories. But you could say the prevailing mood is earnestness and a sense of brewing threats. The title refers to the staging of such slumbering decors, in which no human is present but the viewer can project oneself as the only protagonist.

Recent solo exhibitions of Hans Op de Beeck (1969) are *In Silent Conversation with Correggio* (2009) in Galleria Borghese in Rome, Italy and *Extensions* (2007) in the Centraal Museum in Utrecht, the Netherlands. The artist has also participated in the *Singapore Biennale* (2008) and the *Shanghai Biennale* (2006). He has realised large-scale sculptural installations such as *Location (5)* (2004), currently a permanent installation at the Towada Art Museum, Japan, *Merry-go-round* (2007) and *Location (6)* (2008). The videos of Hans Op de Beeck have been shown throughout the world. Later this year Hans Op de Beeck will participate in the *Aichi Triennale*, Japan and open the solo exhibition *Sea of Tranquillity* in Le Grand Café in Saint-Nazaire, France, which will travel on to Belgium, Switzerland and Spain.

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