

Contemporary Art Daily

A Daily Journal of International Exhibitions

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Jos de Gruyter and Harald Thys at Wattis

April 8th, 2015



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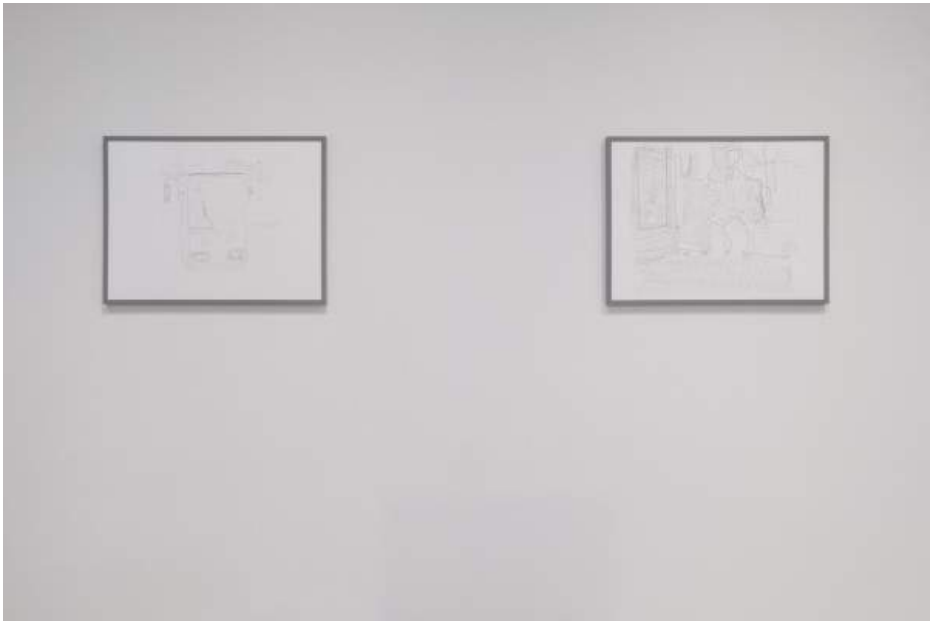
Exhibition Title: Tram 3

Date: January 21 – April 18, 2015

Note: The text associated with this exhibition is available [here](#).

[Click here to view slideshow](#)



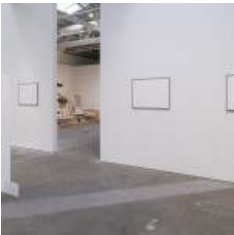


Full gallery of video, images, press release and link available after the jump.

Video:

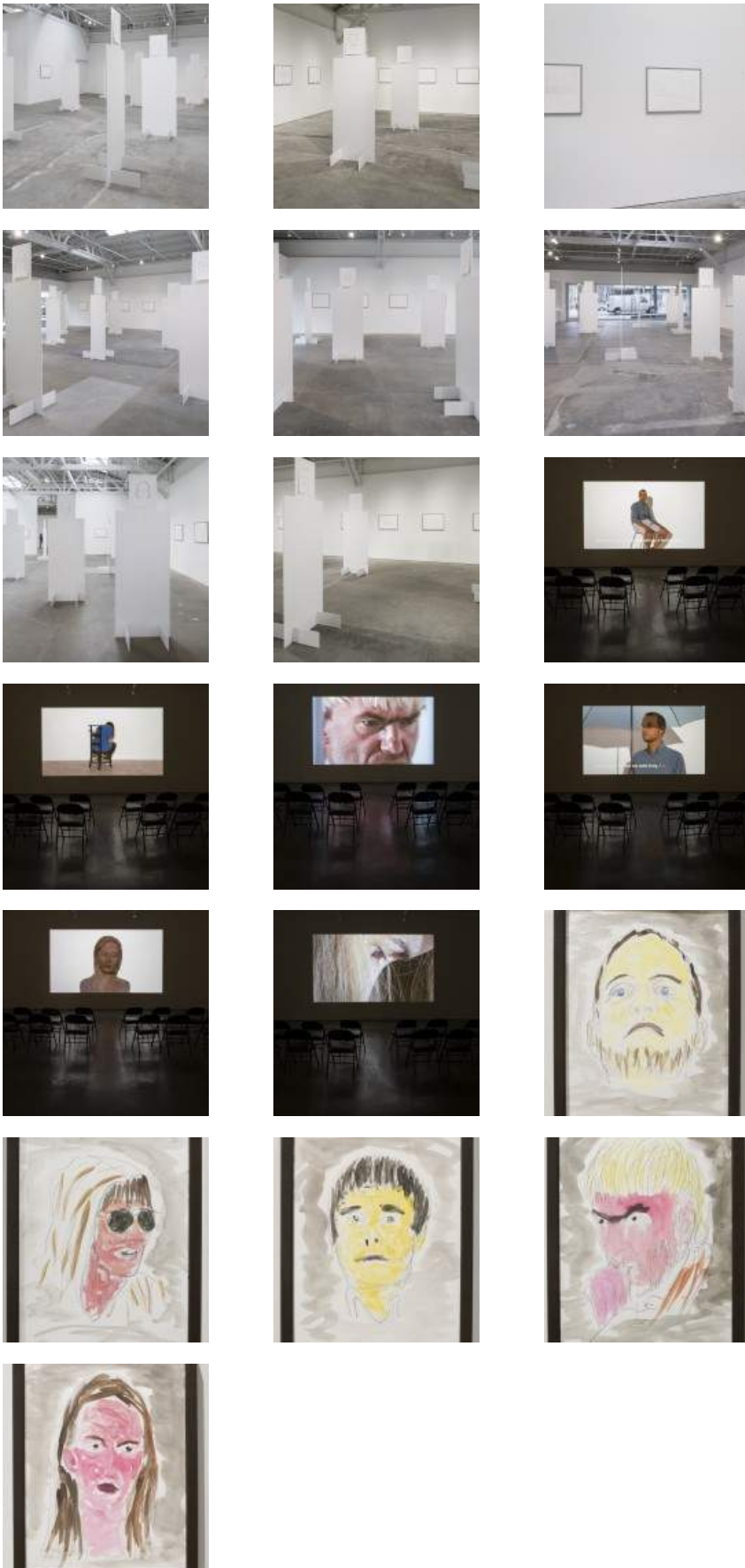
Documentation of Erik Thys performing his organ piece at Saint Mary’s Cathedral in San Francisco, 2015, 39.38 min.

Images:









Video and images courtesy of Wattis, San Francisco. Photos by Johnna Arnold.

Press Release:

The collaborative works of de Gruyter and Thys are rooted in tragedy, comedy, and silence. Their videos, drawings, photographs, and sculptures are deadpan: funny and blank at the same

time. The artists engage a recurring cast of nonprofessional actors as well as invented or adopted characters, ranging from puppets to dummies, plush animals, makeshift robots, and rejected toys, who rehearse power dynamics and emotional entanglements. Their dark humor creates perverse caricatures of a world that is not unlike our own.

The sculptures in this presentation are new versions of *The White Elements* (originally 2013), each part statue and part stick figure. Despite being made of steel, they resemble pixelated forms, as if extracted from an outdated video game. Pencil drawings of faces—traced from anonymous images found online—are pinned to the top of each one. The 25 drawings, all titled *Public Transport*, depicting trams or trolley cars, are also traced from images found online. The video, *Die aap van Bloemfontein* (*The Ape from Bloemfontein*, 2014), features a group of static figures in a bare set of blank but colorful walls. Speaking in Afrikaans, a computerized voice narrates a story of impossible and exuberant transformations—a computer becoming a lawnmower becoming a television, for example—with deadpan indifference.

Jos de Gruyter and Harald Thys are based in Brussels and have been working together since the mid-1980s. Their work has been widely exhibited, including solo shows at Le Plateau, Paris; Kunsthalle Basel, Switzerland; Culturgest, Lisbon; Kestnargesellschaft, Hannover, Germany; Mu.ZEE Oostende, Belgium; MuHKA, Antwerp, Belgium; and Kunsthalle Vienna. Their work has been included in the Berlin Biennale and the Venice Biennale. In fall 2015, they will have a major solo exhibition at Raven Row, London.

Link: [Jos de Gruyter and Harald Thys at Wattis](#)