

bram braam

modern mutants

modern mutants

The formal reductions of Holland's De Stijl would reverberate throughout the history of the twentieth century, crossing oceans to effect movements such as American Minimalism and international currents in architecture. For a Dutch artist concerned with the built environment, such as Braam, the modernist legacy looms large. In previous projects such as *City of Tomorrow* he worked through the tactile and volumetric poetry of failed urban planning experiments—the dead ends of utopian reduction, rather than so many promised clean slates. Through a series of compelling sculptures, installations and wall reliefs, his oeuvre has spoken by splicing together 'poor' modern vernaculars to address the wrack of good architectural intentions on the shores of lived experience.

With this new body of work Braam's focus has shifted, from imperfect figures of total design to messy ground. From the skein of built control—the masterplan, with its centripetal organization—to neglected fringes. Also, to centrifugal fallout: wastelands, junkspace and street furniture; milestones on the pathway between environmental rationalization and entropy. Specifically, Braam's new works address Berlin—his home—as a mutable cityscape, hovering between the forms inherited from its exceptional history, its planned future development, and its remaining pockets of undefined character. In a work such as *Coordinating Berlin Traces*, a photo-grid depicting sections of various walls encrusted with wear and graffiti, the artist foregrounds memories inscribed upon the built environment. Elsewhere, in a photo of a brownfield site occupied by an empty billboard, he seems concerned with the possibilities that may emerge from unclaimed spaces. What will be written next on the face of this city?

Braam's new artistic offerings are also hybrid objects. *As If* contains a found stone that has been sawn in two; one half replaced by a three-dimensional printed copy of itself. Such an object might be said to fulfill philosopher Noel Carroll's definition of the monstrous. It is a 'category violation'; a mutant plastic-mineral. But Braam's agenda is not to cast perjorative stones. This item, like other recent works, is offered as a metaphor for what he considers the 'hyperreal' condition of the contemporary metropole.¹ Indeed, his gestures respond to the loosening of reductive strictures ushered in by postmodernism, as well as the laissez-faire eclecticism of contemporary urban design where image and structure are fused-in billboards, facade as screen or photograph, cladding and more. Another part of this multi-object artwork consists of wall-mounted plexiglass panels, bearing printed images depicting parts of a sculpture. The source material—the sculpture—is located nearby, placed on the gallery floor. Through this choreography of elements,

distributed across media, *As If* endeavours to pick apart the hybrid or hyperreal municipal condition—marshalling forms that flatten three-dimensional source material into two-dimensions, and which volumize image conditions.

The prevalence of plexiglass in the works is loaded. It is the ultimate 'look but don't touch' material. One fingerprint, or the lightest overlay of dust, and its pristine surface is sullied. No amount of right angles is a bulwark against the profanation of a smudge. The nullity of Donald Judd's minimalism—ventured as the cousin of transcendence—needs constant tending in order to be maintained. In *The Immateriality Within the Effects of Time* Braam's eye for the vernacular fate of modern(ist) materials is again put to work: Plexiglass as a protective layer, a tool for preservation out in the 'real' world beyond the white cube. The work consists of a rusting square metal plate, its paint flaking and corroded away in places, that has been wall-mounted. Recovered from a wastesite by the artist, part of it is overlaid with a plexi panel—a section of which bares a printed hue that refers to the original colour of the metal plate. Braam's aesthetic gesture serves to highlight the now profaned design concept for the object, while supplying it with a defensive token. Like other works in this exhibition, here Braam stages the uneasy tension between a plan and its realization; between map and territory.

Through his sculptural borrowing of heterogeneous materials and stylistic traces Braam presents the audience with compressions of architectural time – past, present and possibility, rubbing up against one another. His works press the question of where revaluation and reuse are most appropriate, and where *damnatio memoriae* (condemnation of memory) is perhaps better applied. The latter was a practice utilized by the ancient Egyptians and Romans to destroy any tangible link to the legacy of historical periods with problematic reputations. In the fields of architecture and design today, the future of communal life and collective memory rests in answers to this question.

Anja Henckel / Nadim Samman

¹ The term hyperreal is a key concept outlined by the philosopher Jean Baudrillard.



white square #3 2014

wood, glass, gypsum plates, paint, kapa plast foam, styrofoam, spraypaint 66 × 66 × 6,5 cm



empty space 2015
photography 90 × 60 cm



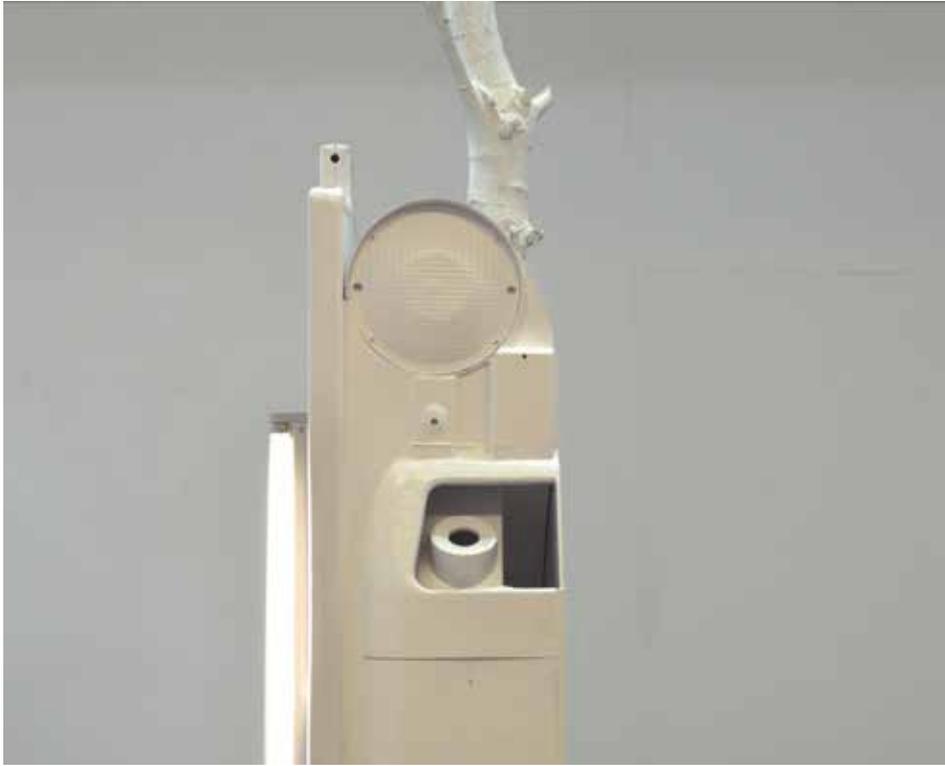
coordinating berlin traces 2015
photographs on dibond, plexiglass, spraypaint, aluminium 149 × 174 cm



a finite slice of infinite space #2 2015
wood, glass, gypsum plates, paint, kapa plast foam, styrofoam, spraypaint, uv protection varnish spray 136 x 136 x 6,5 cm



the immateriality within the effects of time 2015
steel, plexiglass, spraypaint 83 x 90 x 11 cm



as if 2015
installation: fluorescent light, steel, wood, paint, gypsum, plastic, epoxy resin, plexiglass, kappafoam 3d prints, stones size variable



as if 2015
installation: fluorescent light, steel, wood, paint, gypsum, plastic, epoxy resin, plexiglass, kappafoam 3d prints, stones size variable



running 2010–2012
silkscreen, plexiglass, projector, water, nylon ropes, silicone kit 400 × 400 × 400 cm



transition of structures 2015

wood, glass, steel, paint, lack print on paper, mirror, plexiglass, concrete, aluminium 250 x 250 x 250 cm

bram braam

born 1980 in the Netherlands

2005 - 2009

Royal Academy of Fine Arts, Den Bosch, Netherlands

1998 - 2003

Sint Lucas, Communication and Design, Bostel, Netherlands

solo / duo shows (selection)

2016

modern mutants,
galerie burster, Berlin, Germany

2015

Galerie Schwartzsche Villa, Duo Show with Ines Doleschal, Berlin, Germany

The Spectrum of all Colours,
Solo Presentation at Art Rotterdam Fair, Frank Taal Gallery, Netherlands

2014

City of Tomorrow, Import Projects, Berlin, Germany

SEA Foundation, Duo Show with Alex Baams, Tilburg, Netherlands

De Aanschouw, Rotterdam, Netherlands

City of Tomorrow,
Frank Taal Gallery, Rotterdam, Netherlands

2013

From 0 to 0, Duo Show with Radu Oreian, Kreuzberg Pavillon, Berlin, Germany

2012

JungArt, Duo Show with Chris Bierl, Freies Museum, Berlin, Germany

NEXT VISIT, Duo Show with Natalia Stachon, Berlin, Germany

Next Nature, Kaleidoskop Gallery, Berlin, Germany

2009

Louis Hartloper Complex Utrecht, Netherlands

2009

Off Space, during Berlin Art Week, Lage Egal, Berlin, Germany

Self Storage, during Copenhagen Art Week, Another Space, Copenhagen, Denmark

Language & Art, KUNSTHAL, Rotterdam, Netherlands

History is a Warm Gun, N.B.K., Berlin, Germany

2014

If Paradise is Half as Nice 3, Leipzig, Germany

Update, Wiebengahal, Maastricht, Netherlands

EXPOSORIUM IN TRANSIT,

VU art collection, Amsterdam, Netherlands

Kopstukken, House with the Heads, Amsterdam, Netherlands

Insitu, by Another Space, during Art Space Festival Copenhagen, Denmark

2013

P/ART Producers Art Fair, Hamburg, Germany

Macht Kunst, Kunsthalle Deutsche Bank, Berlin, Germany

2012

100 Days in Kassel, Kreuzberg Pavillon, Germany

Point De Vue,
Stedelijk Museum, Den Bosch, Netherlands

BKKG, De Salon, Tilburg, Netherlands

Architecture as Human Nature, Supermarkt, Berlin, Germany

Tape Modern, Berlin, Germany

2011

JungArt Prize, Alte Münze, Berlin, Germany

Euro Land Art,
Landgoed Velden, Netherlands

2010

Human Nature, Seelevel Gallery, Amsterdam, Netherlands

BYTS, Young Talent Show, Den Bosch, Netherlands

2015

Culture Trip: Netherland's Local Favorite Award

2014

Scholarship, Cultural Administration granted by the Senate of Berlin, Germany

Sea Foundation, artist-in-residence, Tilburg, Netherlands

2013

HomeBase Lab, artist-in-residence, Berlin, Germany

working budget,
Mondriaan funding, Netherlands

2011

JungArt Prize, Berlin, Germany

2010

artist-in-residence, Culturia Berlin

2009

Scholarship, BKVB, Netherlands

prizes, grants and residencies

2015

Kunstcollectie UMC Utrecht

Sea Foundation Tilburg

Boghossian Foundation, Brussels

Private collections

2016

galerie burster

**mail@
www.
telefon**

**kurfürstendamm 213
10719 berlin**

**galerieburster.com
galerieburster.com
+49 (0)30 243 34 983**