

MACS

Musée des Arts Contemporains
Grand-Hornu

Matt Mullican

Representing the Work

16.02 > 18.10 2020

PRESS RELEASE





Photography of Oscar Monsalve / Courtesy de NC-arte.

Representing the Work

16.02 > 18.10 2020

The MACS is organising the first monographic exhibition of work by Matt Mullican in a museum in Belgium. Born in 1951 in Santa Monica, the American artist who now lives and works in New York and Berlin was marked by his studies with John Baldessari in the early 1970s at the California Institute of the Arts. Since the 1980s, his work has been exhibited regularly throughout the world, including at major collective events such as Documenta (1982, 1992 and 1997) and the Venice Biennale (2013), along with solo exhibitions, notably his immense retrospective at the HangarBicocca in Milan (2018).

Having developed historically from the Pictures Generation, Matt Mullican's obsessional, encyclopaedic work is a response to conceptual art through the way it places importance on the image, sensation and subjectivity. Drawing on the world around him for the raw material of his creation, the artist points out, *"Everything that I have to catalogue is actually found where I live. When I say 'where I live', I am speaking of both the physical and the psychological world."*

Beyond this body-mind dualism, Matt Mullican in fact extends his presentation of the universe to five worlds, represented by five colours: green symbolises nature, blue represents daily life, yellow signifies art, black relates to language and red evokes subjectivity. This cosmology, which found its first expression during his childhood, along with his two principal artistic developments in 1973 and 1983, constitute the veritable driving force of a fundamentally existential work which applies his graphic principles (colour chart, pictograms, lists, etc.) to a broad array of supports: books, flags, posters, stained-glass, an architectural pavilion, noticeboards, tapestries, light boxes, virtual spaces, etc.

Added to this diversity of media are his numerous 'talks', in which he recounts the history of his work, and his on-stage 'performances under



Matt Mullican was born in Santa Monica (United States) in 1951. He lives and works in New York and Berlin. He is the son of the modern artists Luchita Hurtado and Lee Mullican. Considered as one of the pioneers of digital art, he belongs to the "Pictures Generation".

Since 1973, Matt Mullican has had a number of monographic exhibitions around the world, in both museums and galleries. He also took part in the documenta 7, 9 and 10 in 1982, 1992 and 1997.

In 2019, he exhibited his work at NC-arte in Bogota; in 2018, he took over the immense space of the HangarBicocca in Milan. In 2010, the *12 by 2* exhibition at the IAC in Villeurbanne confronted the works of Matt Mullican with those of "That Person" the individual who emerges when Matt Mullican is hypnotised and in 2005, the Ludwig Museum in Cologne organised a solo exhibition of works created by him, *Learning from That Person's Work*.

His work is found in numerous international public and private collections, notably the MoMA in New York, the Tate Modern in London, the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, the Haus der Kunst in Munich, the Centre Pompidou in Paris and the MACS.

hypnosis', when he turns into someone he calls 'That Person', an alter-ego who interprets, often in a caricatural manner, the various situations that he is presented with. During his first experiment under hypnosis, *Entering the Picture: Entrance to Hell* (1976), Matt Mullican was seated facing a painting by Piranesi into which he entered through thought to create a real-time, detailed description of it to his audience. Since then, he has regularly repeated this technique, enabling 'That Person' to appear, a sort of subjective double, who experiences emotions or even creates works of art that are different to those of Matt Mullican.

In 1987, the American artist pursued this to-and-fro between real and imaginary worlds, when he created an imaginary city through the intermediary of super-computers. Here he was subconsciously prefiguring the virtual spaces of present-day video games, whose landscapes are formed as the player advances through them. Likewise, the specific symbols of his cosmology are also reminiscent of the icons and pictograms on our smartphone screens, which lends a truly visionary dimension to his work: "*I think my work has a close connection with contemporary life, with what is happening in the world today and what people are having to deal with, what children have to cope with and what my children are facing nowadays, when you think about the internet and the way in which their world could be defined.*"

The exhibition *Representing the Work* is arranged around several major series by the artist, which reflects its retrospective nature. Following the narrative line suggested by the museum's architecture, Matt Mullican invites the spectator to discover the principal chapters of his work until his emblematic series of *Rubbings*, and includes the *M.I.T. Project*, the pavilion representing a three-dimensional cosmology which he invented in the 1980s along with a vast series of works on paper, not forgetting *The Meaning of Things* and *Yellow Monster*, two series based on images taken from the internet and his performances under hypnosis. The highpoint of the exhibition is the installation-mosaic which gave its name to the exhibition, *Representing the Work*, a series of 64 bedsheets which present iconographic plates detailing his entire oeuvre, from his early experiments in John Baldessari's class at CalArts, to his gigantic installation at the HangarBicocca, and includes his performances under hypnosis and rubbings.



Practical Information

THE MUSEUM

The MACS is housed in the former colliery premises at Grand-Hornu, an outstanding example of European industrial heritage, listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2012. Since it opened in 2002, the museum has received over a million visitors, produced more than 85 exhibitions and promoted numerous artists from the Wallonia-Brussels Federation. Thanks to major international artists, including Anish Kapoor, Christian Boltanski, Giuseppe Penone and Tony Oursler, who have presented their first major exhibitions in Belgium here, the reputation of the MACS now reaches far beyond our national borders. Inspired by the unique architectural and historical context of Grand-Hornu, its collection has developed according to themes that connect with the preoccupations of many contemporary artists, including memory, technology and community.

COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT:

Maité Vanneste

Telephone:

+32(0)65 61 38 53

E-mail:

maite.vanneste@grand-hornu.be

Florence Dendooven

Telephone:

+32(0)65 61 38 82

E-mail:

florence.dendooven@grand-hornu.be

PRESS CONTACT:

Club Paradis

Micha Pycke

Telephone:

+32(0)486 68 00 70

E-mail:

micha@clubparadis.be

LOCATION AND TICKETS

Chairman: Claude Durieux

Director: Denis Gielen

Address:

Site du Grand-Hornu

Rue Sainte-Louise, 82

B-7301 Hornu (near Mons)

Tel: +32(0)65 65 21 21

Fax: +32(0)65 61 38 91

E-mail: info.macs@grand-hornu.be

Opening times:

Every day from 10am to 6pm, except Mondays, 25/12 and 01/01.

Entrance fee:

- Combined ticket for the Grand-Hornu site / MACS / CID : €10 - €6
- Reduced / group price (minimum 15 people): €6
- School group: €2
- Free for children under 6 and adults accompanying school groups

Guided tours:

- €50 for a group of 25 people max. during the week
- €60 for a group of 25 people max. during the weekend

Booking service: reservations@grand-hornu.be +32 (0) 65/613.902