



Press release

JOKE SCHAUVLIEGE

FLEMISH MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT, NATURE AND CULTURE

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T.O.P. Office wins the Flemish Culture Award for Visual Arts 2012-2013

Today, Flemish Minister for Culture Joke Schauvliege presented the design studio T.O.P. Office of Luc Deleu and Laurette Gillemot with the Flemish Community Award for Visual Arts 2012-2013. The presentation took place during the inauguration of the exhibition 'Three Blind Mice' at the Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens in Deurle. The jury praises T.O.P. Office for their uncompromising attitude, unconventional ideas and self-willed visual language which keeps appealing to new generations of artists, designers and architects. On this occasion, Minister Schauvliege also launched a call for pilot projects for Commissioned Art around the theme 'More than an Object'.

Last year, the centre for art and architecture Stroom Den Haag organised an exhibition on Luc Deleu - T.O.P. Office's long-term research project entitled 'Orban Space'. The timing is no coincidence. His ideas about urban living, consuming less and architecture on a global scale (not urbanism, but 'orbanism') are embraced by new generations today. It is not about urban planning, but about creating a new world image. In doing so, generating ideas is just as important as realising them.

In 1970, immediately after his studies, Luc Deleu founded T.O.P. Office, together with his wife Laurette Gillemot. Since then, this self-willed design office has been exploring the boundaries of visual arts, architecture and urbanism, comfortably blending artistic and design practice and fundamental research. Their concepts and projects are highly varied and range from texts and drawings to plans and digital simulations and to actual interventions, both in the world of art and in public space. Still, their oeuvre is not a mishmash. It clearly shows great consistency and coherence.

Deleu and Gillemot have not forgotten their roots: the critical and creative spirit of 1968 is never far away. From a very early stage onwards, they started to question ecological, economic and social aberrations. This criticism now sounds more relevant than ever. They have created for themselves and their co-workers an uncomfortable, yet inspiring 'sanctuary' in the no-man's-land between visual arts, architecture and urban planning. From this position they critically challenge both the artistic world and the world of architecture. Not like preachers or do-gooders, but by peppering their projects with humour and irony, which points to a healthy sense of (self-)perspective. Still, the smile does not wipe out reflection. Viewers are absorbed by the rich ideas of T.O.P. Office, which make them reflect on today's relevant issues.

Flemish Minister for Culture Joke Schauvliege said: "T.O.P. Office ties fantasy to inventiveness. With unorthodox designs and projects Luc Deleu and Laurette Gillemot succeed in creating intractable eye-catchers at the interface between art and landscape."

Three Blind Mice: Dan Colen, Nate Lowman & Rob Pruitt (02.02 – 23.03.2014)

The Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens gathers the work of three American artists who live and work in New York. Although these artists do not belong to the same generation they all base their work in their own individual way on the heritage of American art. Their work is both iconoclastic and a witness to the history of art. It is the first time that the work of these artists can be seen in a Belgian museum. With an annual group exhibition the museum explores the contemporary tendencies in the international art scene.

More information is available at www.museumdd.be.

Culture Awards Flanders 2012 -2013

A jury of experts pays tribute to individuals or an organisation that in the course of the past season made a notable contribution to cultural life in Flanders. The Flemish Culture Awards create public awareness of the laureate at a major event in the sector, which generates attention and appreciation for both the sector and the winner.

A cash prize of €12,500 is connected to the Culture Award. The Government of Flanders sets aside €20,000 for the Flemish Community Award for General Cultural Achievement. Each laureate receives the bronze statuette 'La ultima isla' by Philip Aguirre.

More information is available at: www.cultuurprijzen.be and www.vlaanderen.be/cultuurprijzen.