

AMOS  
Rex

Amos Rex  
Mannerheimintie 22-24  
Helsinki  
amosrex.fi

OPENING HOURS

Mondays 11-20  
Tuesdays closed  
Wednesdays 11-20  
Thursdays 11-20  
Fridays 11-20  
Weekends 11-17



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Amos Rex is a discrimination-free zone.



HANS OP DE BEECK

The Quiet Parade

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# HANS OP DE BEECK The Quiet Parade



Please don't touch  
the artworks.



You may sit on the sofas  
that are marked.



Please stay on the paths, and  
do not step onto the grass.



There are guides on hand in  
the exhibition space.

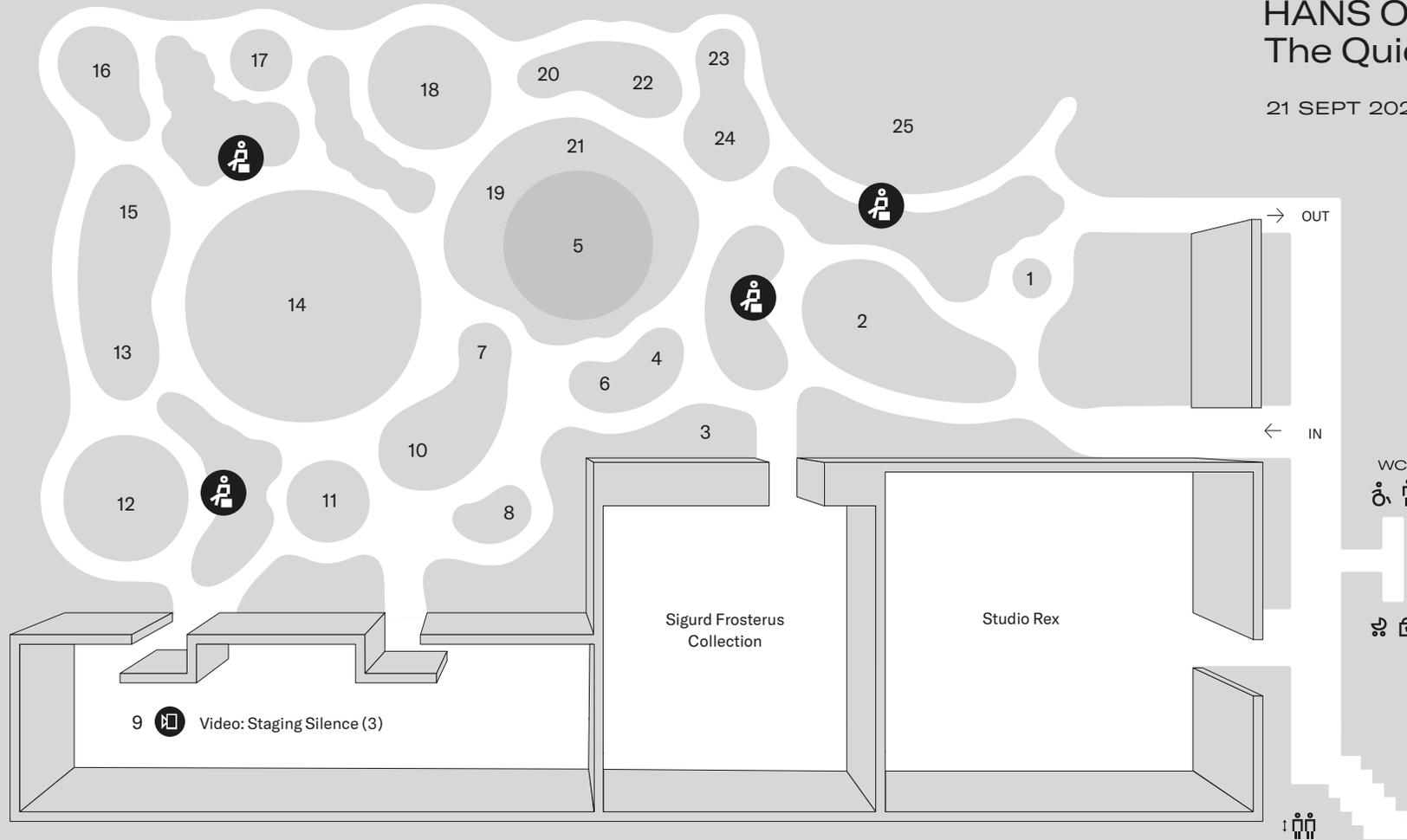


The exhibition features  
a soundscape.



# HANS OP DE BEECK The Quiet Parade

21 SEPT 2022 – 26 FEB 2023



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*A shimmering soap bubble floats high in the air.  
A young boy draws the string on a bow.  
His back straightens and his eyes close  
just before an arrow with a rubber stopper flies.*

*The surface of a black pond reflects an image  
of a raft with a sleeping girl on it,  
as if floating in a dream.  
What kind of world unfolds  
beneath her closed eyes?  
A piano waits silently.  
A roe deer turns.  
All the different shades of the world have  
condensed into grey.*

*Events have a recognisable form,  
but movement has solidified in a moment.  
The nocturnal landscape simultaneously  
combines the familiar and the unknown  
—and on the other hand,  
time, and timelessness.*

These mystical figures and frozen moments are part of the world created by Belgian artist Hans Op de Beeck (b. 1969) at Amos Rex. *The Quiet Parade* is a sculptural mindscape that includes works from 2015–2022 as well as a soundscape composed for the exhibition. The artist invites us to wander in an enigmatic park depicting different stages of life. There is no single correct path or a locked-in way of interpretation. Instead, everyone can approach the works from their own experience. This grey landscape, as if covered by ash, leads us to slow down and reflect inward—to focus on the present moment.

Op de Beeck's art depicts life, its transience and beauty, and on other hand its tragicomedy. The artist, who moves fluidly between various media, says that he navigates somewhere between baroque and minimalist language, spiced with supermarket kitsch aesthetics. His current work, which mostly involves various shades of grey, includes large scale spatial installations as well as paintings, animations, texts, drawings, photographs, videos, opera, and theatre. The artist's sculptures are linked to the classical sculpture tradition and consists of echoes from the real world. They do not depict reality, but rather they are interpretations of it.

Proportional play and allusions to art history are part of the artist's oeuvre. *Danse Macabre*, a work in the centre of the exhibition, refers to the 'dance of death' motif, a familiar metaphor for the universality of death seen in Late Medieval ecclesiastical art. The startling figures on the carousel remind us of the bittersweet parade of life and death. Time and memento mori ('remember that you [have to] die') also serve as essential themes in works

## The Artworks

depicting an oversized piece of cake and still lifes, in which the artist stretches familiar proportions and hence sprains the spatial and bodily experience of the viewer. The works are like scenes from the reality, yet full of surreal possibilities of a dream world where even a tiny blackberry can swell into a giant one.

The soft gradient between illusion and truth is highlighted in the video *Staging Silence (3)*, in which the artist plays with the power of visual illusion. Landscapes are transformed before the viewer's eyes, as pairs of hands reach in from the edges of the image, intervening with the narrative in a surreal manner. The hands repeatedly build and dismantle the scene, as one landscape flows into another in time with a musical score. The work embodies the artist's attempt to create so-called visual fiction that offers moments of wonder and silence.

Op de Beeck lives and works in Brussels. His works have been widely exhibited in solo and group exhibitions around the world—and now for the first time in Finland.

1. TATIANA ( soap bubble )

2017

Polyester, metal, glass,  
lead, coating

48 × 50 × 125 cm

*Tatiana (soap bubble)* is a lifelike image of a girl blowing a soap bubble, concentrated and with her eyes closed. This work belongs to a series of sculptures of children, in which the artist shows the poetry, simplicity and beauty of small, everyday gestures. The bubbles made from hand blown glass seem congealed, frozen in time, as it were. The bubble is a recurring element within the traditions of classical paintings. This is most evident in the conventions of vanitas\* still lifes, where it is used as a metaphor for the brevity of our lives, which can be over in the blink of an eye.

\* Vanitas is Latin, and it means emptiness, futility, or worthlessness. A vanitas is a symbolic work of art showing the transience of life, the futility of pleasure, and the certainty of death.



## 2. THE CLIFF

2019

Steel, concrete, wood,  
polyester, styrofoam, coating  
420 × 940 × 291 cm

*The Cliff* combines the life-sized human figures with a sculpted natural landscape. This monumental sculpture features a couple of 14-year-old teenagers, perched on the edge of a large, rocky cliff. A scrawny boy is holding hands with a girl and staring at her, completely in love. The girl, however, stares into the distance, supposedly towards the horizon of the sea. Her thoughts are transported elsewhere, seemingly not at all engaged with the boy.



### 3. DANCER

2019

Polyester, steel, coating

110.5 × 110 × 146 cm



The life-sized sculpture *Dancer* presents a Brazilian dancer during an 'off' moment. Resigned, and with her eyes closed, she is smoking a cigarette in an old Chesterfield chair, often associated with gentlemen's clubs. Her exuberant clothing, with an impressive crown of plumes, contrasts sharply with the figure of the performer at rest, taking a quiet moment for herself. The sculpture depicts a silenced down cheerfulness.

### 4. TATIANA (butterfly)

2017

Polyester, polyamide,  
copper, coating, wood

79 × 50 × 156 cm



A small butterfly has landed on the index finger of a seated girl who—with eyes closed—seems to intuitively have provided a landing spot for the fragile insect, just in time.

## 5. THE WORKSHOP

2022

Wood, steel, mixed media

ø 780 cm, height 400-800 cm

The artist has used cylindrical volume at the centre of the space as a starting point for this site-specific work. The title *The Workshop* indicates that something is being created in the interior, but the very peculiar wooden building does not exactly set us on the road to understanding what that might be.

The countless small windows, the improvised gutters and many other details seem to testify that the fictitious resident is someone with a do-it-yourself attitude. In many of his works, Op de Beeck likes to give us suggestions of possible private lives behind the facades of houses and invites us to imagine the inhabitants and their stories.



## 6. ROE DEER

2018

Plywood, glass,  
steel, polystyrene,  
polyamide, polyester, plaster  
200 × 110 × 240 cm

This sculpture depicts a young roe deer, turning its head as if it has only just noticed our presence. The animal is frozen in this moment of observing us, with its gaze fixed on the viewer in a way that implies we are intruding on a private scene.

Overall, the sculpture refers to notions of the 'idyllic', and how innocence can be depicted. The blossom tree and roe deer create connotations of fairy tales, and the traditional portrayal of beauty and virtuousness through symbolic figures.



## 7. TIMO

2018

Polyester, wood,  
steel, coating  
80 × 50 × 150 cm



*Timo* doesn't look at us; it seems as if he just closed his eyes for a second, taking a deep breath before shooting an arrow with a rubber stopper. A light and playful act, yet one that demands true concentration and employs a classic pose that contains many references. The artist often names his sculptures by the model's own names, as in this case as well.

## 8. THE CONVERSATION

2019

Wood, polyester, coating  
81 × 83 × 148 cm



In *The Conversation*, we see two orderly, older gentlemen with long beards having a seemingly rather serious conversation with each other. For some absurd reason they are both standing on a small, fragile folding ladder. Yet, they seem to be totally comfortable doing so. Their briefcases are placed on the floor, which suggests that they are both either coming from work, or on their way to it. Are they colleagues, friends, family? What is their conversation about?

## 9. STAGING SILENCE (3)

2019

Black and white video,

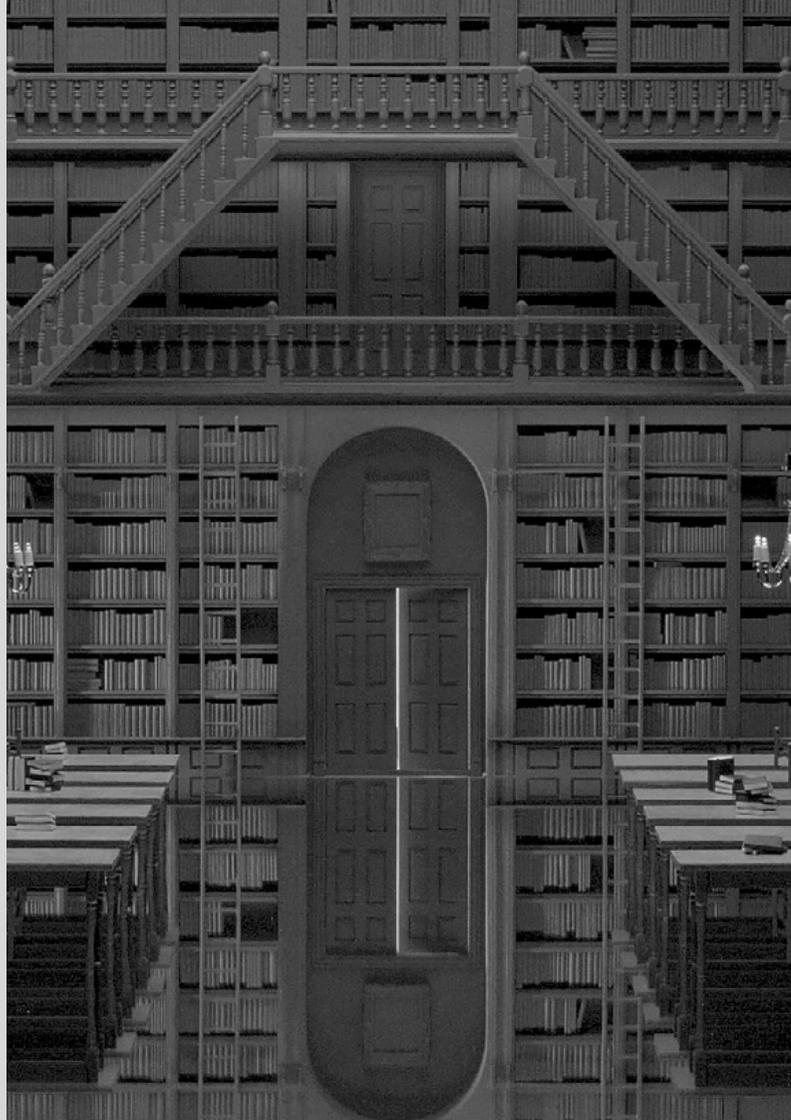
stereo, full HD

Duration 44 minutes

*Staging Silence (3)* takes us on a visual journey through depopulated, enigmatic, often melancholic, but nonetheless playful, small-scaled places, which are built up and taken down before the eye of the camera.

The film is the third and final instalment in a series of three autonomous art films that were all realised according to the same principle. In these films, two pairs of anonymous hands construct and deconstruct fictional interiors and landscapes on a mini-film set of about three-square meters in size. The hands are like a double *Deus ex Machina*\* of sorts, deciding on the life and death, growth and blossoming or decay of the places that are conjured up. The landscapes and interiors are teeming with cultural and subcultural references, including historical as well as current themes that refer to the way in which humans — both in their dealings with architecture and with nature — ‘humanise’ the open space.

\* *Deus ex Machina* is Latin, and it means “God out of the machine”. The term was originally used in an ancient Greek theatre. It is a plot device whereby an unsolvable problem in a story is suddenly and abruptly resolved by an unexpected and unlikely occurrence.



10. BRIAN (rock)

2020

Polyester, glass, coating

94 x 68 x 150 cm



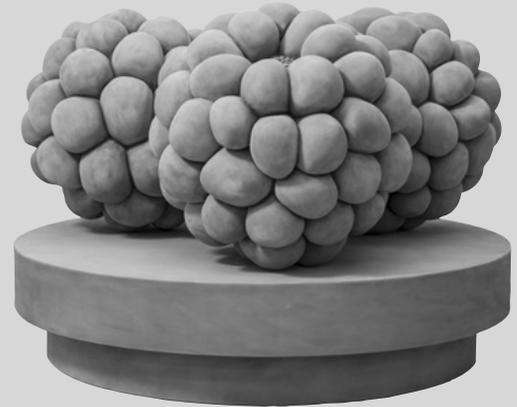
*Brian* sits meditatively, cross-legged on a remarkable rock, holding a crystal sphere, as if divining a mysterious future.

11. BLACKBERRIES

2019

Wood, polyester, coating

200 x 200 x 145 cm



*Blackberries* brings the artist back to his childhood. Op de Beeck has a vivid memory of the stone-walled garden of his parental home, overgrown with wild blackberry bushes. The taste of the blackberry, pure, fair, and summery fresh, symbolises the innocence of childhood and the long days of the future that still lay open. The berry, in triplicate, is depicted outsized, emphasizing the significance of a personal memory, and making it appear disproportionate and absurd as in a dream.

12. MY BED A RAFT, THE ROOM  
THE SEA, AND THEN I LAUGHED  
SOME GLOOM IN ME

2019

Polyester, polyurethane, steel,  
polyamide, epoxy, wood, coating  
400 × 400 × 114 cm

“As a child, I often imagined that my bed was a raft on the water, and the surrounding night-dark bedroom was the sea. When I went to sleep, I retired to my soft raft, with an emergency ration of comic strips, some sweets, and a torch to read with.” — Hans Op de Beeck

The life-sized sculpture depicts a young female figure asleep in her bed which hovers above a raft, which, in turn, is afloat on a lily pond. The floating sensation is commonly associated with the onset of sleep. As the raft has no sail or tiller it is controlled by chance and the natural elements, becoming a fitting metaphor for surrender. By the side of the bed are books, candy, a glass of water and sleeping pills. Butterflies flutter about, emblems of mortality and transience. In ancient Greece they were considered representations of souls.



### 13. SILENT PIANO

2015

Wood, polyester, plaster, coating

155 × 200 × 146 cm

*Silent Piano* is an entirely sculpted monochrome grey grand piano; an unplayable and therefore absurd, silent interpretation of the instrument. On top of the piano is a still life of empty photo frames, books, drinks, candles, fruits, and cigarettes.

Grand pianos often end up silenced and gathering dust in country houses or other bourgeois haunts. They have the same stifled presence as libraries of old books that haven't been opened in a long time. The sound, the music, is left to the imagination.



## 14. DANSE MACABRE

2021

Steel, aluminium, wood,  
polyester, polyamide,  
polyurethane, PVC coated  
nylon, plaster, coating  
950 × 950 × 650 cm

The classic carousel as we still know it today in many variations, is usually a baroque, brightly coloured, sparkling kitsch object that nostalgically refers to the past times when the attraction had little competition from all the fairground commotion we see today.

Op de Beeck considers the merry-go-round as a somewhat absurd and tragicomic staging: we place our children on wooden horses to subsequently let them aimlessly spin in circles. Such fairground objects or constructions, when not or no longer in use, take on a melancholic quality.

*Danse Macabre* is a life-size, monochrome grey sculpture of a fictitious carousel that contains that feeling, appearing as if petrified and inert, stalled, covered in colourless dust or a layer of ashes, if you like. A dream about or a memory of your childhood can be sweet like a radiantly polished merry-go-round but can also be the undressed afterimage of an unprocessed past.



## 15. HAPPY BIRTHDAY

2020

Wood, steel, polyamide,  
polyester, coating

225 × 210 × 105 cm

*Happy Birthday* depicts an oversized piece of a birthday cake on a plate. This monochromatic grey, disproportionately large sculpture appears as a petrified object. To the artist, the birthday cake is the ultimate memento mori\*, a reminder of our mortality that human beings, rather oddly, want to celebrate annually.

\* Memento mori is Latin and it means  
“remember that you (have to) die”.



## 16. THE HORSEMAN

2020

Polyester, steel, polyamide,

brass, coating

215× 92 × 243 cm



The life-size sculpture of a man on a horse presents us with an enigmatic, nomadic horseman, a figure that evokes the lonely traveller of all times, in search of a better life. His companion is a little monkey sitting on his shoulder, holding a parasol in its hand to protect its owner from the sun. The horse carries handy work tools on the flanks and small collections of banal yet also mysterious objects that presumably are of great importance to the traveller.

## 17. STARGAZING

2020

Wood, polyester, epoxy,  
resin, polyamide, steel,  
fibreglass, coating

146.5 × 146.5 × 199.5 cm

*Stargazing* is a sculpture of a rock in the water, on top of which there is a tree with a tree house. From the jetty in the water at the bottom, the viewer can visually follow the spiral movement upwards, consisting of carved steps, tiny wooden bridges and ladders leading to the tree house. The tree house seems like an ideal little place to rest and reflect or to look at the stars. The sculpture fits into the romantic tradition of the small, puny man in relation to the greatness of nature.



## 18. THE BOATMAN

2020

Polyester, steel, wood, MDF,  
epoxy, glass fibre, polyamide,  
synthetic gypsum, coating, reed,  
glass, PU, rubber, bamboo  
400 × 400 × 180 cm

*The Boatman* is a life-size statue of a man on a small rowing boat, seemingly pushing the boat away from a bank. Like the sculpture *The Horseman*, he is a homeless loner, a middle-aged man, halfway through life, always on the move. He has packed his whole life together on the small boat; means of survival, personal belongings, and goods that he can offer for sale or exchange are stacked and tied up in an improvised way.

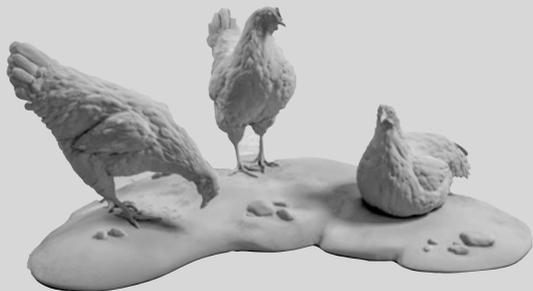


## 19. THE THREE SISTERS

2020

Polyester, steel, coating

112 × 84 × 47 cm



*The Three Sisters* is a life-size sculpture of three chickens: a resting one, an alert looking one and a pecking one. Op de Beeck depicts domesticated animals in an extremely everyday way: unspectacular, small, and poetic. According to the artist, animals that live alongside humans in their everyday simplicity, have a calming and soothing influence on our experience of time.

## 20. LAUREN

2016

Polyester, mixed media

37 × 47 × 124 cm



A young girl, eyes closed, holds a piece of string woven into a geometric figure between her hands; an extremely simple, universal children's game in which the hands must perform a small choreography to create a specific pattern.

## 21. MUM AND DAD

2019

Polyester, wood, coating

42 × 42 × 165 cm



*Mum and Dad* is a half-scale sculpture of an aged couple on the lookout in their dressing gowns, as if something happened on the street at night, and they want to find out what's going on from the doorway. Their body language and facial expressions speak volumes about their age and their relationship.

## 22. VANITAS XL

2021

Polyester, polyurethane,  
metal, polyamide, coating  
approx. 350 × 350 × 290 cm

*Vanitas XL* is a homage to the tradition of the *vanitas*\*, a prominent genre throughout the history of art and painting. In this gigantic larger-than-life blow-up, the artist alludes to his previous, more classical *vanitas* variations. The monochrome still-life sculptures feature commonplace objects, both classic as well as contemporary. Sculptural versions of the human skull, corals, plants, bottles, vases, fruit, drink cans, candlesticks and so on, form uniquely assembled compositions that represent our present environment, certainly, but also remind us of the transitory nature of our human existence.

\* *Vanitas* is Latin, and it means emptiness, futility, or worthlessness. A *vanitas* is a symbolic work of art showing the transience of life, the futility of pleasure, and the certainty of death.



23. TIMO (marbles) (small version)

2019

Polyamide, glass, wood,

steel, coating

40 × 40 × 113 cm



A young boy plays with a set of glass marbles on the ground. He is kneeling and very concentrated, as he keeps his eyes closed for a moment before he shoots a marble from his hand.

## 24. SLEEPING GIRL

2017

Polyester, aluminium, coating

210 × 100 × 76 cm

Sleeping and dreaming are hermetic states invoked by the artist in his figure work. Eyes closed and curled up on a sofa, this sleeping girl submits to dreams, her slumber separating her from the realm of the spectator. The sofa, a classic deep-buttoned Chesterfield, appears larger-than-life and cups the young female in its comfortable hold. Based on the artist's personal experience it captures a blissful moment when a parent watches over their child's sleep. It is the child's body at its most vulnerable, deserving of protection and care, yet at the same time its conscious mind is elsewhere, in a parallel universe.



## 25. THE SETTLEMENT (indoor)

2016

Wood, mixed media

approx. 1300 × 1000 × 400 cm

This seemingly depopulated monochromatic village on poles is a fictional home to a small imaginary community. The details to be discovered in this abandoned place, the rowboats, the watchtower, the fishing nets, the deadwood, can be the beginning of many stories. The research on houses on poles from Vietnam and the Philippines provided inspiration for this quiet settlement on water.

Op de Beeck often stages parallel worlds and likes to describe his images as 'visual fiction', and not as 'fantasy'. He aims to produce and evoke fictive environments that are legible, recognisable, and therefore identifiable and acceptable as a reality: credible imagery, even though the staged spaces are undeniably sculptural translations and interpretations.



In the exhibition, you can follow your intuition and explore the works according to your own mood and interest. However, here are a few tips if you lose your inner sense of direction:

## Wake up!

The works in the exhibition are like moments and characters that are frozen in time. But what if the characters came to life—what would they do? Would they celebrate, chat or try to escape from the museum? What would they say to each other? And what do you think they'd say to you?

Let the artworks lead you. You can come up with your own story for them as you progress through the exhibition.

## What next?

Stop by one of the works for a moment and close your eyes. There's a soundscape in the exhibition, but what else can you hear? The murmur of speech, footsteps, or perhaps silence? Breathe calmly a few times and listen to your surroundings. When you open your eyes, focus your gaze on the first thing you see. What is it? Think about or record five observations.

## Ou's favourites

Ou, who lives in the museum, loves the animals in the exhibition. There are so many different species! How many can you find? Afterwards, you can tell a museum guide how many you've seen. In return, they may tell you how many Ou has found.

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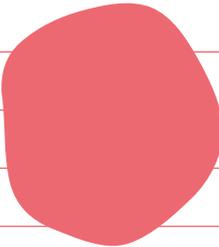
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You can use this page for your own notes or drawings!

# Studio Rex

Studio Rex is the museum's art workshop space where you can pause to look, feel and create—regardless of your relationship to creating art.

In *The Quiet Parade*, you'll encounter an almost monochromatic, i.e. single-coloured world. What if your own everyday life would turn into just one shade, or if the colours didn't behave in the way we're used to?

At Studio Rex you get to explore how losing control over the use of colours can cause limitations, but also generate new creative possibilities.

Pop in during your visit! You can also book an art workshop for your group.

More information about art workshops, guided introductions, and events during the exhibition:  
**amosrex.fi**

# GENERATION 2023

UPCOMING IN 29 MAR – 20 AUG 2023



*Generation 2023* is the third edition of a triennial showcasing the art and visual culture of young artists. The works in the exhibition provide an overview of the multidisciplinary and ever-richer spectrum of the Finnish art scene. They provide a look into young people's personal perceptions of the relationship between humanity and nature, identity and mental health as well as the pandemic era and the role of art in dealing with these difficult topics.

## GENERATION 2023 ARTISTS:

Alfred Aalto, Bayonle Adelakun, Mimmi Ahonen, Robin Berende & Antti Järvelä, Amos Blomqvist, Saikou Ceesay, Katariina Fortuna, Maija Fox, Suvu Haapaniemi, Claudia Hirvonen, Siiri Hänninen & Jon Petterson, Aatos Ketvel, Yoonsik Kim, Aarne Kivelä, Aino Kontinen, Samir Kuronen, Heini Laaksonen, Oona Laitinen, Juho Lehiö, Kuutti Lemmetyinen, Janna Lindfors, Auri Lukkarinen & Iris Kareoja, Axel Lyytikä, Anniina Marjakangas, Kristian Miettinen, Nsambu & Pieski, Emma Oittinen, Veeti Otsamo, Iiris Puustinen, Ilmari Pylvänäinen, Salaado Qasim, Dara Riikonen, Eetu Ronkainen, Johanna Saikkonen, Viivi Saikkonen, Mariia Sennikova, Sofia Sirén, Saga Suni, Karo Tapiovaara, Aino Tillonen, Leevi Toija, Anette Toiviainen, Ida Tomminen, Vertti Turunen, Alina Uura, Juulia Vanhatalo, Karun Verma, Olivia Viitakangas, Ada Vuorinen & Venla Vuorinen, Yu Yue, Rong-Ci Zhang

# HANS OP DE BEECK

## The Quiet Parade

### Artworks and soundscape

Hans Op de Beeck

### Curator

Terhi Tuomi

### GALLERY GUIDE

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Krista Mamia, Terhi Tuomi

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Amos Rex

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#### Photos

© Studio Hans Op de Beeck

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**Flanders**  
State of the Art

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