

XAVIER MARY

WORKS

2009 - 2018



Artist statement

The work of Liège-born, Brussels-based contemporary artist Xavier Mary (1982) oscillates between post-industrial sculpture and post-apocalyptic realism, his iron and brutalist installations existing as powerful poetry for the motorised age. Underpinned by a fascination with cars and driving, his practice celebrates the Fordist era in all its glory, repurposing disused and disregarded industrial materials and equipment to create a damning discourse of the modern and motorised civilisation.

Highway Ravers

November 29

2008-

February 22

2009

Part of the exhibition *Un-Scene*
WIELS, Bruxelles (B)



Highway Rotor 2008
Highway lamp, aluminium, *DMX* controller
300 x 270 cm



Highway Ring 2008
GSA profil traffic barriers, steel profiles
230 x 220 cm

Exhibition title: Un-Scene

A group exhibition with: Stephan Balleux, Aline Bouvy & John Gillis, Vaast Colson, François Curlet, Michael Dans, Koenraad Dedobbeleer, Lucile Desamory, Vincent Geyskens, Tina Gillen, Geert Goiris, Valérie Mannaerts, Xavier Mary, Benoît Platéus, Frédéric Platéus, Jimmy Robert, Gert Robijns, Ivo Provoost & Simona Denicolai, Harald Thys & Jos De Gruyter, Heidi Voet

Curated by: Devrim Bayard, Charles Gohy, Dirk Snauwaert

Venue: WIELS

Date: November 29 - February 22, 2009

One can (quite easily) think of an engine: a rather basic engine – ON/OFF – in which speed can only be constant, without any acceleration. On a closer look, this engine doesn't even seem to have any mechanics. Motionless thus, not equipped, as if abandoned on the spot. Its noise, if it's heard, can only be repetitive – like a serial music – composed of a few motifs, repeated ad infinitum. A machine abstracted in itself.

This might sound minimal. The repertory of forms evokes indeed the straightness of heavy and raw materials, a world of procedures turned aesthetical.

And yet, one cannot prevent oneself from sensing a flaw, a profound anomaly in this apparent radicality. There is a sort of paradox in Xavier Mary's work: although the artist primarily talks about forms, he develops an obvious taste for sophistication, sometimes doubled by a strange dramatic tension, which disturbs any purely formal reading and leaves the interpretation hanging between minimalism and psychedelics, radicality and incoherent fantasy.

Xavier Mary regularly corrupts the production processes by exploiting the oppositions between the industrial and the handmade, the do-it-yourself strategy against the cold efficiency of mechanization. The artist is driven by a need "to make", a will to achieve. His coding is manual and his sometimes retrograde techniques underline this desire to reverse current manufacturing processes, without falling in any conservatism. His re-writing of historical minimalism is intuitive and energetic

If the formal and theoretical sampling, as well as the analogical hacking is often coupled with nostalgic feelings, the experience of his works

is too physical, even visceral, for one to speak about "neo-formalism" or "post-minimalism". Furthermore, Xavier Mary is familiar with treasure hunts and labyrinths of images, this pleasure of losing oneself in the multiplication of signs and images. From the *Ritournelles* and *Fractales* until the more recent *Crossover*, the artist is attached to forms hidden in reality, images draped in the visible.

Often, he isolates, brings out, underlines an object from the real, an image in the landscape, and reveals a graphic sign, a form and/or its tautological repetition. This geometry of the real manifests a fascination for lines and forms like keys of a mysterious truth. As an open figure, the motif of the enigma remains more important than its solution. And the infinite and dynamic combinations of this figure could be the echo of the insistent noise mentioned earlier.

Far from complex symbolic systems, of which the garden architects from the Renaissance were very fond for instance (with silent figures, they composed coded messages), the artist's installations with their graphic references and industrial outlook express very playful readings in which electronic music is systematically evoked, in the guise of an aesthetical intuition, however rare his sound sculptures are. One thus returns to the paradox previously evoked, which now seems to emerge from this ghostly presence in the images and sculptures: many of those seem to speak about music, to be music (or, at least, sound) but they remain curiously dumb and heady, like an interior and inaudible melody. Many sculptures and images are then absent and often confronted with their own loneliness under the appearance of an unbearable silence... a black hole. †

– Charles Gohy

Specific Pattern

January 9 -
February 7
2009

Exhibition title: Specific Pattern

Venue: Espace Uhoda

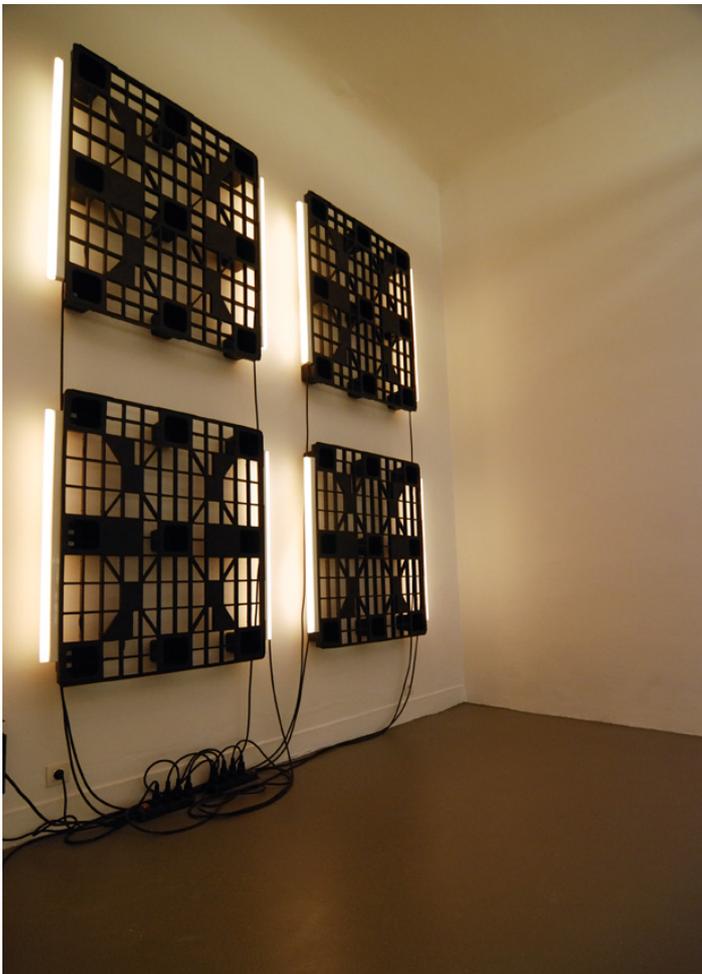
Date: September 1 - February 7, 2009

The young Belgian artist Xavier Mary uses industrial design equipment to create large-scale sculptures. He employs familiar and everyday objects such as gray Euronorm boxes, the same that travelers at airports use to hold their laptops, phones, belts, and keys for X-ray scans.

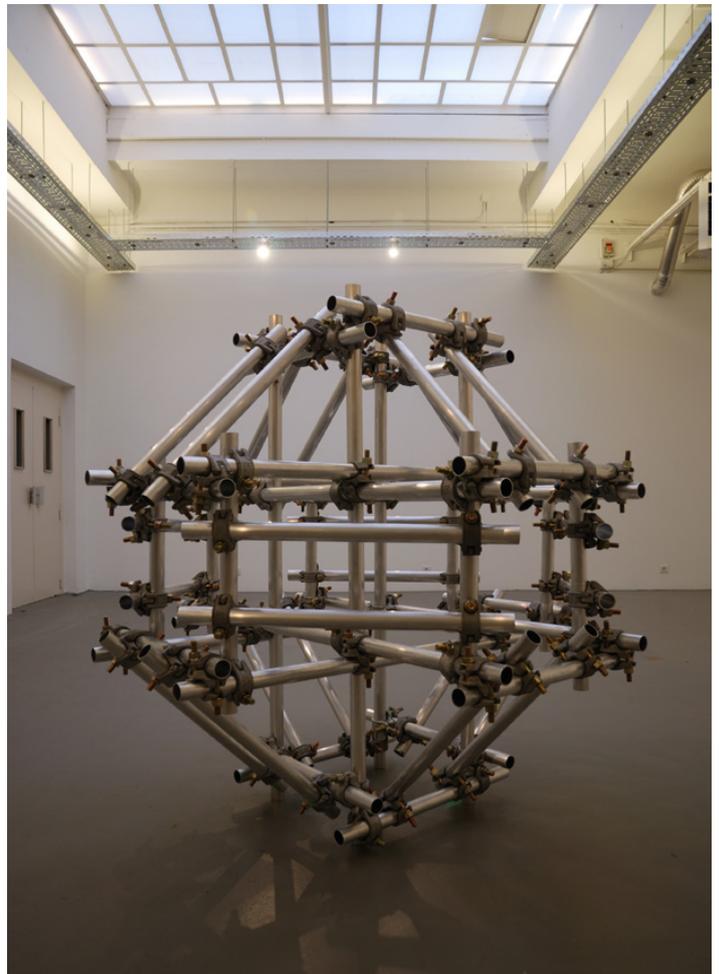
In this exhibition, the boxes are arranged to form the word SPECIFIC, under which fluorescent tubes create the word PATTERN. Mary also presents an installation with trampoline netting stretched between scaffolding elements in the two exhibition spaces, as well as sculptures made of corrugated sheet metal—used for so many warehouses and temporary furniture markets erected hastily along access roads. The sculptures are based on designs that the artist prints on colored paper and are presented in what he calls a laboratory: a rectangular table where more Euronorm boxes containing the printouts are displayed under a sheet of glass.

What appears at first to be an aesthetic strategy situated between the technological and the minimal is actually a direct transformation of everyday experience into art. Mary's extremely creative work entails stunningly simple artistic interventions into the world of forms that surround us. Despite its emphasis on surfaces, his practice is anything but superficial: It contains numerous references to the history of architecture, art, and design, ranging from the Art Nouveau architect Victor Horta to the contemporary artist Reinhard Mucha.

— Saskia Draxler

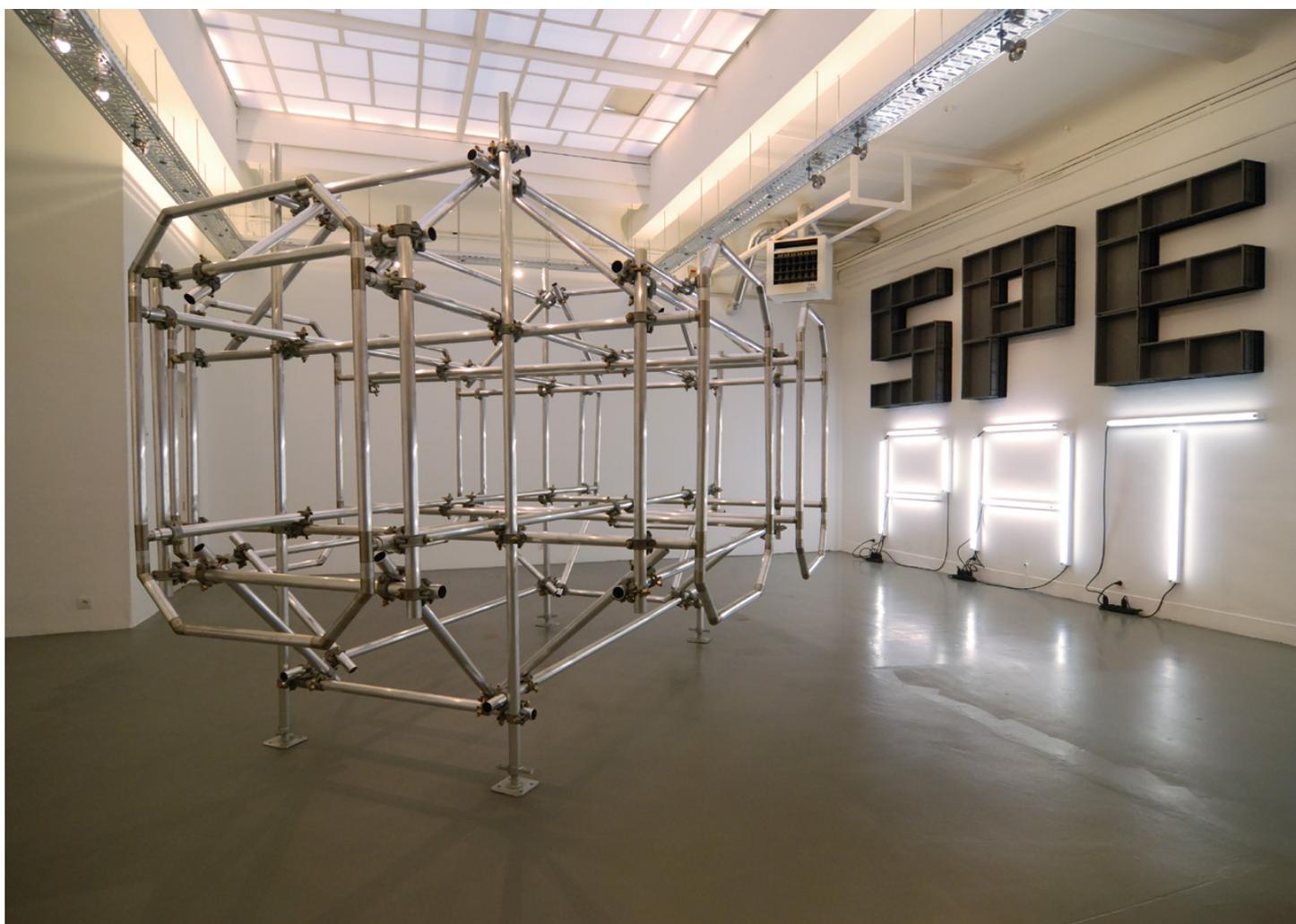


Condensed struct 2009
Aluminium, scaffold coupling
150 x 150 x 150 cm



Vertical Dancefloor 2009
PVC Palettes, neon light, DMX controller
230 x 270 cm

Specific Pattern 2009, Eurobox, neon light, neoprene cables, 900 x 240 x 30 cm



Jumping Space 2009, Profil aluminium, scaffold coupling, 450 x 220 x 220 cm

Ortho Graphe

March 13 -

April 24

2010

Galerie Christian Nagel, Berlin 



Cross Over 2010
Metal stud *MSV50*, neoprene, *DMX* controller
(2x) 524 x 282 x 5 cm

Exhibition title: Ortho Graphe

Venue: Christian Nagel

Date: March 13 - April 24, 2010

Photography: © Simon Vogel

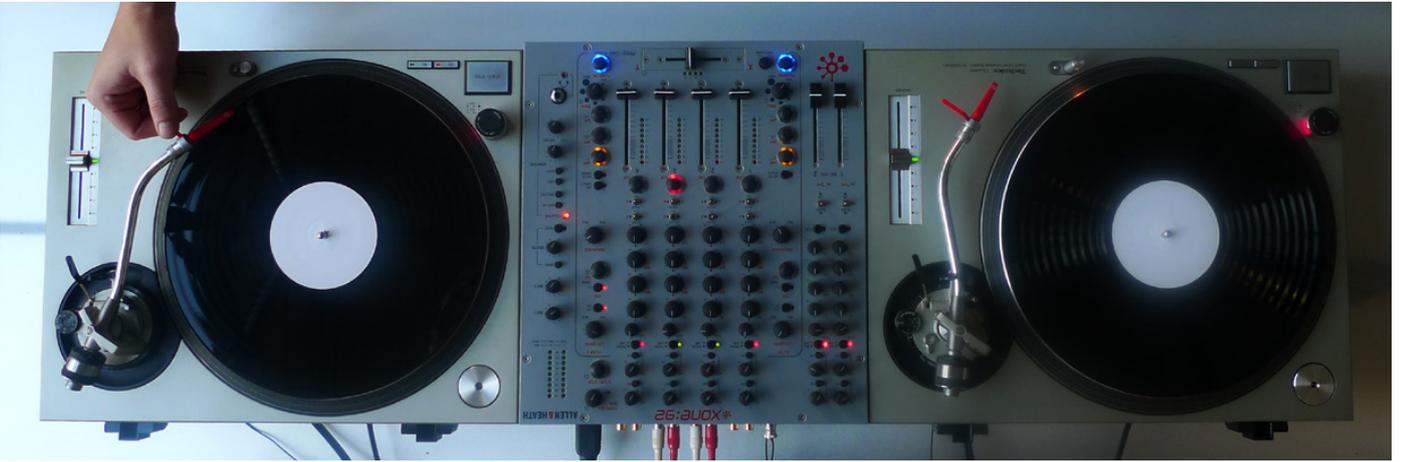
Ortho Graphe is an exhibition project, first based on a drawing from a Joey Beltram 's vinyl record (one of the techno's founding fathers).

The original drawing is used to create a new range of sculptures and installations linked to the definition of techno music. Patterns and repetitions cross all over the gallery space as a response to multiplicity of techno loops produced on a vinyl record.

— Saskia Draxler



How to make a track from **Closed Donuts** continuous scillons Lp, by Marcus Vector



How to make a track from
Closed Donuts continuous
scillons Lp

Slide to the 1rst loop of a side
Closed Donuts Lp.

Cross the fader of Line 1

Slide to the 1rst loop of b side
Closed Donuts Lp.

Cross the fader of Line 2



Slide to the 1rst loop of a side
Closed Donuts Lp.

Cross the fader of Line 1

Slide to the 1rst loop of b side
Closed Donuts Lp.

Cross the fader of Line 2

Slide to the 1rst loop of a side
Closed Donuts Lp.

Cross the fader of Line 1

Slide to the 1rst loop of b side
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Slide to the 1rst loop of a side
Closed Donuts Lp.

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Closed Donuts Lp.

Cross the fader of Line 2

Slide to the 1rst loop of a side
Closed Donuts Lp.

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Slide to the 1rst loop of b side
Closed Donuts Lp.

Cross the fader of Line 2



Slide to the 1rst loop of a side
Closed Donuts Lp.

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Closed Donuts Lp.

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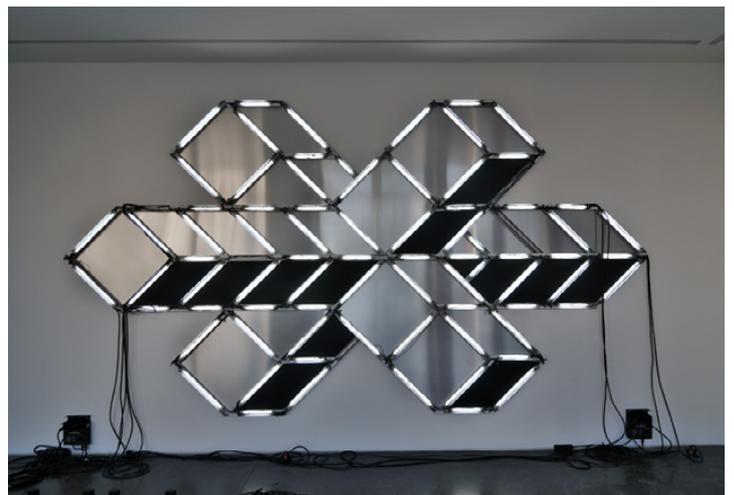
Cross the fader of Line 1

Slide to the 1rst loop of a side
Closed Donuts Lp.

Cross the fader of Line 1

Slide to the 1rst loop of b side
Closed Donuts Lp.

Cross the fader of Line 2



Over Game

June 8 -
July 17
2010

Galerie Baronian , Bruxelles ©



Over Game 2010, Exhibition view



Edmo Plateforme 2010
Industrial Foam
200 x 200 x 30 cm



Acid Lover 2010
Silkscreen, industrial foam
Dimensions variables

Exhibition title: Over Game

Venue: Albert Baronian

Date: June 8 - July 17 - 2010

Je me souviens de cette pièce de Xavier Mary qui dégringole du bureau d'accueil de la Galerie Baronian-Francey à Bruxelles. Des briques grises, un tas de briques en mousse qui s'effondre.. Et puis, c'est le mur de brique des Tetris peut-être? Pour moi, c'était plus que ça. Aussi, j'ai trouvé la pièce moins dure que les autres, pas tellement par la matière mais par l'arrangement de la chose qui ne tient pas en place. ça m'a plu. C'est une pièce qu'on a envie d'avoir pour l'installer à sa guise sur différents murs, dans des lieux publics ou privés. C'est le genre de pièce qui vous emmène ailleurs, entre la construction et la déconstruction, la ruine et les fondations. Le délabrement rappelle la tradition des fausses ruines. Celles qui sont romantiques. Un objet qui crée une image. Presque du Robert Smithson avec l'anthropie. Une pièce mélancolique qui vous transporte aussi dans un autre temps, le passé peut-être davantage que le futur? Un pop art gris, un peu triste, pas pourri mais durci sédimenté. Dans l'autre sens, c'est un jeu d'enfant, on peut y toucher ?

Je reçois les photos des autres pièces qui étaient dans cette exposition. Je vois bien maintenant qu'il s'agit des jeux de briques sur ordinateur. Puis aussi, il y a des impressions de smileys sur mousse de différents gris ou couleurs passées qui suggèrent qu'il s'agit d'objets anciens. Les impressions de smileys sur mousse accrochés au mur et le tas de plaques de mousse carrées de différentes couleurs, c'est sculptural et pictural à souhait. j'aime. C'est fragile, tout se décolle déjà, c'est juste posé là. Les images font référence à des jeux anciens et les objets qui les représentent sont aussi décrépis que les jeux sont désuets. Une pièce lumineuse clignote. C'est la touche de couleur, le signe de l'extinction. Il se passe quelque chose là de transitoire. Vraiment, c'est une exposition mélancolique. Pas nostalgique mais qui crée un retour dans le passé en se projetant dans le futur improbable. Il ne s'agit pas d'une critique des médias, d'enterrer des jouets ou le rêve de la rave party mais bien de donner une vie durable à des icônes du passé. L'artiste les transforme pour les projeter dans un univers retiré, ailleurs, plus loin dans le futur. Ce sont des ruines, oui.

— **Sonia Dermience**



Castle Mania 2010
Industrial foam, flat screen, V-20 MSX computer



Castle Mania (détail) 2010
Industrial foam, flat screen, V-20 MSX computer

Eat The Magic Lions

**March 3 -
March 25
2012**

Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin 

Exhibition title: Eat The Magic Lions

Venue: Künstlerhaus Bethanien

Date: March 1 - March 25, 2012

For *Eat The Magic Lions* Mary has realised three huge lion's head sculptures, starting out from a 3-D model of a lion's head from the Internet *SketchUp database*. The 732 polygons of the first model in his sculpture were realised using cardboard packages of the breakfast cereal brand "Lions".

The second component of the exhibition is a sculptural installation inspired by the architecture of the Khmer temples, *DVD Temple*. Its sculptures are made of common polystyrene blocks and join together to form a kind of "altar", the central element of which is the looping DVD menu of the film *Apocalypse Now Redux*. Other films available on blue ray are also ironically cited by Mary, including classics like *Terminator* or *Transformers*. His installation accentuates the current multimedia formats such as Internet, 3-D, video games, DVD or blue ray in a kind of self-aggrandising pose somewhere between radicalism, illusion and redundancy. Xavier Mary's installations create a parody of the beacons of popular culture and centre on themes such as "appropriation" and "imitation", which are and will remain extremely relevant in face of our unlimited networks. which are and will remain extremely relevant in face of our unlimited networks.



Roarrrrrr 2012
DVD video installation

- Christina Sickert





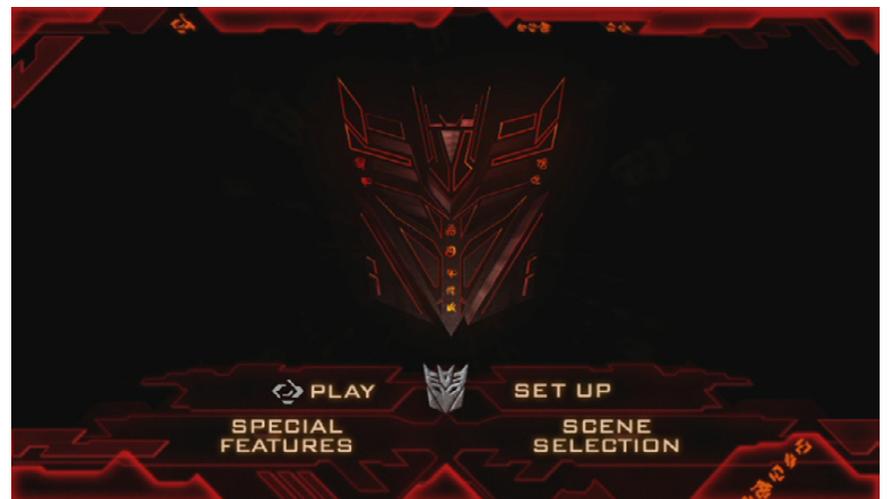
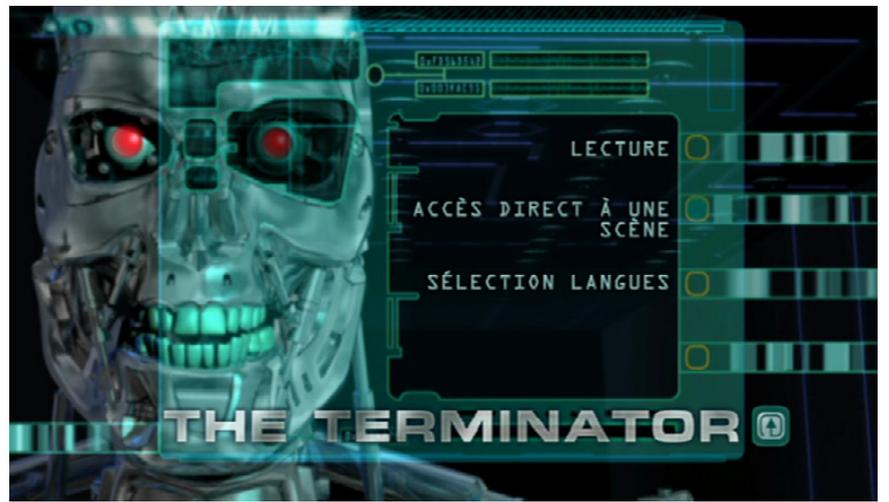
Lions Head #1,2 2012
Cardboard, Nestlé LION cereal box, black spray paint
(2 x) 200 x 142 x 110 cm



Lions Head #1 2012
Cardboard, Nestlé *LION* cereal box, black spray paint
200 x 142 x 110 cm



DVD Temple 2012
EPS blocks, SONY monitor, DVD menu *TRANSFORMERS*, DVD menu *THE TERMINATOR*



DVD menu *THE TERMINATOR*, 1984

DVD menu *TRANSFORMERS*, 2009

Petrolatum

November 2 -
December 22
2012

Galerie Christian Nagel, Berlin 

Exhibition title: Petrolatum

Venue: Galerie Christian Nagel

Date: November 3 - December 22, 2012

Photography: © Simon Vogel

«We knew the world would not be the same. A few people laughed, a few people cried. Most people were silent. I remembered the line from the Hindu scripture, the Bhagavad-Gita Vishnu is trying to persuade the Prince that he should do his duty, and, to impress him, takes on his multi-armed form and says, 'Now I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds.»

J. Robert Oppenheimer

In his space filling installations and sculptural projects Belgian artist Xavier Mary (born 1982) often uses shapes and materials usually used in heavy industry. In their appearance the energy input necessary for its production is mostly visible. Made by humans their dimensions yet exceed human measurements. Their functional values are embedded in the physical forces of industrial production as well as in the fields of political and economical power.

PETROLATUM is a petroleum-based product, used a.o. as paraffin. In this exhibition Xavier Mary uses this raw material for a ceremony of forms and signs dedicated to the oil empire and its impending end. The reversed VW logo makes the cast for a series of paraffin sculptures. It stands for an apocalyptic last industrial production and also corresponds to the artists initials: XM. A hollow round metal sculpture that is placed on the end wall of the gallery space forms as a perfect minimal sculpture an antipode to the softness and asperity of the casted wheels.

The short circuits between creative and destructive energy - Mary refers to - have affected scientists and economists for centuries («Every economic development goes back to the process of creative destruction.» Joseph Schumpeter after Marx)

— **Saskia Draxler**



Now I am become Death, the destroyer of worlds 2012
DVD video loop, 01'32"



Petrolatum 2012, Exhibition view



Petrolatum I,II,III 2012
Petrolatum paraffin, wooden box
(3 x) 150 x 150 x 8.5

Ghost Rider

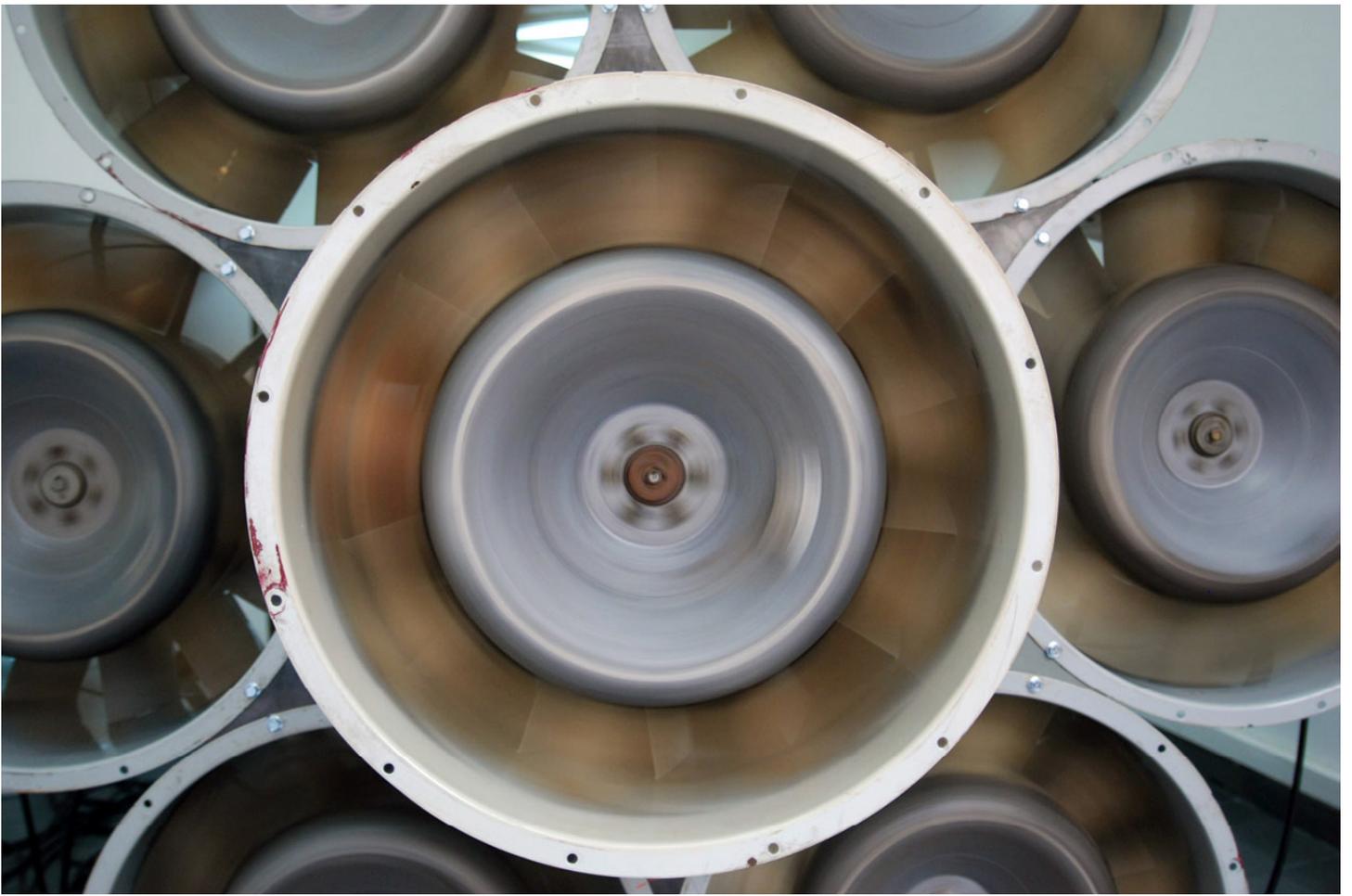
May 15-

June 8

2013



Ghost Rider 2013
8 x 0.75 kw jet fan, steel, neoprene cables
185 x 128 x 203 cm



Exhibition title: Ghost Rider

Venue: Toutouchic

Date: May 15 - June 8, 2013

A l'instar de projet tel que *Highway Rottor* et *Highway Ring* (pièces emblématique de l'artiste), l'univers des autoroutes ce retrouve une fois de plus au centre du travail: L'exposition *Ghost Rider* est composée d'une série de ventilateurs extracteurs d'air pour tunnel autoroutier. 8 «Pulseurs» propulse l'air de l'espace vide de la Galerie pour une pression totale de 24 Kg/ m³. Le tout se présente comme un gigantesque barillet de moteurs industriels et de tôles d'acier.

— **Vanessa Steiner**

Ghost Rider (détail) 2013
8 x 0.75 kw jet fan, steel, neoprene cables
185 x 128 x 203 cm

Iron Triangle

September 1-
October 27
2013



Iron Triangle 2014, Exhibition view

King of Nothing rool (détail) 2013
Aluminium sheet, enamel ink, sangle, 3 Corona beer glass bottles
120 x 109 x 88 cm



Muffler Sculpture 2013
Mufflers, steel, wheel
203 x 76 x 76 cm



Great Seal Of United States 2013
Aluminium panel, sealcoating
132 x 132 cm

Exhibition title: Iron Triangle

Venue: APT Institute

Date: September 1 - October 27, 2013

Crocs, fraises au sol, taches imaginaires sur des toiles d'araignées, écrans géants translucides, des flammes spectrales roses et pailletées, un triangle de carbone et de métal géant dont l'ombre s'étend comme la mort sur les cavités boueuses et les garages précaires du quartier dont il est l'insigne, amoncellement de pots d'échappements en arbres, chansons hybrides nasillardes, anciens messages d'indiens à même le sol, reflets métalliques, sels d'argents et cheveux de jais, poudre d'aluminium, pommades colorées, trais lumineux, formes organiques, bulbes gris, étrangers, opercules, de vagues éclairs lumineux qui traînent entre les passants effrayés, des chiens entrain de baiser des crânes fendus à la hache, des bras métalliques dont le temps a usé l'âme et la fonction flottent comme des corps sans vie dans des plaques d'huiles aux reflets vermillons, des poissons géants, des montagnes d'ordures transformées en cascades rutilantes d'ors et de fers, le crocodile qui dit pop corn et la truie qui rigole, des pare-chocs gigantesque d'acier galvanisés, des visages terreux liquides de gens qui errent dans l'ombre du triangle, Las Vegas inversé où des yeux se reproduisent indéfiniment pour épier ces gigantesques piles d'assiettes cassées à perte de vue et des morceaux de carrosseries recouverts de végétations mauves et ocres et des maladies qui parlent. Mec, ça arrive tu sais des fois que je regarde des trucs, que je regarde des trucs tellement fort que, je sais pas, que je finis par voir des trucs...

— David Evrard



Muffler Sculpture (détail) 2013
Mufflers, steel, wheel
203 x 76 x 76 cm

TNL

February 14

2014-

March 15

2014

Part of the exhibition *Bande à part*
CAB Art Center, Bruxelles ©B



TNL 2013
Extruded aluminium profiles, reflector in metalized
aluminium, fluorescent high output tubes
326 x 245 x 18 cm
132 x 132 cm



Bande à Part 2014, Exhibition view



Highway Ring #1 and #2 2013
Guardrails in galvanized steel, GSA profile

Exhibition title: Bande à part

A group exhibition with: Thomas Bogaert, David Brognon & Stéphanie Rollin, Marie José Burki, Robert Devriendt, Lionel Estève, Mekhitar Garabedian, Fiona Mackay, Xavier Mary, Benoit Plateus, Helmut Stallaer

Curated by: Albert Baronian

Venue: CAB Art Center

Date: June 14 - August 10, 2014

Xavier Mary current project, *TNL*, is conceived as a successor to *Highway Ravers*. *Highway Ravers* was the title of a solo presentation at BOZAR, Brussels in 2006. Another version was displayed at WIELS in Brussels, as part of the group exhibition *Un-Scene* in 2008. The main piece of the show, *Highway Rotor*, is a sculpture composed of highway lighting. Mary isolated the lamps from their usual, site-specific context. The lamps are flashing successively, creating an optical effect of rotation, a subtle wink to the subculture of rave parties as well as Duchamp's kinetic experiments.

The pieces included in *TNL* were presented for a group exhibition at CAB art center. The main piece in this project, a follow-up to the project in BOZAR and WIELS, is an octagonal sculpture composed of highway tunnel lighting. Its aluminium, reflective profiles are transformed into curved lines reminiscent of Frank Stella's shaped canvases. The piece actually takes on the form of one of the three *Shaped Canvas* versions presented by the artist at Leo Castelli Gallery in 1964, during his second gallery show. The other piece in *TNL* equally refers to the culture of cars, technology and speed. The sculpture consists of three monumental rings made from guardrails. The piece is titled *Highway Ring*, an ensemble of entangled, topological rings exemplary of a 'hyperbolic geometry'. This monumental ensemble doesn't seem to be on a human scale, somehow transcending our everyday orientation. Everything that is usually just whooshing by on the highway, mediated through a cage of steel, is meticulously turned into giant sculptural pieces. They are Xavier Mary's answer to the technological culture of speed, conceived by figures J.G. Ballard or Paul Virilio. And somehow one still gets the impression that modernism itself is being accelerated here, that we are face-to-face with the avant-garde on speed.

— Pieter Vermeulen

Digital Monolithe

June 15

2014-

August 10

2014

**Part of the exhibition Het Kanaal
Kunsthall Antwerpen, Anvers (B)**

POETICS OF HYPERSPACE

Exhibition title: Het Kanaal - Le Canal

A group exhibition with: Jonathan De Winter, Xavier Mary, Elise Eeraerts, Kasper Bosmans, Philippe Van Wolputte, Fabian Rouwette, Antoine Van Impe, Thomas Grødal

Curated by: NICC and Espace 251 Nord

Venue: Extra City, Kunsthal Antwerpen

Avant-garde on speed 2014
UHD vidéo,



Het Kanaal 2014, Exhibition view





Digital Monolithe Silver Chrome 2014

Polyurethane resin, spray-painted chrome-plating,
transparent coloured varnish, Reynobond silver
mirror, Aloe vera
Dimensions variables

Le cube tronqué ou hexaèdre tronqué est un solide d'Archimède. Il s'obtient par l'une des techniques de base du tailleur de pierre : le débitage de chacun des coins du bloc à sculpter.

Aujourd'hui, c'est par un processus analogue qu'un programme de modélisation en 3D simule la volumétrie d'un objet : une multiplicité de polygones qui se juxtaposent comme autant de faces d'un volume coupé dans la masse.

Digital Monolithe modifie nos repères en déconstruisant les étapes entre réel et virtuel. Un simple cube, chanfreiné au sein d'un logiciel 3D, est réalisé dans un bloc de polystyrène haute densité. Utilisant le procédé récent du fraisage CNC, le projet fait dialoguer les fondements des techniques de la sculpture et les technologies de production

Recouvert d'un chromage par pulvérisation, chacun des tirages se différencie ensuite par l'application d'un dégradé : un vernis dont les diverses teintes décomposent le spectre des couleurs. Des techniques de peinture en carrosserie détournée dans le domaine de la sculpture.

Présentées sur des socles en panneaux *Reynobond silver mirror*, les pièces se perdent dans un jeu de reflets. La multiplicité des faces se répondent en symétrie et démultiplication. Diverses plantes exotiques finalisent l'ensemble. *Bananier Musa Cavenshi* et palmier *Phoenix Revoluta* questionnent la valeur décorative des œuvres. Leur géométrie rigide et hightech se confrontent à l'aspect organique et naturel des végétaux.

— Julie Hanique

Over Drive

November 07-
December 20
2014

Galerie Albert Baronian , Bruxelles (B)





Krauss 2014

Brushed anti noise panels, poly mirror, textured metallic powder, brushed aluminum profile
40 x 300 x 12,5 cm



CONAN

Over Drive 2014, Exhibition view

King of Iron, Dust and Nothing (détail) 2014
Graphite on paper, spray painting, print



Over Drive 2014, Exhibition view



Das beste oder nichts 2014
Welded steel
150 x 9 cm



Tree of woe 2014, Steel, wheel, mufflers , 195 x 113 cm



Wheel of pain 2014, Tire, metallic textured powder coating, 221 x 100 cm



* **Highway star** * 2014, Guardrail corner pieces in galvanized steel , 275 x 289 cm

Exhibition title: OVER DRIVE

Venue: Galerie Albert Baronian

Date: November 7- December 20, 2014

Photography: © Hugard & Vanoverschelde

« I think the 20th century reaches its highest expression on the highway. Everything is there: the speed and violence of our age; the strange love affair with the machine, with its own death.»

J.G. Ballard

The works included in Xavier Mary's solo show 'Overdrive' at Albert Baronian gallery clearly exemplify the themes and fascinations that have been informing his practice ever since his solo presentation at BOZAR in 2006.

By giving a contemporary twist to the Duchampian ready-made, the artist relocates industrial objects within the white cube, isolating them from our usual, everyday conception. From carpet motifs to video games, from Khmer temples to hi-res three-dimensional renderings, hybridity is a core element in the understanding of Xavier Mary's work. His position as an artist is one of constant negotiation between different visual and value regimes, connecting tradition and avant-garde, sincerity and irony, past and future, actual and virtual.

Krauss, Foster and Fried (2014), dedicated to the artist's favorite thinkers, is a triptych consisting of acoustic panels that usually isolate the roadway noise from the surrounding area. The metal panels are treated using various industrial techniques such as polishing, powdering, sanding or blasting, each leading to a different aesthetic. Noise barriers mark the divide between the linear culture of speed, somewhat nostalgically emblemized by the automobile, and the cyclical structure of the countryside situated behind it (think of meadows, fields, pastures, etc.)

As if to simulate the absent scenic vistas or to somehow conjure their loss, some noise barriers feature abstract designs that turn into rhythmic and almost melodic lines when passing by at high speed. This variation in design was mainly to avoid a monotonous feeling or a tunnel effect for motorists. However, looked at from a less common, frontal perspective, these sound panels become gridded

In that very same year, Frank Stella got commissioned for the *BMW Art Car Project*, where he used a drawing on graph paper to cover the car's bodywork. As a painter, he was basically treating the car as if it were a shaped canvas.

Xavier Mary's work still carries this same legacy. But instead of searching for the specificity of the medium by reducing it to its "pure essence", so typical of American modernism (advocated by Greenberg and co.), Mary starts off from the specificity of objects. In this way, one might define his practice as a "reverse engineering" of modernism, disassembling it into its components and putting them back together.

Tree of Woe (2011) is a straightforward reference to Duchamp's *Bottle Rack* (1914). Mary found the piece during a residency in New York, in a auto body shop in Willets Point, Queens, a dodgy, industrial area (nicknamed 'Iron Triangle') that is now being gentrified. By manipulating the muffler sculpture and putting it in a different, artistic setting, the object practically turns into a monument to the bygone, Fordist era of production.

Much akin to this piece is *Wheel of Pain* (2014), a display stand for tires. The tires are covered with a specific texture that emphasizes the object's autonomous existence and material features.

Borromean Rings (2013) equally refers to technological culture of speed, conceived by figures like J.G. Ballard or Paul Virilio. The monumental ensemble is produced from guardrails, forming entangled, topological rings exemplary of a 'hyperbolic geometry', exceeding the Euclidean model. A similar and more recent version, in the shape of huge five-pointed star, goes by the name of *Highway Star* (2014).

— Pieter Vermeulen

XMSL

March 19-
April 15
2016



XMSL, 2016, Exhibition view

The image shows the word 'XMSL' in a bold, stylized, 3D metallic font. The letters are rendered with a gradient from light blue to silver, giving them a metallic, reflective appearance. They are set against a solid black background. The 'X' is particularly stylized with a triangular cutout in its center.

Exhibition title: XMSL

Duo exhibition with Simon Laureyns

Venue: Galerie Geukens & Devil

Date: March 19 - April 15 2017



Front
Xavier Mary
Iron Bench 2016
Iron tubes, stanchion, rubber
Dimensions variables

Back
Simon Laureyns
Big in Japan, 2015
200 x 150 cm



Front
Xavier Mary
Iron Bench 2016
Iron tubes, stanchion, rubber
Dimensions variables

Back
Simon Laureyns
Big in Japan, 2015
200 x 150 cm

Snake Driver

March 17-

April 15

2017

Exhibition title: Snake Driver

Venue: Galerie Albert Baronian

Date: March 17 - April 15 2017

Photography: © Hugard & Vanoverschelde

ROUTE 175

Oaxaca to Ocotlan: Takes about 40 minutes, initially with urban sprawl out of the city, and then gently rolling hills with a few strong curves, vegetation predominantly agave and corn under cultivation. Passes by the villages producing black pottery and cotton textiles. In Ocotlan, noted for its Friday market, you'll find clay painted figures of the Aguilar sisters, the workshop of knife maker Angel Aguilar.

Ocotlan to Ejutla: Takes about 25 minutes, with long easy straight-aways and occasional curves and gentle hills. Once again agave and some corn, with a number of outcrops of carriso (river reed used for making ceilings, roofs and fences). Known for its Thursday market, with sale of animal skins.

Ejutla to Mihuatlan: Takes about 35 minutes, with more pronounced curves and hills, and easy-to-navigate peaks and valleys through similar vegetation and some mixed brush. Good idea to take your Dramamine or Gravol about 15 minutes into this portion of the trip. Just keep going straight and the highway takes you out of the city.

Mihuatlan to San Jose del Pacífico: Takes about 50 minutes. Leaving Mihuatlan you'll see the impressive mountain range in front of you, which you quickly begin to climb. You'll note the temperature change quite readily, as you witness the dramatic change in vegetation. In addition to deciduous trees including scrub oak, you'll see an abundance of conifers, mainly pine. The agave changes from espadín under cultivation, to very different and impressive wild varieties along the side of the road, growing from rock outcrops, some reaching an immense size, with stock (chioté) shooting up from its core dwarfing many of the surrounding trees. This segment of the trip, and the next with descent to Pochutla, are characterized predominantly by significant mountain switchbacks. You'll see roadside eateries, booths with alebrijes for sale, and small cottage-industry lumber and firewood producers. San Jose del Pacífico is noted for the sale of locally harvested hallucinogenic mushrooms, in particular during the rainy season, and therefore you'll come across roadside workshops selling hand-made wooden mushrooms as well as other hand-crafted products. You can rent a cabin if you wish to break up the trip and spend the night.

San Jose del Pacífico to Pochutla: You'll continue to climb for about another 10 minutes until you reach El Manzanal, then begin the descent. This portion of the trip takes about two hours and 25 minutes. The ride down is initially quite gradual, and then more pronounced once you reach San Miguel Suchixtepec, a picturesque village with large impressive church, and homes strung out along a few hilly mountain roads. You'll begin to detect another significant temperature change, depending on the facing of the portion of mountain you are descending relative to the sun. At different portions of the stretch you'll pass by a couple of waterfalls and three or four smaller rivulets spilling across the highway, goats and donkeys, home construction of wood, pine cones on the roadway, brilliant orange flowered bromeliads, wild orchids, large expanses of boston-like ferns, and perhaps one or two patches of fog. For several kilometers you'll encounter a sweet smell similar to that of maple syrup. Because of the steep descent, you may even detect the smell of burning rubber, but don't worry, it's likely a truck up ahead having brake problems. At about four hours into the trip you'll begin to hear tropical insect and bird sounds and calls, and see bananas and sugar cane under cultivation and for sale, with coffee and honey also offered at roadside stands. On the approach to Pochutla the roadway will then gradually straighten out, with curves much easier to navigate. Tropical grasses predominate the roadside landscapes. An indication that you're getting closer will be blown sand encroaching part of the roadway, and finally a sign stating "Iguana Hunting Prohibited." A short while later you'll see the sign pointing to the right for the Puerto Escondido bypass.

Pochutla to Puerto Escondido: Takes about an hour. Highway 175 ends at a "Y", so veer to the right and you're on highway 200, following along the Pacific. However, you won't be able to see the ocean for about 40 minutes. You'll pass by the exit to Puerto Ángel, Mazunte and Zipolite. The entire final leg of the trip is basically straight and flat. For the last half hour or so you'll see mango, papaya and coconut under cultivation.

<http://www.oaxacadream.com/articles/tourist9.html>



Snake Driver, 2017, Exhibition view



Snake Driver, 2017, Exhibition view



Snake Driver, 2017, Exhibition view



Snake Driver 2017, Exhibition view



Snake Driver 2017, Exhibition view



We have the same scales 2017

Aluminium cast
120 x 41 x 13 cm



Bionic Eagle Beyond the mountain of Memory Lane 2017, Truck trailer doors, 295 x 240 x 19 cm



Ego will tear us apart (part II) 2017
MAN TGA truck cabin, sandblasting
222 x 257 x 155 cm



Ego will tear us apart (part II) 2017
MAN TGA truck cabin, sandblasting
222 x 257 x 155 cm



Ego will tear us apart (part II) 2017, MAN TGA truck cabin, sandblasting, 222 x 257 x 155 cm



Ego will tear us apart (part I) 2017, MAN TGA truck cabin, sandblasting, 222 x 257 x 155 cm



Deleted pictures from my private camera, jpg.024 (Front) 2017

Truck trailer pannel
242 x 157 x 16 cm



Deleted pictures from my private camera, jpg.024 (Back) 2017
Truck trailer pannel
242 x 157 x 16 cm



Deleted pictures from my private camera, jpg.017, jpg.021, jpg.022 (Pilgrimage of the snake bite) 2017

Truck trailer pannels
242 x 332 x 7 cm







Bionic Eagle 2017, Truck trailer doors, 129 x 139 x 19 cm

The Enigma of steel

November 9

2017-

January 6

2018

Exhibition title: The Enigma of steel

Venue: Galerie Nosbaum Reding

Date: November 9, 2017 - January 6, 2018

Photography: © Tania Bettega

‘Fire and wind come from the sky, from the gods of the sky. But Crom is your god, Crom and he lives in the earth. Once, giants lived in the Earth, Conan. And in the darkness of chaos, they fooled Crom, and they took from him the enigma of steel. Crom was angered. And the Earth shook. Fire and wind struck down these giants, and they threw their bodies into the waters, but in their rage, the gods forgot the secret of steel and left it on the battlefield. We who found it are just men. Not gods. Not giants. Just men. The secret of steel has always carried with it a mystery. You must learn its riddle, Conan. You must learn its discipline. For no one – no one in this world can you trust. Not men, not women, not beasts. [Points to the sword] This you can trust.’

The exhibition *The Enigma of Steel* by the Belgian artist Xavier Mary is loosely inspired by the film *Conan the Barbarian* (1982) directed by John Milius and based on a story by Robert E. Howard. The film is set in the Hyborian Age, a fictional period in the history of the Earth between 14,000 and 10,000 BCE (late Upper Palaeolithic). The title of the exhibition refers to the eponymous legend as told to Conan by his father.

Mary’s work for Nosbaum Reding consists of sheets of laminated steel with engravings made using a plasma cutter. Besides a transcription of the dialogue situating the legend of the origins of steel, they feature the swords that string together the narrative of the film, namely, the ‘Master Sword’ forged by Conan’s father and the ‘Atlantean Sword’ that Conan uses to avenge his father. Produced by the artist in a specialised metalworking shop in Diekirch, a small town in the Luxembourgish Ardennes, these imposing sculptures combine anachronistic fantasy worlds and advanced technology. Harking back to a mythical past, the artist’s installation encourages us to consider the origins of the steelmaking industry and question its current role in a context where technology threatens to elude our control. By focusing on an apocalyptic narrative, he furthermore invites us to reflect on our responsibility in the use we make of technology.



The Enigma of Steel 2017, Exhibition view



FIRE AND WIND COME FROM THE SKY
FROM THE GODS OF THE SKY
BUT CROM IS YOUR GOD
CROM AND HE LIVES IN THE EARTH
CROM GIANTS LIVED IN THE EARTH
CROM
AND IN THE DARKNESS OF NIGHT THEY
SEEKED CROM AND THEY TOOK FROM
HIM THE ENIGMA OF STEEL
CROM WAS ANGERED AND THE EARTH
THROU FIRE AND WIND STRUCK DOWN
THESE GIANTS AND THEY THREW THEIR
BONES INTO THE WATERS BUT IN THEIR
RAGE THEY WERE FORGOTTEN THE SECRET OF
STEEL AND LEFT IT ON THE BATTLEFIELD
WE WHO FOUND IT ARE JUST MEN
NOT GODS NOT GIANTS JUST MEN
THE SECRET OF STEEL HAS ALWAYS
CARRIED WITH IT A MYSTERY
YOU MUST LEARN ITS RIDDLE CONAN
YOU MUST LEARN ITS DISCIPLINE
OR NO ONE AND NO ONE IN THIS WORLD
CAN YOU TRUST
NOT MEN NOT WOMEN NOT BEASTS
IF ONLY TO SWORDS
THIS YOU CAN TRUST

The Enigma of Steel 2017, Exhibition view



Master's Sword 2017, iron, plasma cutting, 270 x 150 cm

FIRE AND WIND COME FROM THE SKY
FROM THE GODS OF THE SKY
BUT CROM IS YOUR GOD
CROM AND HE LIVES IN THE EARTH
ONCE GIANTS LIVED IN THE EARTH
CONAN
AND IN THE DARKNESS OF CHAOS THEY
FOOLED CROM AND THEY TOOK FROM
HIM THE ENIGMA OF STEEL
CROM WAS ANGERED AND THE EARTH
SHOOK FIRE AND WIND STRUCK DOWN
THESE GIANTS AND THEY THREW THEIR
BODIES INTO THE WATERS BUT IN THEIR
RAGE THE GODS FORGOT THE SECRET OF
STEEL AND LEFT IT ON THE BATTLE FIELD
WE WHO FOUND IT ARE JUST MEN
NOT GODS NOT GIANTS JUST MEN
THE SECRET OF STEEL HAS ALWAYS
CARRIED WITH IT A MYSTERY
YOU MUST LEARN ITS RIDDLE CONAN
YOU MUST LEARN ITS DISCIPLINE
OR NO ONE NO ONE IN THIS WORLD
CAN YOU TRUST
NOT MEN NOT WOMEN NOT BEASTS
[POINTS TO SWORD]
THIS YOU CAN TRUST



Atlantean Sword 2017, iron, plasma cutting, 270 x 150 cm



By this axe I rule 2017, iron, plasma cutting, 150 x 70 cm



Crom, 2017
iron, plasma cutting,
53 x 49,5 cm



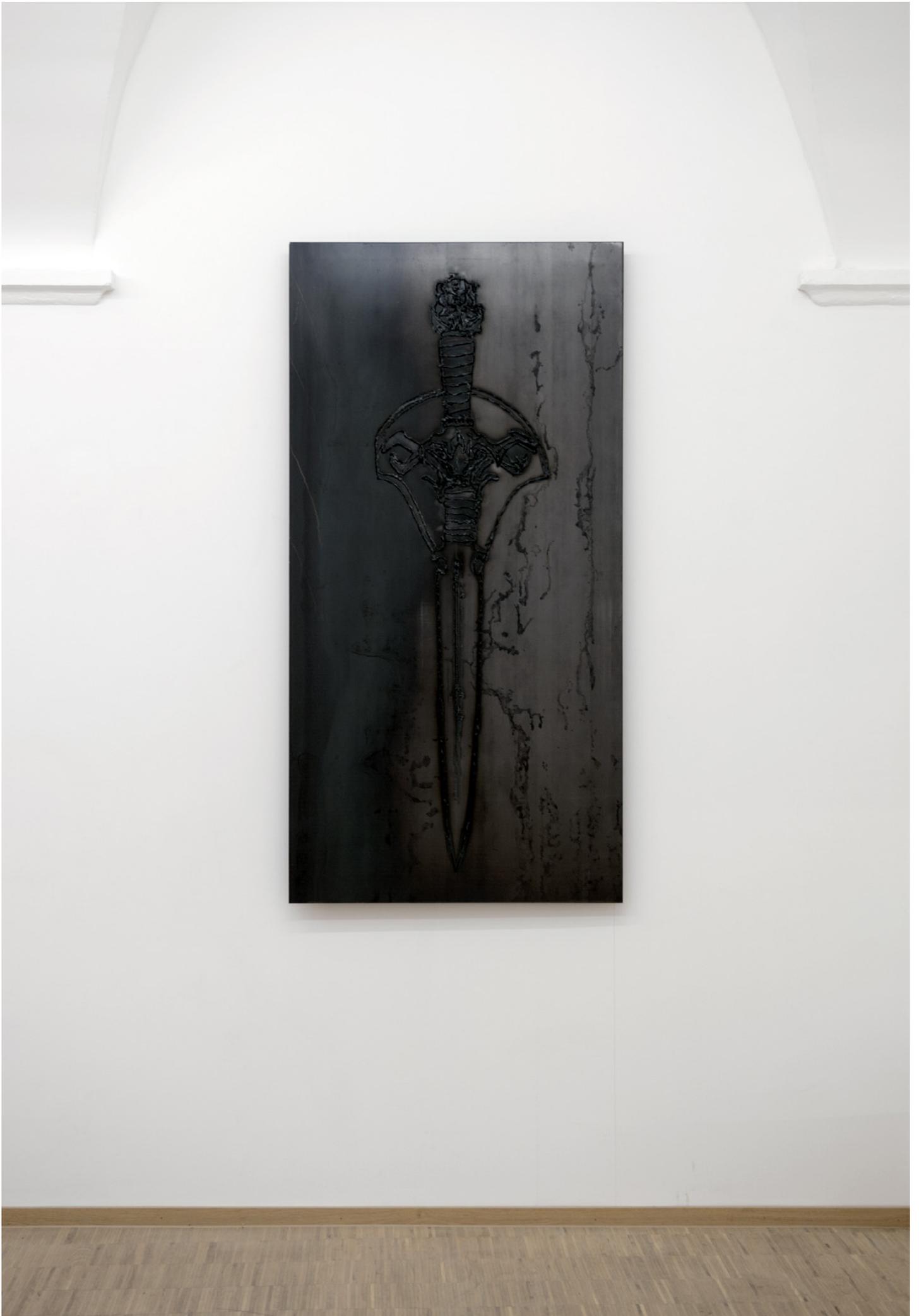
Crush your enemies 2017, iron, plasma cutting, lifting chain, 200 x 150 cm



The Enigma of Steel 2017, Exhibition view



Crush your enemies 2017, iron, plasma cutting, lifting chain, 200 x 150 cm



Gate of Darkness 2017, iron, plasma cutting, 150 x 75 cm



Gate of Darkness 2017, iron, plasma cutting, 150 x 75 cm

Dance Floor Of Emergency

January 20 -
March 11
2018

NAK

Neuer Aachener Kunstverein, (DE)



Dance Floor of Emergency 2018, Exhibition view



Dance Floor of Emergency 2018, Exhibition view



Dance Floor of Emergency 2018, Exhibition view



Harry 2018, John Deere 710 tractor parts, iron, 186 x 94 x 185 cm



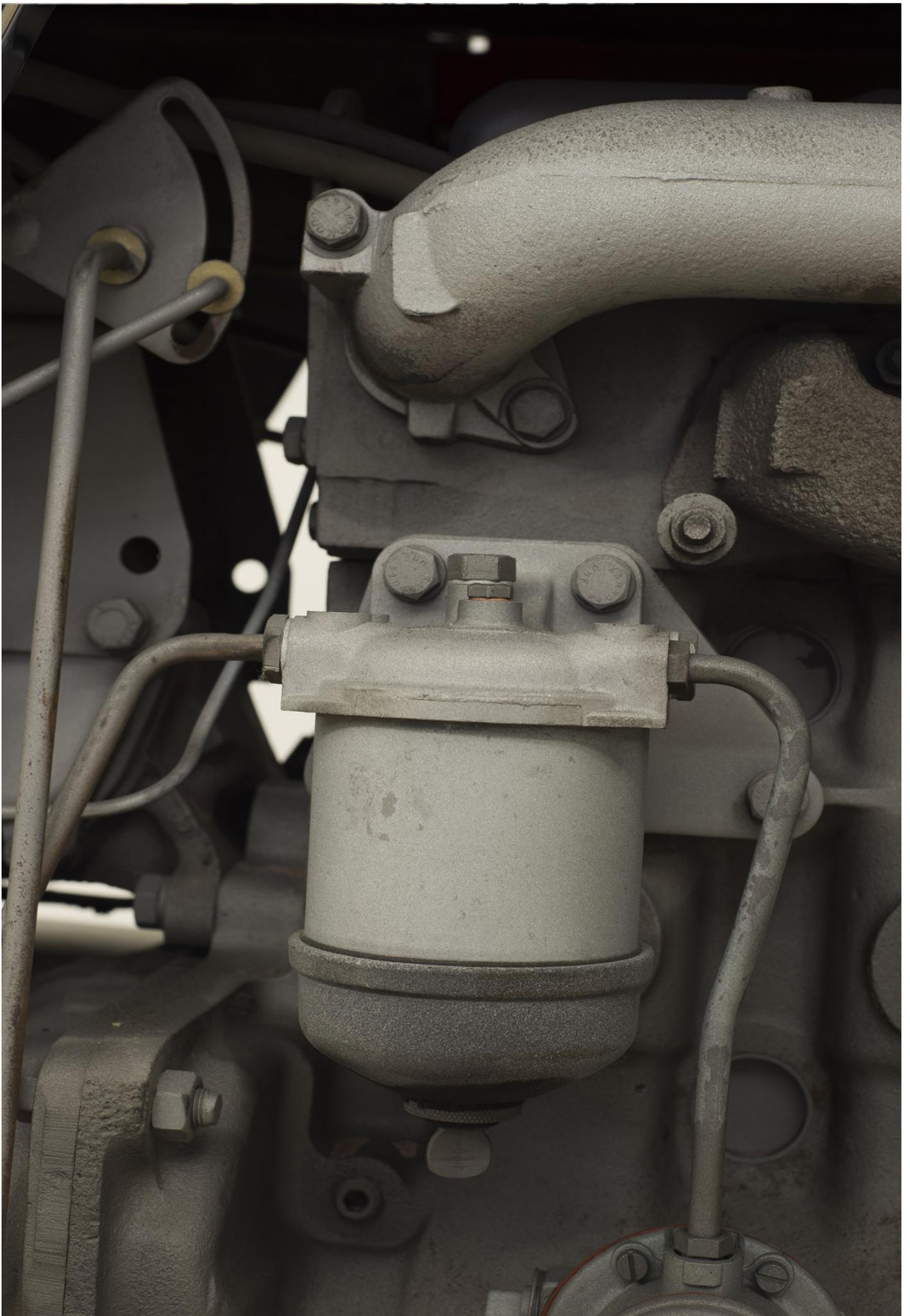
Harry (detail) 2018, John Deere 710 tractor parts, iron, 186 x 94 x 185 cm





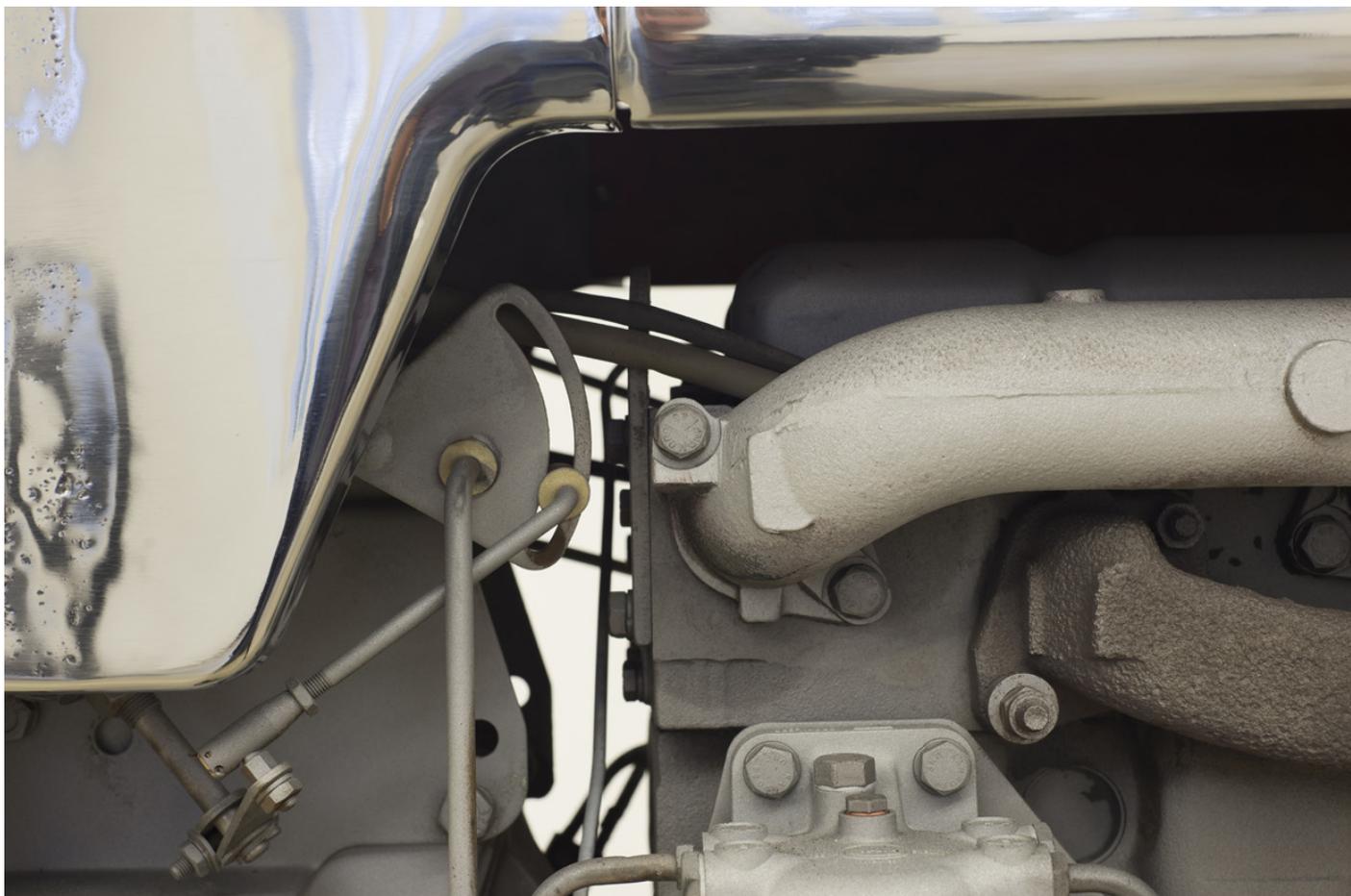


Henry (detail) 2018
Massey Ferguson 165 tractor parts, bottle jack
185 x 98 x 195 cm





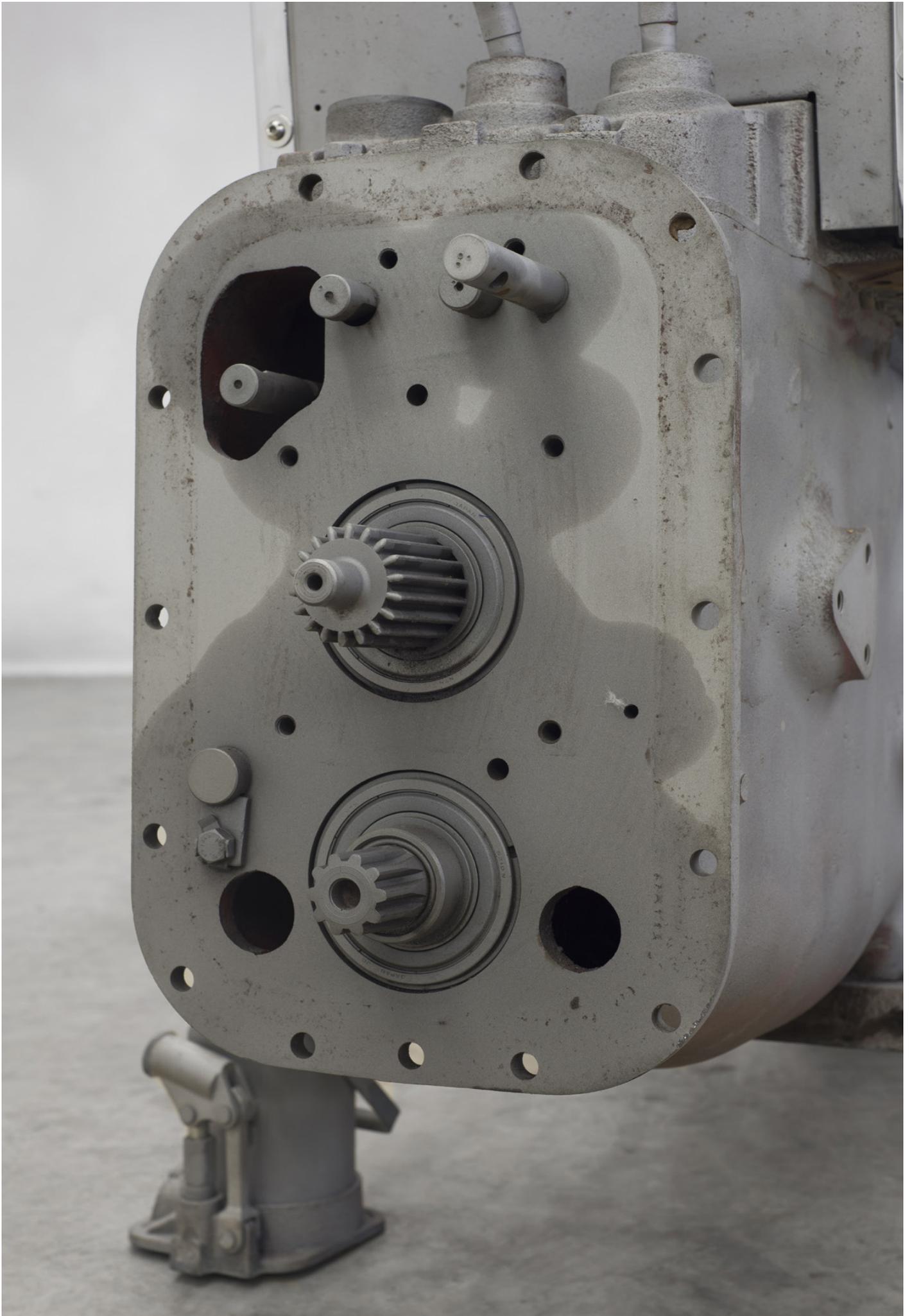
Henry (detail) 2018
Massey Ferguson 165 tractor parts, bottle jack
185 x 98 x 195 cm



Henry (detail) 2018
Massey Ferguson 165 tractor parts, bottle jack
185 x 98 x 195 cm



Henry 2018, Massey Ferguson 165 tractor parts, bottle jack, 185 x 98 x 195 cm



Henry (detail) 2018, Massey Ferguson 165 tractor parts, bottle jack, 185 x 98 x 195 cm

Exhibition title: Dance Floor of Emergency

Venue: NAK, Neuer Aachener Kunstverein

Date: January 21, 2018 - March 11, 2018

Photography: Thomas Weidenhaupt, Xavier Mary

Belgian artist Xavier Mary chose the subtitle *Dance Floor of Emergency* for his works presented in the exhibition **Jan Hoelt / Xavier Mary**. In his artworks Mary broaches the issue of socio-economic problems of a present-day affluent society, at the same time crafting an almost modern fable about fading dreams and virtues in the afterglow of the bygone industrial age.

The two sculptures *Harry* (2018) and *Henry* (2018) in the central exhibition space on the ground floor of the Kunstverein are composed of two different tractor elements dating back to 1965, a John Deere 710 and a Massey Ferguson 165.

Surrounding these two pieces the site-specific wall installation *We'll roll coal until we die* (2018) was created by grit blasting the walls with carbon dust. Now the exhibition space resembles a garage, a car repair shop or a tractor factory, the smell of petrol and oil filling the air. On the one hand Mary's intervention unearths residues of exhibitions long past at NAK¹ and on the other hand it emblemizes metaphorically the dust of time, referring to the anecdotic story of the *handshake agreement*² between Harry Ferguson and Henry Ford. Said verbal contract led to the mass production of Harry Ferguson's innovative tractor model. The Ferguson system revolutionized and restructured agriculture in the USA and replaced the horse as draught animal. Due to the missing written agreement Ferguson sued Ford for damages in patent violations in 1948. The legal dispute lasted for years, resulting in Ford having to pay amends in 1952, as Ferguson won in court. Afterwards he sold his firm to Canadian competitor Massey-Harris. Hereupon Ferguson founded Ferguson-Research and started to develop a new, innovative automobile. Two years before the planned completion of this endeavour Ferguson committed suicide in 1960.

By the re- and deconstruction of the historic facts Xavier Mary hints at the mechanical origins of the western industrial society and in addition relegates to the competitive situation between European and US-American corporations in the emerging capitalism of the 20th century.

In the foyer Mary furthermore presents the sculpture *Dance Floor of Emergency DJ Booth* (2018), consisting of the tractor cabine of the Massey Ferguson 165 and which was used during the opening; a mix of electronic, trap, dark grime and bold ballroom music by Belgium DJs Ssaliva, Liyo and Munix filled the space.

On the terrace of the outside section of the Kunstverein Mary's sculpture *Too Many Parties* (2017) blazes into the interior as well as the surrounding municipal park in equal shares. *Too Many Parties* (2017) resembles a massive motor block in form and is composed of various vehicle's lighting bulbs. A variable programming regulates the intervals and sequence of the illumination of the headlights similar to a lighting console in a discotheque and once more directly alluding to an excessive, subcultural nightlife.

Completing Mary's presentation at NAK is his piece *We have the same scale* (2017), which was previously shown in other exhibitions as well. The relief of an eagle made of aluminium recreates a belt buckle from childhood days of the Liège born artist and therefore could be read as a signature.

1 In 2003 NAK presented the first institutional solo exhibition Brian Eno by Lucy McKenzie; inadvertently the site-specific trompe l'oeil paintings became visible again via Mary's intervention. „McKenzie nimmt den NAK ein, verwandelt und verunklärt die Ausstellungsräume (...) durch eine Installation aus trompe l'oeil Wandgemälden und Siebdruckplakaten im Untergeschoss“.

2 „C'est le fameux accord, le plus extraordinaire accord que deux hommes de ce poids aient jamais conclu: le «handshake agreement», une parole d'honneur pour contrat, une poignée de mains pour signature“.



Too Many Parties 2017

Aluminium, truck headlights, truck rear lights, neoprene cables

146 x 127 x 202 cm



Too Many Parties 2017

Aluminium, truck headlights, truck rear lights, neoprene cables

146 x 127 x 202 cm

Curriculum Vitæ

Xavier Mary

Né / Born 1982 in Liège (B)

Vit et travail / lives and works in Bruxelles (B)

Etudes / Formations

2002-06

Master Art, sculptures et installations, ERG, Bruxelles (B)

Bachelort Art, sculptures, ERG, Bruxelles (B)

Expositions Solo / Solo Exhibitions

2018

Jan Hoeft / Xavier Mary, NAK Neuer Aachener Kunstverein, Aachen (DE), duo exhibition with Jan Hoeft

2017

Kiss the Girls, Ultrastudio, Pescara (IT)

The Enigma of Steel, Galerie Nosbaum Reading, Luxembourg (LU)

We have the same Scale, Mélange, Cologne (DE), duo exhibition with Eva L'Hoest

Snake Driver, Galerie Albert Baronian, Bruxelles (B)

2016

XMSL, Galerie Geukens-De Vil, Knokke (B) , duo exhibition with Simon Laureyns

2014

Over Drive, Galerie Albert Baronian, Bruxelles (B)

2013

Iron Triangle, APT Institute, New York (USA)

Eat The Magic Lions #2, Do Not Open Project Space, Brussels/Belgium.

2012

Petrolatum, Galerie Christian Nagel, Berlin (DE)

Eat The Magic Lions, Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin (DE)

2010

Game Over, Galerie Baroninan-Francey, Bruxelles (B)

Ortho Graphe, Galerie Christian Nagel, Berlin (DE)

2009

One Man Show Art Bruxelles, Galerie Albert Baronian, Bruxelles (B)

SPECIFIC PATTERN, Galerie Espace Uhoda, Liège (B)

2008

Arts 00+8, La médiatine, Bruxelles (B)

2007

Gantz Graf', Witte Zaal, Gent (B), duo exhibition with Yves Coussement

2006

Highway Ravers, Palais des Beaux Arts, Bruxelles (B)

Expositions de groupe / Group Exhibitions

- 2018
Electropolis, BPS22 Museum (B)
Résurgences, Espace 251 Nord, Liège (B)
- 2017
Plant B, Molenbeek Sculpture Park, Bruxelles (B)
Matellifère, CALCB, Centre d'art Contemporain du Luxembourg Belge, Buzenole (B)
- 2016
Les Sept Périls Spectraux, Galerie Arnaud Deschin, Paris (FR)
From Here to Eternity, La Maison Particulière, Bruxelles (B)
Stay Focused, Cookie Butcher, Anvers (B)
Panorama, BPS 22, Charleroi (B)
Dust as a new value, Villa Arson, Nice (FR)
The Emotional Junkie and the Cyborg Love, MuHKA, Musée d'art contemporain d'Anvers, Anvers (B)
Les lèvres nues, DOC, Paris (FR)
The Green Ray, Wilkinson Gallery, Londres (GB)
- 2015
Don't Look a gift horse in the mouth, The Stable, Waregem (B)
**S*W*I*M*, In De Ruimte; Gand (B)
First summer show, Galerie Yoko Uhoda, Liège (B)
Quand fondra la neige où ira le blanc, Galerie Les Filles du Calvaire, Paris (FR)
Museo delle Palme, Museo delle Palme, Palermo (IT)
To blow smoke in order to heal, Galerie Baronian, Bruxelles (B)
- 2014
The square rectangle, Kunsthal Kade, Amersfoort (NL)
Het Kanaal, Extra City Kunsthal Antwerpen, Anvers (B)
Het Kanaal, Espace 251 Nord, Liège (B)
Trailers For The Future, Galerie Yoko Uhoda, Liège (B)
Scoglio Di Cielo, L'A project space, Palermo (IT)
Acid Rain, Island, Bruxelles (B)
Bande à Part, CAB Art Center, Bruxelles (B)
L'art Belge, Musée des beaux-arts de La Chaux-de-Fonds, Neuchâtel (CH)
- 2013
DEFINING SPACE, Die Bastei, Cologne (DE)
Batterie, RAVI, Liège (B)
- 2012
Vinyl in the studio, Mu.ZEE, Oostende (B)
Who's afraid by red, yellow and blue ?, La Maison Rouge, Paris (F)
Pop up, Ixelle Museum, Bruxelles (B)
- 2011
100 DRAWINGS AGAINST THE VIETNAM WAR, Le commissariat, Paris (FR) + Komplot, Bruxelles (B)
Nouvel Art de la Belgique III, Galerie Nagel, Berlin (DE)
- 2010
Nouvel Art de la Belgique I, Galerie Nagel, Cologne (DE)
Enlightenment, L40 BERLIN, Berlin (DE) *Nouvel Art de la Belgique*, Galerie Nagel, Anvers (B)
- 2009
Dialogique Parc, Bétonsalon, Paris (F)
Nothing is permanent, La centrale, Bruxelles (B)
- 2008
Un-scene, WIELS, Bruxelles (B)
Harder Than It Looks, MAGP, Cajarc (F)
Sculptural Proposition, Galerie Desimpel, Bruxelles (B)
Utopia-Dystopia, W3 Kunst centrum, Vlissingen (NL)

Résidences & prix/ Résidencies & awards

- 2016
Résidence RAVI, Liège (B)
- 2013-2015
Résidence Komplot, Bruxelles (B)
- 2015
Résidence Museo delle Palme, Palermo (IT)
Prix de la commission des arts de Wallonie, Musée Lanchevici (selected artist), La Louvière (B)
- 2014
Residence L'A project space, Palermo (IT)
Résidence AIR Antwerpen, Anvers (B)
- 2013
Résidence APT Studios, Brooklyn, NY (USA)
- 2011
Résidence Künstlerhaus Bethanien, Berlin (DE)
- 2009
Second Lauréat, Illy prize, Art Bruxelles, Bruxelles (B)
Laureate Prix Jeune Artiste, Parlement de la communauté Française de Belgique
- 2005
Laureate Prix médiation 2005

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