

# ARTFORUM

## CCA WATTIS INSTITUTE FOR CONTEMPORARY ARTS

### SAN FRANCISCO

Through April 18

Curated by Anthony Huberman

In Jos de Gruyter and Harald Thys's unnerving, darkly comic videos, characters sit mutely, assault one another, or comment glumly on unsatisfactory vacation experiences. These low-watt individuals could have produced the artists' intentionally pedestrian drawings, depictions of sex scenes, urban views, vehicles, dinosaurs, etc., which feel similarly blank. The Belgian pair's first US exhibition presents a new video, a work composed for organ (to be performed in a local cathedral), and steel sculptures elaborating on their earlier *White Elements*, 2012–, masklike white physio-gnomies (and functioning fountains) that could be public sculpture in Thys and de Gruyter's world. Yet this art suggests that its emotional evacuations might be elective, a means of escaping a confining state apparatus via comfortable numbness. Therein—sidestepping liberal pieties, approving self-hobbling—lies its real challenge. *Travels to MoMA PS1, New York, May 3–Aug. 30.*

— *Martin Herbert*