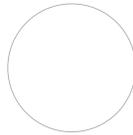


**NICK ERVINCK GNI-RI 2006**

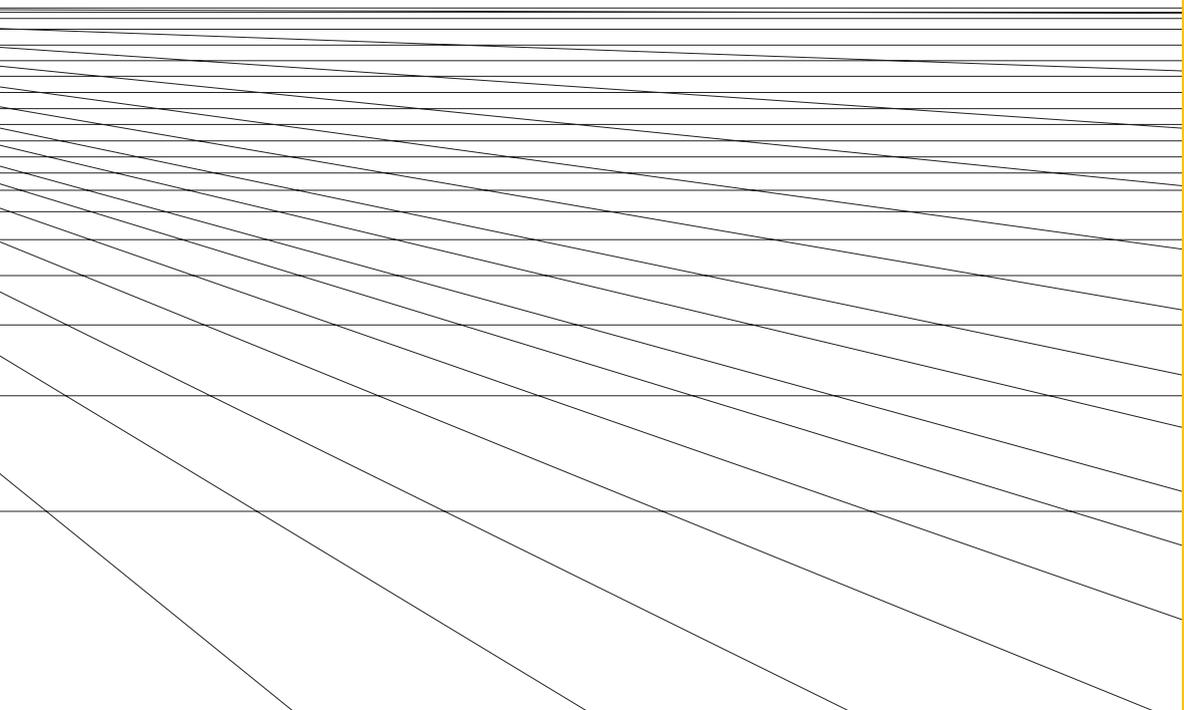
Studies 2004-2006



DVD video / PAL / 2006

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[www.nickervinck.com](http://www.nickervinck.com)





GNI W A JAN03 83.JPG



GNI W A MAR03 109.JPG



GNI W A APR03 7.JPG



GNI W A AMO 03 26.JPG



GNI W R 04 KHL 45.JPG



GNI W A ELU 05 16.JPG



GNI W A ELU 05 18.JPG



GNI W R FLA 05 122.JPG



GNI W R FLA 05 28.JPG



GNI W R FLA 05 78.JPG



GNI W A 05 39.JPG



GNI W A XOS 05 10.JPG



GNI W A 05 25.JPG



GNI W A ETY 05 06.JPG



GNI W A ETY 05 12.JPG



GNI W A ETY 05 48.JPG



GNI W A ETY 05 110.JPG



GNI W A ETY 05 06.JPG



GNI W R IER 05 12.JPG



GNI W A 05 48.JPG



GNI W A SAL 06 07.JPG



GNI W A SAL 06 02.JPG



GNI W A 06 9.JPG



GNI W A 06 22.JPG



GNI W A STU 06 76.JPG



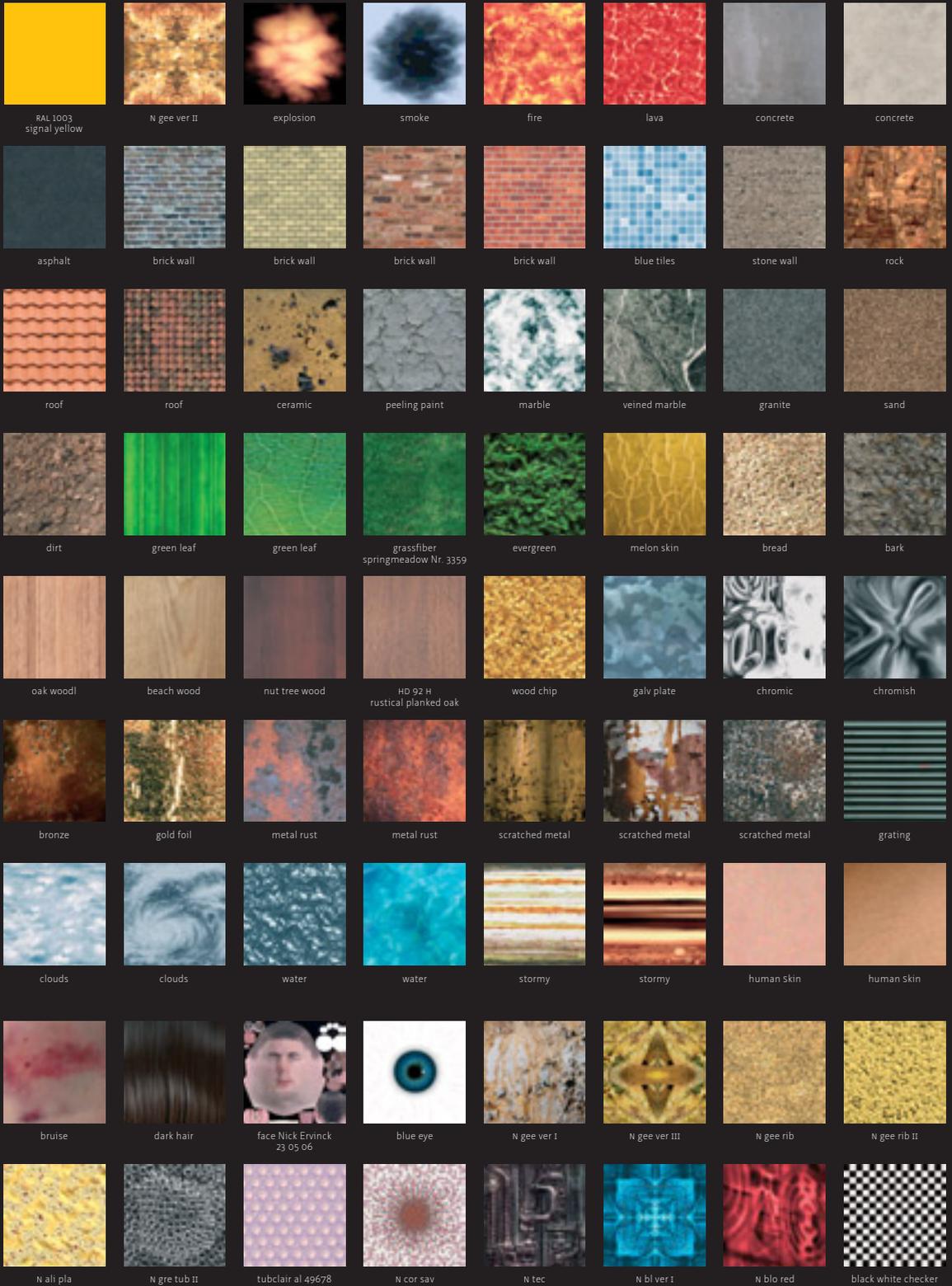
GNI W A STU 06 17.JPG

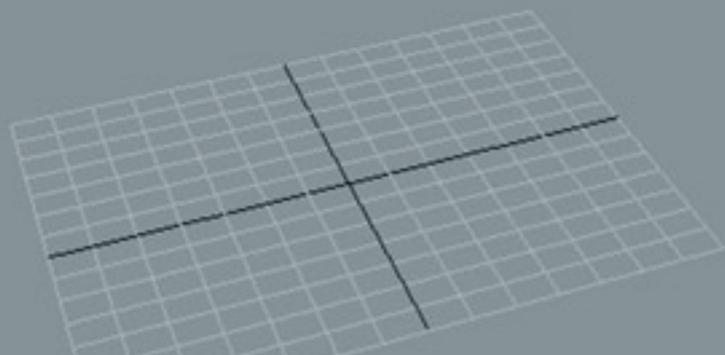
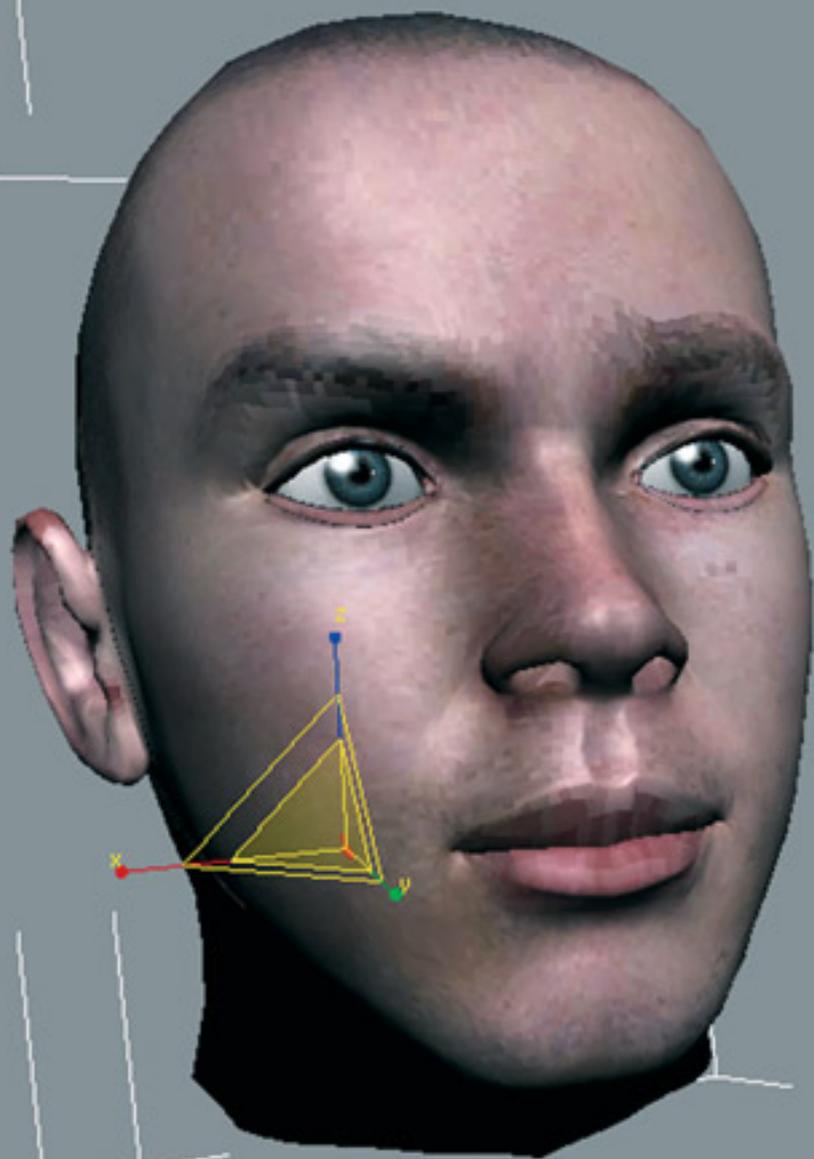


GNI W A 06 12.JPG



GNI W A STU 06 58.JPG







NICK ERVINCK GNI-RI 2006

KORAALBERG



## CONTENTS

 GNI\_RI\_2006\_CAT\_009

Muriel Andrin

*Mnemosyne* in motion

Nick Ervinck's archiving of the mind

 GNI\_RI\_2006\_CAT\_015

Sabine Dorscheid

Recognition-signs, word-signs, Passwords, Solutions

 GNI\_RI\_2006\_CAT\_021

Guy Bovyn

Plastic thinking and the plasticity of the mind

 GNI\_RI\_2006\_CAT\_029

... / ... / ... / DRAFTS

 GNI\_RI\_2006\_CAT\_035

Interview with Nick Ervinck by Phillipe van Cauteren

A Director of hybrid Worlds

 GNI\_RI\_2006\_CAT\_045

... / ... / ... / PRINTS

 GNI\_RI\_2006\_CAT\_055

... / ... / ... / VIDEO STILLS

 GNI\_RI\_2006\_CAT\_063

... / ... / ... / DRAW\_SCULP\_EXHB

 GNI\_RI\_2006\_CAT\_083

... / ... / ... / TRANSLATIONS-VERTALINGEN

 GNI\_RI\_2006\_CAT\_101

Biography

 GNI\_RI\_2006\_CAT\_105

Author Biographies

 GNI\_RI\_2006\_CAT\_107

Credits



# Mnemosyne in motion

Nick Ervinck's archiving of the mind

«Quand j'étais jeune, j'ai visité les musées du monde entier. De toutes sortes, allant du national, énorme, dont trois jours de visite ne viennent pas à bout, au cabanon bricolé par un vieillard obstiné à seule fin de rassembler des outils agricoles. Mais je n'ai été satisfaite d'aucun. Ce ne sont que des débarras. Ils ne révèlent aucune trace de la passion qui mène à faire une offrande aux déesses de la sagesse. Ce que je vise, c'est un musée qui transcende l'existence humaine.»

YOKO OGAWA – Le musée du silence

From 1924 to 1929, the year of his death, Aby Warburg worked on an atlas which would be the synthesis of a life-long dedication to research aimed at establishing the connections between images from all origins and times, with the aid of a subtle and well thought-out *montage*; «D'un coup se révélait une forme qui n'était pas seulement à ses yeux, un 'résumé en images' mais une *pensée par images*. Pas seulement un 'aide-mémoire', mais *une mémoire au travail*.»<sup>\*</sup> The atlas, never finalised, was to be called Mnemosyne, in homage to the Greek goddess representing memory.

<sup>\*</sup> Georges Didi-Huberman, *L'image survivante – Histoire de l'art et temps des fantômes selon Aby Warburg*, Paris, Les Éditions de Minuit, 2002, p.452.

Confronted with Nick Ervinck's works of art, our first reaction is to find similar images of objects, spaces, movements, combinations of the same materials, which would belong to our own memory and make their strangeness appear safe. But, despite our efforts, we quickly have to admit, and surrender, to their uniqueness and to the fact that Ervinck's work is attempting the extreme or the impossible: the building of a brand new memory of a world – its own *Mnemosyne*. The cryptic names of the sculptures, prints and installations confirm this feeling of a new and self-sufficient world with its own logical schemes and rules. The comparison of the young artist with an all-powerful and commanding figure is tempting, almost immediate and spontaneous. It becomes even more obvious if we take into consideration the fact that Ervinck spent a part of his youth constructing worlds with LEGO cubes, therefore shut off from immediate reality in an obsessive state, playing so-called 'god-like'



Screenprint from Simcity 2000 (detail)



GNI-RI jan2003, 2003  
Mixed Media, 80 m<sup>2</sup> (variable placing)  
Exhibition view installation CC scharpoord Knokke, 2003

\* from the text 'IEBANULK' by  
Christophe De Jaeger, Ghent,  
April 2006

video games as Simcity, Settlers, Warcraft, 'acting as an almighty creator'

The duality between real-life and virtual constructions is already present in these early age games where the omniscient power of organising life is clear; it will remain, develop and structure the artist's way of creating his own world, no longer dependent on previous data.

One element of Ervinck's uniqueness seems to come from an apparently natural ability to understand, assimilate and use the specificity of each means, of both digital and 'real life' creation; hybridity, or even more appropriately, 'syncretism', comes naturally as it does in other artistic forms, and Ervinck combines impossible shapes of wood or clay sculpture and digital rendering in coherent compositions (for instance, the amazing *ARCHISCUPTV* 2004-2006 [p. 13] or *XOBBEKOPS* 2004-2006 [p.69]). In this syncretic process, no means is considered or perceived by the viewer as inferior to the other. If the vision of a coherent and assimilated world is here engendered, it does not undermine the specificity of all the different media that co-exist in magical 'organic' œuvres. Each medium remains autonomous, but, paradoxically, also works together with the other mediums and with the other works of art, in order to disclose new configurations, made of alliances and hostilities, but also, at the end, a complex and meaningful ensemble. It is moreover plainly obvious that Ervinck creates with the same importance each piece of its world, whatever they are made of (video, digital prints, drawings, painted plaster or polyester sculptures), whether virtual or handmade. Indeed, what also matters is the global configuration of the world itself (whether in prints or in real-life settings of galleries), in which each piece has a part in its interaction with the others and with the space itself; autonomous objects exist (like the series of small sculptures, *OSTOR*, nov 2002 to *GARFINOTAY*, 2003-2005) but many of the items created participate in



OSTOR, 2003  
Ceramic, wood, styrofoam, plaster, calk and gauze  
40 x 140 x 30 cm



GARFINOTAY, 2003-2005  
Plastic, cardboard, plaster, calk, gauze and grassfiber  
47 x 49 x 44 cm

group compositions (like in C-prints *GNI\_D\_GH\_44b\_DEC2003*, 2003 [p.57] OR *GNI\_D\_GH\_73\_DEC2003*, 2003 or the installation for *Sugar-free* in Aalst, 2005 [p.12]). Ervinck plays with the idea of the archive, but also of the museum or of the universe itself in which each thing has to find a particular, defining and significant place.

But what makes Ervinck's almost autistic work even more interesting is its continuous changing. Ervinck's work evolution resonates like a human being's linguistic development. At first, it was self-assured and protected in its completely subjective language, made of works that were self-explanatory and autonomous without referring to any known reality (*ARHCISULPT* or *XOBBEKOPS* again). It evolved in a very subtle way, subjected to the external symbolic urge, integrating known shapes and objects but never losing sight of its own peculiar and unique identity. Hence the creation of *IEBANULK* 2004-2006 [p.74], combining the known forms of a boat and that of a church but in an altogether unique and surprising composition, or *IENULKAR* 2004-2006 [p.79], an impressive wooden church/boat sculpture. The hybrid material nature of its previous works is here displaced or extended in the objects confronted, and in the final known/unknown objects confrontation. New objects, like new words, appear and extend the world set in place, like in a Darwinian evolution pattern. Even the meta-dimension is integrated in the process; the visual deconstruction of some pieces into schemas, numbers, scales and environment proposals allows the necessary distance from a metadiscourse on the works themselves (like in C-print *GNI\_S\_WT\_10\_JUL2005* [p.64], 2005 or *GNI\_S\_WT\_09\_MAR2005*, 2005 [p.67]).

The combination of known objects in strange and new propositions is not the only sign of linguistic development and Darwinian evolution; the



ARCHISCULPT I, 2005

Wood, formica, chardboard, plaster, chalk and gaze  
130 x 165 x 100 cm



Exhibition view: Sugar Free, Network – Aalst, B, 2005

KADRIKET,2004, ARCHISCULPT II,2005, GNI\_S\_WT\_05 JAN2005, GNI\_S\_WT\_01 JAN2005,  
GNI\_S\_WT\_04 JAN2005 and GNI\_S\_WT\_03 JAN2005

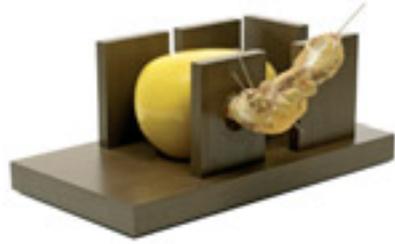
new handling of movement brings an altogether new dimension to the whole project. Other artists have already played on images of technologically transformed organisms, like Dieter Huber, William Latham or Karl Sims; their digitally elaborated worlds had many familiar traits with our own realm of objects and shapes, which is not the case with Ervinck's imaginary forms. The fixed objects of previously shaped sculptures or petrified representations in prints find a life principle in their animated forms; we are witnesses to their actual birth and metamorphosis, revealed to us by the images in motion. When brought to life, uniqueness no longer belongs to the unknown but in the always evolving changes of the matter, a relentless and fast-growing, de-multiplying, fragmented and expanding matter, appearing and disappearing in front of our eyes. Fascination grows from this perpetual movement, this 'mouvement protensif' which, as Roland Barthes wrote,<sup>\*</sup> denies the melancholic quality of the fixed photography or, in this case, prints and sculptures; but fascination grows also from the literal breathing of the forms which, even if they remain yet unknown to our collective minds, acquire very human characteristics.

\* Roland Barthes, *La chambre claire – Note sur la photographie*, Paris, Gallimard, Le Seuil, 1980, p.140.

The confrontation of the virtual sculptures set in motion and the actual hand-made works also brings us back to well-known cinematic narratives like *The Matrix* trilogy, Mamoru Oshii's *Avalon*, Tarsem Singh's *The Cell* or even, at a more complex level, David Cronenberg's *eXistenZ*, in which a 'real' world co-exists and interacts with one or even several virtual universes creating multiple kinds of interactions. What we discover in those films, as in Ervinck's work, is that the two worlds do not live autonomously but are defined and delimited by their perpetual confrontation with each other. But, unlike those films, Ervinck's dual world is not confronting a 'real world' [based on our own reality] to a 'virtual



Exhibition view, GNI-RI feb2005, Kc nOna's nOva, Mechelen, B, 2005  
 CAGESCULPT I, 2005, ILLUSCULPT I, 2005



ARCHISCULPT V, 2005  
 Wood, polyester, styrofoam, plaster, chalk, polyurethane and gauze  
 104 x 185 x 142 cm

\* Roland Barthes, *La chambre claire – Note sur la photographie*, Paris, Gallimard, Le Seuil, 1980, p. 140.

one' [an imaginary one]. By creating syncretic sculptures, prints or installations, Ervinck perfectly illustrates Jean Baudrillard's conception of simulacra and simulation, 'La simulation n'est plus celle d'un territoire, d'un être référentiel, d'une substance. Elle est la génération par des modèles d'un réel sans origine ni réalité; hyperréel. Le territoire ne précède plus la carte, ni ne lui survit.'\* The absence of the referent here is obvious; Ervinck's world finds its own ways of emerging and existing, any connection with our own world being strangely remote or most of the times clearly avoided.

This passage by the image in motion is essential because it also echoes the impression of the dynamic quality of his work, either sculpture, print or animation, which captivates the viewer immediately; Ervinck's strange world, even if practically deprived of human presence, only half implies the fossilised nature of the *Mnemosyne*, or a post-apocalyptic feeling. Its materially hybrid nature (wood, polyester, paper, plastic, moving images, etc.) denotes the world's active confrontation principle. It becomes alive to our contact and our vision, watching us – as George Didi-Huberman – from its own perspective, with its own (and invisible to us) eyes. One wonders of course what will be the evolutionary curve of this universe since Ervinck explains himself that combination of shapes, material, space 'are all elementary parts of the story, all carefully considered. Even the smallest shift makes one question everything again' \*.

\* from the text 'Nick Ervinck 2003-2005' by Nick Ervinck, Kortemark, april 2003 – 2005



# Recognition-signs, word-signs, Passwords, Solutions\*

\* Note of the translator: the original title reads 'Wahrzeichen, Wortzeichen, Losungen, Lösungen'. I choose to translate 'Wahrzeichen' with recognition-sign, instead of the more commonsense translation of 'symbol'. As shown in the title, the author plays a game of words. In the text itself an etymological trick is undertaken too. Both of which would be lost in the more commonsense translation. The same goes for the strange word 'word-sign', this translates though a word, 'Wortzeichen', that is a creation of the author.

In recent years the representation of the model has become disproportionate in the Arts. This devotion of the artist to these 'model-sculptures' is connected to parallel developments in industrial manufacturing and the enhanced possibilities in Virtual Simulation. This thrust of technology in physics, engineering, architecture, design and industry are not linearly related to the growing number of *art-models* – this would imply that the artist uses the new technologies to an ever greater extent. In actual fact what we are dealing with is a complex causal principle. Both the developments of technological innovation and the flood of models produced in the visual arts are indirectly related to each other. Fundamental changes in everyday production have resulted in an almost complete extinction of handmade models. The 'freed' genre of the model could therefore be redefined by art – the model as a sanctuary for thought. The multiple qualities of the model that have been 'banalised' by a hundred years of industrial production are once again beginning to regain centre stage in the arts. The instrumentalized models were till now mostly seen as a pre-phase or an 'in between' phase, always referring to something bigger, more perfect and more useful. To a great extent this direct structure of reference has been deconstructed, with the result that the model has been able to become an art form in its own right.

The handmade model has been replaced by its virtual successor in the everyday production process. Even end-products can now increasingly be manufactured thanks to 'rapid prototyping': with 3D-plotting a collection of digital data is all that is needed to be able to produce an object. This process will also have a bearing on our living room in the near future. Neil Gerschenfield (MIT) described this phenomenon in his 2005 publication 'FAB – The Coming Revolution on Your Desktop – From Personal Computers to Personal Fabrication': The 3D-printer will appear on our writing desks as the standard printer does nowadays. This kind of hardware is already obtainable for 20.000 USD.

Many engineers have already left behind the field of the traditional model. As in the case of abandoned neighbourhoods, where after a period of standing vacant the process of *Gentrification* can set in, for the



Sint Petersburg pier in Florida



ETEBNOZAY, 2005  
Mixed media, 270 x 329 x 180 cm  
Exhibition view. Filiaal van de hemel, Stedelijk Museum – Lokeren, B, 2006

model it now comes down to a creative transformation of the open structure. The different roles in which models can work are being utilized by artists. Roles that were always part of the model (analyses, reflection, vision etc.), but that were not on the foreground in the industrial operating process so far. This bandwidth is now being played by the great quantity of new *art-models*, with the effect that the new genre of models is far from homogenous. Only the increased presence of the model and the revolution that took place can be seen as connected phenomena. The survey-exhibition *post\_modellismus* (Wien Krinzinger Projekte; Bergen Kunsthalle)\* in 2005 illustrated this new phenomenon and arranges it in a historical order.

\* Exposition-catalogue: Sabine Dorscheid, Krinzinger Projekte (Hrsg.): *post\_modellismus*. Wien 2005. ISBN: 3200005416

Nick Ervinck is one such new model-artist. He creates landmarks and recognition-signs that do not aim for a spot within the city panorama, but he reflects upon the socio-structural use of city-, landscape and space markings with his models.

Who does not think of projected airport terminals or existing architecture, like the St.Petersburgpier in Florida, when looking at Ervinck's *ETEBNOZOY*, 2005? To an ever greater extent recognition-signs of cities have become marketing tools. Industrial landscapes have been transformed by artists and striking investors' architectures will appear even more profitable thanks to star architects. Municipalities are impotent in acting against these trends because of empty coffers and show themselves delighted that without any public financial engagement new signs of recognition are created.

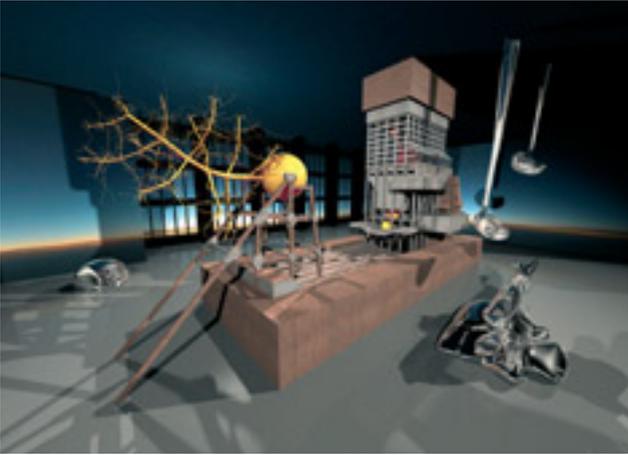


National and university library in Pristina, Kosovo

XOBBEKOPS, 2004-2006  
Wood and polyester  
120 x 156 x 100 cm

The word recognition-sign has consequentially lost its original meaning, since these contemporary landmarks are of transient nature and disappear when the substance of construction has been exploited. These quickly-placed signs are seldom real. The recognition-sign used to be a word-sign, a kind of password, by which wandering fellows could prove that they had been at these different places. Nick Ervinck makes these imagined recognition-signs mobile, for instance, by putting the Cluny Abbey on an enormous ship which – in a play of imagination – is put in Florence where the cathedral resides as a recognition-sign in reality. Another of his works, in which the contours of the continents rise as sculptured forms, makes one think of the artificial islands off the coast of Dubai that are being constructed in such a way that they will form a miniature world.

Ervinck's computer simulations show marvellous constructions that are built up out of 'real' materials and purely virtual elements, while also feature, as an encore, the astonished observer at the same time. On his plotted presentation boards a simulated human-being reflects, as apparent reference point, upon the inconceivability of that which is represented before him. When for instance an opened, big brick building shows as its interior content only a huge egg-shaped structure, the featured individual joins us in astonishment, but creates additional distance at the same time. Though we identify ourselves with the alienation as the presented emotion, we, on the other hand, look as if it concerned an unknown cosmos, if it were inhabitants that might follow other rules, while at the same time they seem to resemble us to a large extent. It's an illusionary world that shows us how much our own world is an illusive one too. We create that illusion. The illusion, the image, the landmark



GNI\_D\_GH\_50\_APR2005, 2005  
 C-print mounted on pvc  
 80 x 115 cm, framed 104 x 139 cm



Ministry of Transportation, 2003

becomes reality, and this phenomenon astonishes us. Nowadays, the London Eye is considered as a point of orientation as much as Westminster.

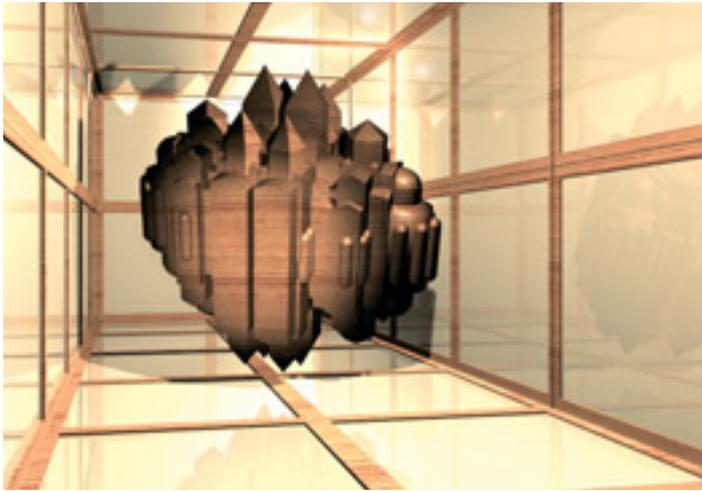
The opposition between the conventional architectural model (box) and the virtual designs (blob)\* pervades the works of Ervinck. He chooses a third way: to synthesise both. Most architects are adherents of the one or the other school of design. Only a few, such as Wil Alsop\*, choose hybrid design methods. Alsop made a cult out of his approach by conceiving of his buildings through painting, thereafter letting his assistants translate them into a somewhat convertible architecture-language. This method has been termed, somewhat ironically, *to alsop* in English.

With his middle way, Nick Ervinck serves the longing for the recognizable monumental, which he combines with familiar elements. He takes the observer on a journey through pictorial systems of signs. Capitalism has extremely accelerated the production of signs and meanings. Signs are carriers of meaning. We live in a world in which the creation of value is an essential practice of economic and social life. The way Nick Ervinck produces signs is a mirror for our everyday sign machines of industry and investors.

All 'real' buildings, which can be compared to Ervinck's sculptures, are landmarks of an extraordinary kind. They mix tastelessness with boldness and tend to give the impression of being outside of time. They give an oddly antiquated impression in their apparent modernity. They are bygone, lightly utopian designs that are, however, always enclosed in their time of origin and easy to date. They have the appeal of an amphibic vehicle that surprises the consumer over and over again with its finesse, but that could never convince most of them to actually want to possess it.

\* See the thematic issue of arch+ „Von der Box zum Blob und wieder zurück“, 1999, Bd. 148

\* [www.alsoparchitects.com](http://www.alsoparchitects.com)



GNI\_D\_GH\_CLU29\_SEP2004, 2004  
C-print mounted on pvc  
80 x 110 cm, framed 104 x 134 cm

The amalgamation of different categories has a staggering, sometimes confusing effect. The unknown, the unseen, is built up from familiar elements and, because of that, seems to astonish us more than the atomic models of abstractions which are incomprehensible to our average intellect. It is the amphibic vehicle that shows us that theoretically all options are open. Creation is possible, even though the practical worth might be less than expected.

The human-being still has to understand that it may not be able to grasp everything, therewith astonishment arises, otherwise disinterest. Insofar something populist clings to astonishment, since it is only a semi-understanding, a propagating. In this sense, the work *GNI\_D\_GH\_CLU29\_SEP2004* makes us think of the theory of the Geomantics. This semi-science, that falls within the range of the esoteric and is concerned with earth radiation and -forces, tries to make invisible relations of force intelligible through physical explanations. A favourite area of research for the Geomantics is the quest for models to explain why historical spiritual buildings have been built at a specific place. In relation to Gothic cathedrals in particular it is often asserted that the outer forms of the buildings are copies on the earth's surface of subterranean lines of force. The duplication of what is on this side as a counterbalance to the invisible subterranean is a fitting anecdote to the work of Nick Ervinck, which is itself not at all meant in that way. The possibility of this interpretation proves how re-chargeable, open and undefined sign systems are.



# Plastic thinking and the plasticity of the mind

The idea that an artist is endowed with a divine power to create is not a new one. From the Renaissance through Romanticism and the twentieth century's avant-garde movements, artists have been ascribed the unusual gift (of being able) to create new worlds.\* Therefore it shouldn't come as a surprise that a young and ambitious artist like Nick Ervinck embraces such idea. However, his inspiration doesn't stay confined to the limits of art history's official canon. Being a product of his time, he also draws on today's computer games culture. He acknowledges that the way code writers like Robyn Miller (*Myst*) have succeeded in creating completely new worlds is one of his sources of inspiration. What distinguishes Nick Ervinck from these 'games designers' – questions of artistic intentions aside – is his explicit ambition to also have an impact on our physical world and its diverse (social and cultural) spaces. By giving impulse to a new perception of our world, he wants to 'actually' intervene in that world. According to the artist himself, this can be achieved by presenting the viewer with *possible* worlds.

\* MUL, Jos de, *Cyberspace Odyssee*, Kampen, Klement, 2005, p. 187

To create a new world some kind of technology is needed. Those who focus on the possible world of tomorrow and are willing to meet the increasing demand for performance, which even the contemporary artist cannot escape, had better run towards high technology.\* For Nick Ervinck, this means that as an artist during the process of 'designing', he explores all the creative possibilities offered by his computer's hardware and software, and applies them as he sees fit. For Ervinck, cyberspace becomes 'action space'. I would like to expand on Jos de Mul's interpretation of this notion because I want to make clear that, although he is *object-minded*, to Ervinck, digital space is more than just a work space. Mindful of McLuhan's credo 'The Medium is the Message', the artist is fully aware that media cannot just be used without any consequences. By using them, they automatically have input and therefore an impact on the way we think about, perceive and act in the world. In other words: Ervinck does not pretend to be above his tools; he does not believe he can just address his tools without being addressed himself by these tools. He acknowledges *and* values his computer as if it were a prosthetic device, for both his mental and physical achievements.

\* McKENZIE, Jon, *Perform or Else: From Discipline to Performance*, London/New York, Routledge, 2001.

In practical terms, this means that Nick Ervinck is using his computer as a storage space for his collection of digital images, as an extension of his own memory. This visual archive consists of images of real, physical objects, images that remind us of objects that once were, and images of objects he has created himself. He says that with this archive he wants to map out the world, decode its cultural gnome, in order to gain a better insight into, and eventually to also get a grip on the complexities that are inherent to life and the world itself. By doing that, he is following in the footsteps of the inventors of the *Wunderkammer* and – perhaps even more obvious – the natural history museums that came later\*. Another term the artist sometimes uses is 'alphabet'. With this he suggests that his database should be seen as a source, a stockpile of images that can be resorted to while writing a new world, or, in his case, while creating digital images that can then be moulded into concrete objects: from collection to analysis, via digital manipulation and/or synthesis, to digital imagery, to two-dimensional prints, museum-ready three-dimensional sculptures, sculptures for public spaces and architecture.

\* Within this context, an eloquent term could be 'database complex', please see: MANOVICH, Lev, *The Language of New Media*, Cambridge/London, The MIT Press, 2001, p. 274

You could ask why any visual artist would want to enter the digital realm. Or, to put it differently, and taking into consideration the artist's ambition: in what way does digital space differentiate itself from other design spaces like a piece of paper or a canvas, when it comes to creating *possible* worlds? A first characteristic of digital media is its multi-media nature.\* In general what is meant by this is digital media's capacity to combine text, sound and image. Nevertheless, what seems to be of more importance to an analysis of Nick Ervinck's oeuvre is the fact that the digital designates one common code for all these other different media. By way of a binary system, text, image and sound are being re-written and translated into 'information': data that can then later be reanimated, regardless of the medium in which that would take place. That way, all the images the artist has stored in his database are brought to the same ontological level.\* Besides, contrary to their physical equivalents, digital images are manipulable by nature. As a consequence, the link between the sign in question and its referent within concrete reality is put under heavy pressure. The tension between 'reality' and 'appearance' is increased to such a degree that the theoretical distinction between these two, traditionally thought of as bipolar concepts, is in danger of collapsing. As a result, this basic opposition, no longer sustainable, has to be abandoned.

\* For a synopsis and further discussion on the defining characteristics of digital media, and also of inspiration to this essay, see MUL, Jos de, *Cyberspace Odyssey*, Kampen, Klement, 2005, pp. 113-124

\* For a conceptual explanation and analysis of the difference between picture and image, see MITCHELL, W.J.T., *What Do Pictures Want. The Lives and Loves of Images*, Chicago/London, The University of Chicago Press, 2005.

A second quality of digital space is interactivity. This notion refers to the possibility the user of a virtual reality has, to actively participate in the creation of the final 'text'. When applied to Nick Ervinck's oeuvre, we can say that by digitalising the world and its cultures, and by placing the cultural artifacts that these cultures have produced in the same ontological reality, the artist has created the possibility for himself – and for us,

as we will see later – to weave his way through time and space in order to create images, and, in the end, pictures that defy any mechanical order. Perished buildings are reanimated, albeit in a mutated form; organisms that clearly are not from this planet develop spontaneously; proportions and relations are so flexible you are left wondering what kind of diabolical logic could be running the show. In short, past and future, top and bottom, front and behind, all turn out to be virtual. Memories and visions are realized and connect themselves in and as an in-between, in a way that can only be described as a parallel universe. By disconnecting reality and appearance, the autonomisation of the image and the (temporal) liberation of the concrete, the ‘now’ makes way for all that is possible: what is not yet, but what *can* become.

All this brings us to a third aspect of digital space: virtuality. On one hand this term refers to what is merely an appearance. On the other hand, it refers to a potential, a possibility that can materialise.\* For Nick Ervinck – what hopefully has become self-evident by now – one doesn’t necessarily exclude the other. In effect, his entire artistic practice is based on precisely this movement from virtual to concrete. He collects the world – yesterday’s, today’s and tomorrow’s – he virtualises that world, or, more accurately, (ac)know(ledge)s that world in its virtual state, and as such approaches it as a collection of ever re-employable (cultural-historical) fragments, scraps of information that can only be delineated against some noise. Moreover he is aware that these positions are always only temporal, and mutually exchangeable. *In essence*, objects and ideas have an equal and identical ontological status. As such, the ultimate goal is to use them as building blocks in his designs of new unities. These don’t completely deny their former physical existence, but in their virtual form they are able to transcend their former physical existence. Nick Ervinck liberates the image of its symbolical value, of the veiling convention it is tied up to. This way, in order to release its potential, suffocated for a long time by an environment that could no longer provide the necessary breathing-space, into a new space to which it has to adapt before it can commit to new syntheses and develop new moments of complexity. Cyberspace is ‘an ontological machine producing possible worlds’.\*

You could argue that simply by producing objects, the artist transports us into a new reality – a reality that has been changed in its materiality and, at best, aesthetically improved. However, Nick Ervinck goes beyond that. He attempts to virtualise the mind and the eye, to liberate us from some of the conceptual and physical structures we have come to consider over time as natural; a de-territorialisation of the mind, away from the familiar and naturalised concepts. He seeks to deconstruct our traditional, mechanised conceptual framings and its coefficients of reality (Bachelard), followed by a different relation to concrete reality. Secondly,

\* MUL, Jos de, Cyberspace Odyssee, Kampen, Klement, 2005, p. 122.

\* MUL, Jos de, Cyberspace Odyssee, Kampen, Klement, 2005, p. 47.

and perhaps this may sound like a contradiction to his first goal, he tries to realize an environment that requires a new way of thinking, one that is actually already active, present on the margins without being recognised as such. As a consequence, the potentiality of this way of thinking is left partially untapped. In short, Nick Ervinck aspires to install a new conceptual space. Located somewhere in-between those two spaces is a so-called 'smooth space'.

How should we image this space? Well, as mentioned above, we saw how Nick Ervinck has created himself an action space: a database of (digital) images, linked to a virtual (work and conceptual) space enabling him to freely navigate through time and space and, almost incidentally, create images which, once materialised, seem to defy all linear logic. The fact that this action space allows him to do so is because, on one hand, all the images that he shapes and forms, having the same ontological status, are being placed *next* to each other. On the other hand, because there is no physical space limiting him in his actions, he can switch from one image to the other effortlessly. To use Lev Manovich's words: (in general) virtual spaces are not real spaces, but constellations of various, distinguishable objects. What is missing is space, in the sense of 'medium', an environment in which the objects are embedded together with the resulting affects the objects have on one another.\* Hence the isotropy that is so characteristic of virtual space: anthropological markers like horizontality (the horizon of our concrete world) and verticality (the human body) lose their meaning as orientation points. Gravity loses its metaphorical significance. However, is this also Nick Ervinck's point of view?

It should be clear that we are dealing with a 'different space'. But it still is a space. If there was no space in hyperspace, there would be no *place* for a designer, however we imagine such a person (or Entity). Consequently, there would be no space for action. An empty space is an action-less space, a space that offers no room for mediation. Hence the question: how is Nick Ervinck's action space set in motion? We have already given the answer to this question: during his wanderings through space and time the artist constantly envisages our concrete world. The creations he produces within the virtual realm have to be able to be actualised one way or another; they have to be convertible into two- or three-dimensional artworks. This means that his virtual action space is penetrated, one way or the other, by our physical world. To this we may add that our physical world of today is the result of our physical world of yesterday. Having seen (a portion of) the images he stored in his database, the artist has taken this into account, too: snapshots of (historical) cultural artifacts that maybe have lost a part of their concrete existence, or images that have lost the *anchorage* that would have given them their signifying stability over time, but that are still haunting our culture as virtual entities, as premonitions and/or after-images, and are

\* MANOVICH, Lev, *The Language of New Media*, Cambridge/London, The MIT Press, 2001, p. 248 and p. 253

still playing a part in our quest for purpose and/or the production of meaning, however transient it may turn out to be.

In other words, Nick Ervinck animates and shapes a hybrid space, a space where virtuality and actuality are merged and change position indefinitely. A space where concepts like Essence and Identity are interpreted differently. Touching, or better, scanning and gripping have more in common than usually thought. While being is based on mutual disfigurement, on im-pression, where only the reciprocal host/parasite relationship is omnipresent and the absolute Marker appears to be nothing but a hyphen, a temporal and local *touch*.<sup>\*</sup> This way Nick Ervinck demonstrates a congeniality with the Deleuzian nomad in 'his' desert, the pre-eminent example of a 'smooth space' and the occupations it lends itself for.<sup>\*</sup>

<sup>\*</sup> In this context, please compare to the conceptualization of the 'touch' in: Henry Focillon, *The Life of Forms of Art*, New York: Zone Books, 1992.

<sup>\*</sup> For an abbreviated review of the Deleuzian 'nomad' and his 'smooth space' and 'striated space', see Edward S. Casey, *The Fate of Place. A Philosophical History*, Berkeley/Los Angeles/London, University of California Press, 1998, pp. 302-308.

The 'striated space' is characterised by schemata and absolute values. It is so homogenous that it can be captured in coordinates and thus becomes 'captureable'. Consequently it allows for explicit utterings of opinion as well as routine. Conversely, smooth space is synonymous with wandering and drifting. The nomad *is* always on his way, between here and there. He is always present in several places at the same time; his existence takes place in an in-between zone, both mentally and physically. The nomad *is* his place, his existence being distributed through the regions he re-lives.<sup>\*</sup> Where he comes from, and where he is going to, cannot be captured with numbers. Just like the traces he leaves in the sand, the point of departure and arrival, the blazing of a new trail, are erased by the perennial movement of the sand. Under such circumstances, a lifetime laid down in advance, the production process humans subject themselves to turn out to be a Fata Morgana. An enforced, ever renewing and renewable orientation becomes even more necessary. A tent needs a nomad, DIY and torches. And of course anchors, markers and signs. But not temples or sanctuaries that, through their place and position, their physical orientation and guiding mission are anchored in an universal and timeless linearity and logic. In other words, for the nomad the image is of vital importance as well. But it isn't of any use to him if it is not surrounded by other images. It is meaningless if it isn't placed *next to other* images, not in the least the nomad's self-image with which it forms a synthesis. It is also useless if there is no space for movement between the images, no space for diagonal movements. After all, images only lead to other images, they have no final destination: in an atmosphere of vectors, the image of the nomad leads to the nomadic image, and vice versa. Can one surf on sand dunes? And if so, where to? The question is answered by being asked... Welcome to the desert that is Nick Ervinck's reality.

<sup>\*</sup> In this context, please compare to Marc Augé, *Non-Places. An Introduction to an Anthropology of Supermodernity*, London/New York: Verso, 1995.

So, where does all this lead us to? We have seen how the artist has virtualised the world. We have also acquainted ourselves with his drift through time and space, and have established how the impressions he gathers during his wanderings inform a reception of his work in terms of memory and predictions. We have also come to a somewhat better understanding of how past and future get entangled within an intermediate present. And how, through the image of a nomad, images touch one another 'incidentally'. But what about the actualisation of the virtual? Remember: in Nick Ervinck's case, digital space is an 'action space' that has to enable him to create objects for our physical space. That's why we imagined this space as hybrid. Certainly in his case, this means that we cannot consider the theoretical distinction between smooth and striated spaces as absolute. Apart from that, to claim the opposite would lead to internal contradictions. Nick Ervinck seems to be aware of this too. His virtual and actual spaces, and the images or pictures they contain and evoke, entertain a host/parasite relationship. They feed off each other while – differently from a symbiotic relation – they interact in a dynamic way. This creates the appropriate conditions for a moment of complexity to develop, and whereby the encounter between two (or more) open systems can set in motion the *feedback*- and *feedforward*-processes, resulting in a collective, non-linear synthetic evolution.\*

\*With regards to the theory of complexity see: TAYLOR, Mark C., *The Moment of Complexity. Emerging Network Culture*, Chicago/London, The University of Chicago Press, 2001

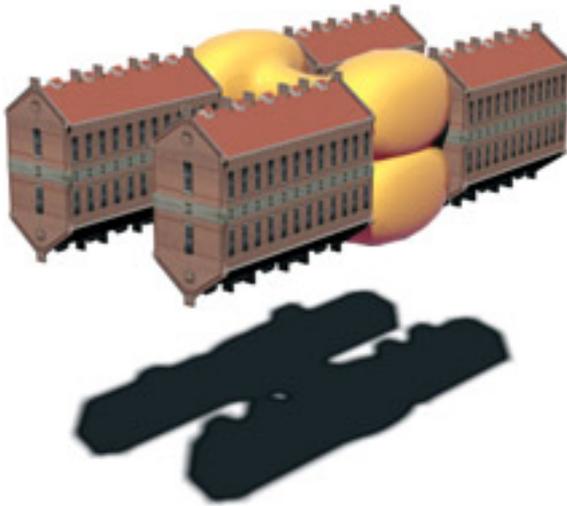
The two-dimensional prints are the first results of the movement started by the artist and lead him to move outside the digital realm without completely abandoning it. They can be divided into two categories. Closest to his digitally-conceived images are the prints that show us a world unto itself: amorphous organisms and *blobs* that are not easily identifiable thrive in combination with geometrical structures: constructions which at times can be associated with concrete architecture, but just as well with logical structures in general and conceptual architectures specifically. All this takes place within an environment that in itself is impossible to locate. Relational patterns appear to be flexible; structures are preyed upon and seem to be on the verge of breaking down. We are placed *opposite to* a (relatively) smooth space in which the viewer, in his or her physical capacity and as a creature of logic, has but little meaning. In this category of works, there exists a huge gap between object and subject, the artwork and its beholder. The virtual quality of the work remains high and the image surpasses the picture (for the time being). If we want to enter these spaces, we will have to leave an important part of our physical being, and thus of this world, behind. Our reflection shows us the artwork as *either* an image *or* an object (carrier of the image); our self-reflection shows ourselves as *either* an image *or* as an object (carrier of the subject that we also are). However, the second category of prints gives us a little bit more to go by. We see similar shapes as in the first category, but this time we are given clues as to their measurements and the materials they are made of, even as to possible concrete spaces in which

they could flourish as full-grown pictures. The identification process becomes somewhat easier, the space between the object and its beholder somewhat less smooth, the relation between the two becomes a bit more 'coordinated'.

At this moment, however, an isomorphous relation between virtual and physical space doesn't exist yet. This can only be put to the test when a third dimension is introduced. The next stage in the development of the relation, the synthesis between virtual and physical space, does indeed manifest itself in the sculptural elaboration of some of the creations that have already been introduced in the prints. We encounter the same structures and organisms, *boxes* and *blobs*, but now they are situated within the actuality of the here and now: not only can we see them, we can also *feel*, touch and grip them. At least, it *looks as if* they are located on this side of the world. At the same time they make their otherness palpable; with one leg they are still in the action space they originated from; they seem to be aware of it too. We see images, mutated memories and divinisations that have yet to become, images that project 'intermezzo' as their adage, that hold our experience in suspense, a postponement of our efforts to locate the images and at the same time ourselves, in a striated space, then and there. Ultimately the consequence is a negation of stable identities and essences. The relations between the artwork and the viewer, and their relational positions with each other are set in motion and evaporate. But not at the cost of our existence: we are still around, here and there, everywhere... The artwork has entered our space, and we have entered the artwork's world: our daily occupied world turns out to be one of the options. *Just one...*







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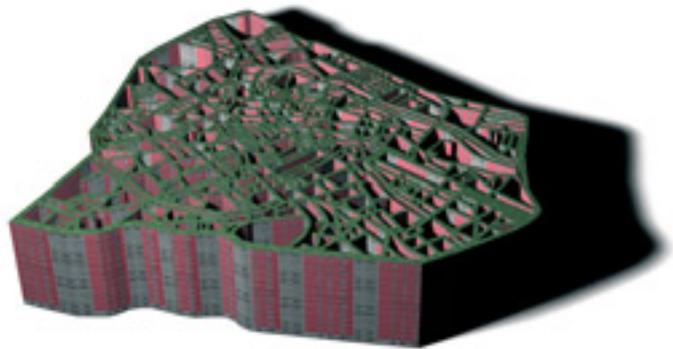
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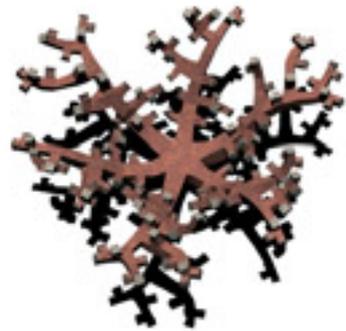
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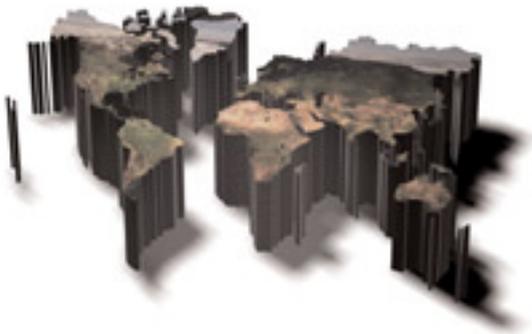
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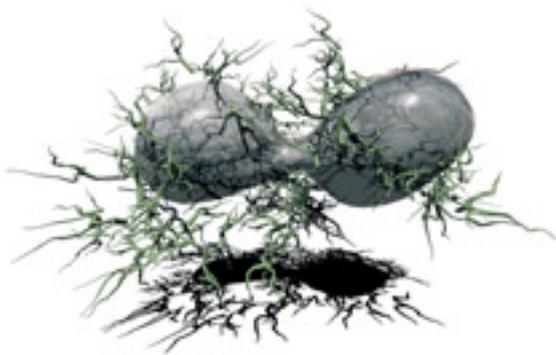
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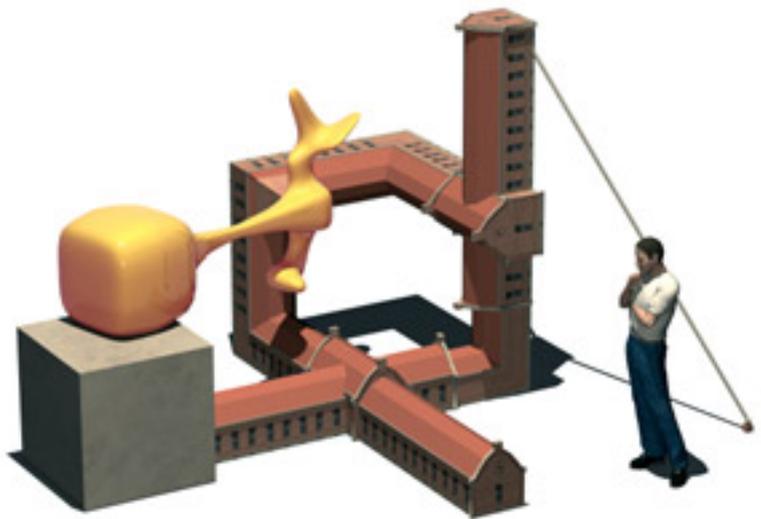
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## A Director of hybrid Worlds

00:02:23

- One year ago I selected you to take part in the exhibition Young Artist (Gent, 2005). That was the first time I actually confronted your work. But it was only recently, after seeing your exhibition at de Brakke Grond, that I really got your work. Strikingly, an incredible shift and development has occurred; I noticed an obsessive eye for materiality. How do you see this development of your work? Where do you locate your interest for materials?



Exhibition view: Young artists selected by Philippe Van Cauteren,  
Palmarium, Gent, 2005

GNI\_D\_GH\_44\_APR2005, 2005  
printwall  
245 x 390 x 50 cm

00:03:32

- First and foremost, my work is an ever-growing archive of images and shapes, in which I am searching for the interaction between virtual constructions and handmade sculptures. You could describe it as a kind of cross-pollination between the virtual and physical world. The digital images are constantly contaminating the three-dimensional shapes and vice versa. I love the contrast between the clean, smooth, almost industrial shapes and the more organic, brutish matter like dabs of paint, soil crusts or concrete-like matter. This way, I am really in search of the duality between certain shapes that are impossible to

create virtually and those that are impossible to achieve in reality. My work becomes just that bit more interesting when I succeed in positing those worlds against each other. But I also want to familiarise myself with the characteristics of specific materials like wood, polyester or plaster. This way, once I start designing with these materials virtually, I am also aware of their possibilities and limitations. The more I engage with the virtual world, the stronger is the desire to re-implement this virtual world within reality and experience it physically. But also the desire to create these images as perfect and clean as possible in reality, like they are designed virtually, became stronger. My work has become more about the search for the almost superhuman, the divine; an object that almost doesn't belong to this world anymore. Something alien. By choosing that perfect finish and hard-wearing materials, I also want to take a certain position and partially dissociate myself from throw-away society. I see that developing within society at large and amongst many young artists too.

00:05:13

- Some time ago you wrote a very extensive text where you created a very personal framework within which to look at your work. At a certain moment you refer to your realisation that the world per se does not interest you. I am fascinated by that remark, because for me personally art always stems from reality. For you art seems to come out of a negation of that reality.

00:05:57

- I have consciously chosen not to engage with the emotional, the political, or the social aspect of art. Initially, I felt very at home with the purely sculptural discourse, but that didn't turn out to be very rewarding. That is why I started looking for more of a symbiosis between sculpture and architecture. From the moment you start working with architecture you are of course in some way again engaging on a social level; albeit in a more national or urban context.

00:07:13

- As a matter of fact, aren't you seeking to generate your own complexity with a parallel universe?

00:07:58

- For me, that complexity is partly a given. My images are adaptations and processings of images taken from the world of my experience. When creating, I question what I see, hear, read and my own interpretation. I strip a space of its original function, its nature, to allow it to create its own reality. Casual looking is only a start. Not all civilisations represent 'space' in the same manner, for the simple reason that not all of them view space in the same way. I am designing

my own world, but this one remains utopian. I only add to the confusion. This clean and virtual world with no room for specks of dust, tiny seeds and skin flakes offers a completely different feeling. As much as I try to imitate these small details of our society, it will always be an imitation. However, this un-emphatic sorting almost imperceptibly makes the notion of authenticity waver. The main incentive for creating is the need to know, to understand the world. And what better way to understand it than to create one's own complex world that in turn can open up worlds to others.

00:09:22

- I'm aware that your original ambition was to become an accountant. How did you end up in this complex universe? It is of course a story that will go well in your autobiography.

00:09:49

- Once I indeed wanted to become an accountant. I don't know what got into me back then. Art was never discussed at home. I never visited museums in my youth. So the decision to go to art school was definitely not a matter of course, although I have always been very creative. However, economics no longer captivated me, and because I had always been fascinated by architecture, I went to study architecture. But I found boring all those long-winded lessons on perspective, although looking back, that's where I got the necessary foundation. That's how I ended up studying ceramics. I thought it was a fantastic medium, but in the end I thought it would be too scary to dedicate my whole life only to that. When I was eighteen years old I was searching for the utopian idea of one single study in which everything was possible. I ended up in the 3D department, but there I couldn't really find my way with my sculptural ambitions. Back then, I was mainly working in performance and video art. I have experimented with all sorts of things, from VJ-ing at parties, making wall paintings, spending time in the dark room at weekends and building booths at fairs. Eventually I switched to the Mixed Media department. That's where I was able to carry out my sculptural research and I finally found what I was looking for.

00:14:11

- In your work you usually depart from digital codes and manipulations of your computer.

00:14:19

- Actually, no. I often take roughly handmade sketches or a physical object in my studio as a point of departure. I don't always first virtually design the sculptures in full. Most of the times there is an interaction between both worlds. For

instance, an object is first created in my studio. I elaborate on that on the computer, which is then further elaborated on in the studio. In this way you deal with constructing and/or designing in a different manner. Certain shapes could not have acquired their exact form without the intermediation of the computer. The way in which you virtually combine, cut or paste a sphere with a cube, I take with me to my studio and vice versa. I exchange the knowledge and possibilities of both worlds.

Originally I had started to virtually rebuild a oil-drilling platform. Out of that I realised the first physical element. And eventually I also realised the oil-drilling platform [p. 44] in a bigger scale, which was the step I needed to make back then to switch back to small-scale works. Next I was short listed for the Provincial Price for Fine Arts and I was given the exhibition space in Knokke [p. 10] as an award. I wanted to make one large installation but didn't have enough space in my studio to experiment with this. Switching to the computer was just a small step for me, because there I could outline this installation virtually and create a preliminary sketch, a kind of digital model. From these sketches for exhibitions the computer prints eventually developed as well as the modules and animations.

00:15:39

- In your work, there is a constant interaction between the virtual and physical worlds. A kind of experience-oriented practice of the studio itself.

00:15:52

- In fact, this duality between the virtual and the physical permeates my whole life. I played with LEGO until the age of fourteen, until it wasn't really becoming for a boy of that age. After that I got seriously addicted to computer games. Especially the intelligent games, or so called god games, like SimCity, Tycoon Traffic, SimTower, Warcraft, Caesar, Red alert etc. When I started studying visual arts, I found an excuse to take up 'handicrafts' again. I also noticed that computers offered more options in terms of graphics than computer games only. There I produced an enormous amount of sculptural elements and also gained a foundation for thinking spatially. When I studied at the 3D department, I came across sculpture again and got attracted to all kinds of digital effects. The computer pulled my leg, as it were. Meanwhile I learned how to use the computer for my own needs. At the Mixed Media course I was able to make spatial works again. As you see, this duality has been present in my whole life. During the time at the academy people have often told me that I had to choose between the virtual or the physical realm, but I am convinced that the strength and richness of my work lies in the combination of those two worlds. Eventually, a logical consequence will be to develop in my studio those things that cannot be done virtually, and to virtually develop the things that are impossible to realise within the physical realm. I have to explore a medium to its fullest potential before attempting to bend its rules.

00:20:20

- Your archive contains over 29,000 images. How did it come about and how are those images collected and organised?

00:20:38

- Because of what happened in the summer of 2001 – the changing of courses and actually being in New York and going through the 9/11 ordeal, I started scanning all the photo-negatives I had made up to that moment in my life. From there on I started selecting and soon ended up with a photo-archive of largely 5,000 images. The 'GNIURKS' archive has been constructed around a structure in which the building blocks of my 'alphabet' are stored: man-made things, things I made myself, fragments of memories of my life. The archive is literally divided into the format of the alphabet: the E stands for exhibitions, the V for virtual images, etcetera. Every letter has its own category, which again has sub-categories. The titles of my computer prints and modules consist of figures and characters. These are direct references to the names of the files in my digital archive. Every object takes its name from its position within the archive. The titles of the sculptures originate from turning over and mixing the letters and words linked with the sculpture. Not so much with the intention to create an explanatory title, but rather to look for a surprising, exotic sound. GNIURKS is an autobiographical archive, a never-ending compilation of fragments with which I attempt the impossible. It is an archive in which I try to sum up my life and my mind. In addition to lots of sketches, photographs of studio situations, exhibitions, sculptures and virtual preliminary studies, my archive also contains images, mostly taken from the internet, that are a potential source of inspiration. Details from our complex society are brought to life, adapted and altered. This way I try to get a hold on what I see, and try to understand form, tension and energy. I search for a different route through the objects, a route that pleases me. But in the end, the whole archive which originated from photographs taken of the real world, has been consumed by this sculptural research. In fact, within the context of my archive, reality has been completely absorbed by my own world.

Ordering the world seems to be one of my existential needs, even if my way of doing that is often not a logical one. My system consists of making an inventory of absolutely everything the world has to offer in terms of material and non-material things. With my systematic order I have always struggled with chaos and random-ness, especially when it comes to my own body and soul. The personal quest and trials that slowly but surely shape my system, are an important aspect of my body of work. It gives it its inner logic, which to a certain extent runs in alignment with our everyday life and world.

00:20:51

- I am asking you this because just now you very explicitly linked the origin of the archive to 9/11. You were only standing 50 metres from the two towers of the WTC. For somebody who claims that the world doesn't interest him, it looked as if you were melting a bit.

00:22:12

- Everyone is aware that the 9/11 attacks were an extraordinary experience. Besides the shocking, tragic, political and social aspects of the event, I was above all captivated by the forbidden beauty of the collapsing towers and the citizens of New York who I suddenly got to see from a complete different angle. In the end, I felt more like an extra in a movie. This feeling was probably enhanced by the fact that I witnessed the whole ordeal from behind the lens of my camera. Somehow as an artist, having been at the scene and returning home with that much film and photographic material, it seems obvious that you would want to produce work on that. I was there by coincidence, however it is not what I make work about. That's not what I had been working on at the time either. That's why, back home, I consciously chose to put it aside and continue on the path that I was on. But now there are more references to the WTC towers in my work, maybe because of a subconscious drive.

00:25:58

- Have computer games been a breeding ground for what you are doing right now?

00:26:03

- The strange thing is, I have never dwelled too much on my past. But eventually, all your memories do come back to haunt you. Throughout our lives, we collect experiences and all of a sudden the puzzle comes together. My strength, therefore, is the enormous foundation I have at my disposal. The challenge, of course, is to re-assemble this huge foundation.

00:29:01

- We have used the word architecture more than once. For me the term also contains a certain dramatic, theatrical component.

00:29:17

- Ultimately, in an exhibition and even more so in a virtual environment, you are like a kind of director arranging the set and props. I really like powerful, aesthetic, theatrical stagings. Definitely the exhibition in de Brakke Grond is actu-

ally impossible to get photographed. Almost with every picture that I show to people they ask me for pictures of the actual exhibition. By building these black boxes in which the works are presented, the actual space disappears, and with it immediately also our way of recognising space. People are no longer aware of the difference between the virtual and the physical. Because the environment has disappeared, our points of reference also disappear. We are able to momentarily fence off the world outside and leave it behind. And that's how we are able to enter as a physical being this virtual, other world. That's how sculptures hover, so to speak, within a virtual space and the visitor, as it were, literally steps into the virtual realm. This is where the visitor no longer is a consumer in a tomb filled with objects, but rather a traveller in an audiovisual world. In this temporary dimension, the actions of the artist or spectator can be reshaped and restructured over and over again. This process, this interaction between reality and art, clearly manifests itself in the installation at the Expozaal of de Brakke Grond [p. 80]: a platform was built around the 11-metre *IENULKAR* construction, creating the illusion of an archaeological site with only a few simple interventions. The effect is an immediate shift of the usual relations between art works and the public: not the sculptural object, but the audience is placed onto a pedestal, and instead of standing in front of an object of experience, the spectator now finds himself inside an experiential environment.

00:37:11

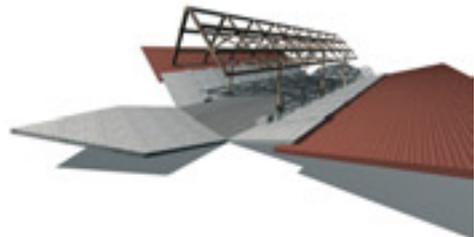
- Is the specific architecture of an exhibition space a point of departure for you?

00:37:20

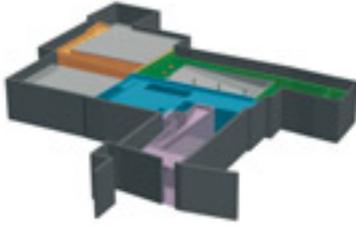
- Not always. But I often do try to take the architectural, sculptural or historical values of a space as point of departure. For example, I have rebuilt the complete Kunsthal Lophem and virtually removed the walls of the building, leaving only the wooden cross-beams of this old shed. And I labelled it art. By doing so you elevate the space that shows art to the status of being art. Another example is the 'nOva' rehearsal studios at the 'nOna' in Mechelen [p. 13 + p. 42], which I completely reconstructed virtually and attached a mirroring on the walls. As a



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GNI\_D\_GH\_132\_MEI2004



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result you get a kind of doubled perception as you walk through this virtual space with the camera. Not every space is an interesting challenge, though.

00:39:39

- A recurring element in your work is the use of the colour yellow. This colour almost becomes the basis of your sculptures as well as your thinking. Can we refer to an 'Ervinck yellow', like there is an Yves Klein blue?

00:40:02

- When I was a kid, I only wanted to wear yellow clothes. When I started attending secondary school, my style got more austere. The last thing I wanted was to stand out in a crowd. But after three years wearing a school uniform, yellow came back with a vengeance. During my first years at the academy I was literally dressed in yellow from head to toe: yellow socks, shoes, trousers, sweater, overcoat, I even had a yellow backpack, wristwatch, mobile phone and bike. I can actually feel my mood being affected by colour. There is too little colour in this world as it is. Yellow in particular keeps me active and vivacious.

00:44:32

- What is the relationship between your sculptures, your prints and your design sketches?

00:44:41

- My digital prints offer a window onto a digital world and also onto a different reality. These vistas show possibilities taken from my research in which sculptural elements can re-position themselves within ever new compositions and meanings. Within those real-looking rooms, racks and platforms, there are polymorphous, synthetic forms that are brought to life as mutated molecules by an artistic computer animation. Walls are no longer walls, and gravity no longer exists. I play with sculptural shapes at the blink of an eye, I lift monumental

'buildings' and put new life into them. A home changes into a sculpture and unfolds into nothingness. It is a dynamic game with images, materials and space, and a balancing act between conscientious calculation and inspired improvisation. At a certain moment the prints were no longer suitable to represent certain ideas and I started to develop design sketches and modules to show my sculptures and archive, and to show how they could manifest themselves within the physical realm. That way you can better anticipate what a sculpture is going to look like, what the dimensions are, what the materials are and how it might be inserted in our concrete reality than with a print. This allowed me to create designs for a much larger scale, or preliminary sketches for public space. Even if those are not yet within my reach, I can already document and clarify my idea. Ultimately, I am creating a dialogue between the sculptures and the sketches, between the sculptures and the animations, between the prints and the modules. This way the audience will have no problem translating the physical sculptures into the digital world and imagining the animated images within our reality. Also, you can visualise how the sculpture will 'behave' when animated.

00:46:28

- In some cases, some of the objects or shapes look like some sort of organised coincidence that has escaped, or lost itself to a kind of volatility, controlled by some major power. Do you intend to give the spectator an orchestrated experience between the virtual and concrete realities?

00:47:27

- At the crossroads between the virtual and the real, new, hybrid sculptural and spatial possibilities come into being, and I can fully explore them in new experimental spaces. This specific context, the dynamics between an independently created virtual realm and the three-dimensional sculptural work, opens up new possibilities of experience. In my exhibitions I would like to be a kind of director. Some of the works are conceptual, the literal executions of ideas. Some are drawn by hand, others are sketched on the computer. This allows for a fascinating interaction between possibilities. There are also works that have originated rather intuitively and are a direct result of a deliberate action. These images are much harder to get, but all the more interesting because of that. It is about an activity that lingers between the conscious and subconscious. It is about breaking away from traditional representations of thinking and perceiving. I have to be able to act 'sans histoire', without having a story to justify or explain my actions.



GNIURKS X1, 2002  
Styrofoam, plaster, polyester, calk and gauze  
135 x 210 x 210 cm (13 parts, variable placing)

01:03:58

- Sometimes it looks as if you know quite well where you want to go to. As if all the works you have made until now could be seen as a logical route or consequence. As if in fact you actually knew exactly where you were headed and the only thing left to do was executing your plans.

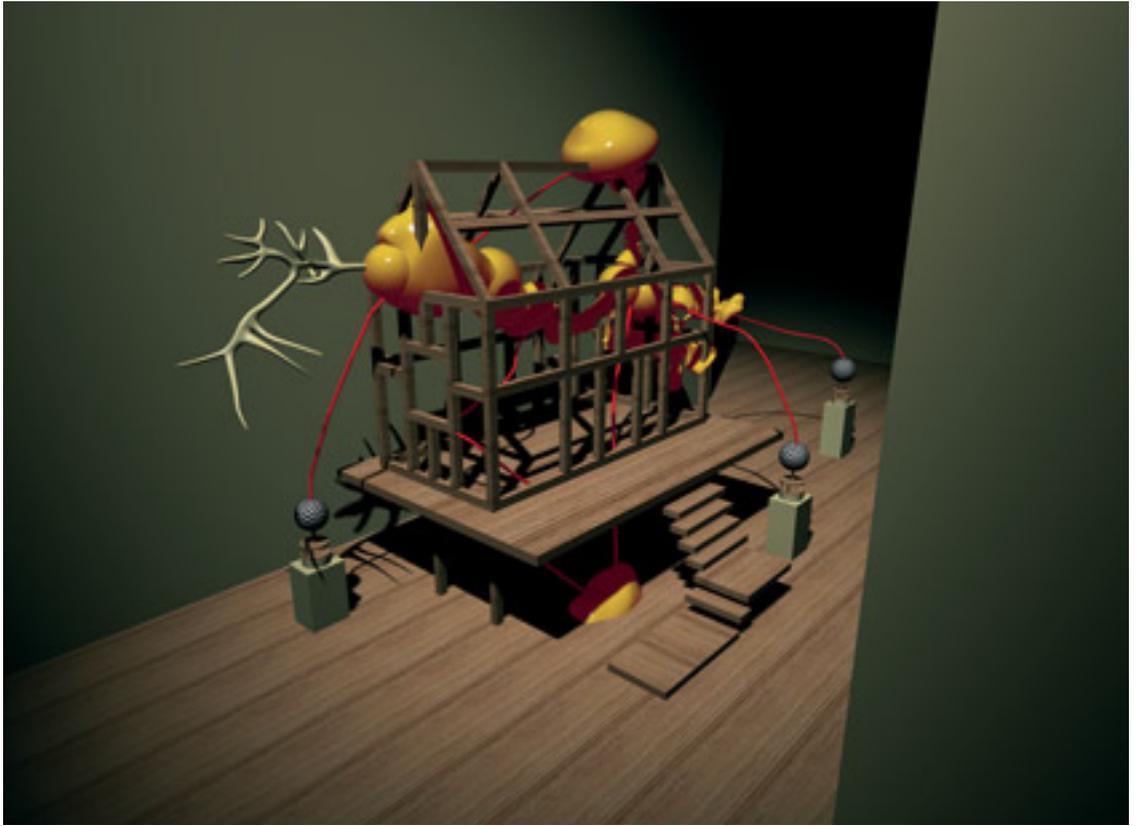
01:04:22

- I know exactly where I am headed, but that 'exactly' can of course be taken broadly. There are still quite a few steps awaiting me that I would like to develop further. Each time I create or do something I try to look for a new challenge or experiment with something new. This way you can also evolve with your work instead of being stuck in the same place; otherwise I'd rather give it all up. When I first started exhibiting my work, I was often irritated by the colour of the walls or the ceiling, by the lighting or a particular floor, or a wall that seemed wrong. In short, I didn't have complete control over the whole space. That's how I developed the idea and the desire to build a completely controllable environment for which I could determine the ceiling, floor, in short, the whole interior. To me the sculpture *XOBBEKOPS* [p. 69] was a preliminary sketch of the first completely controllable space. In reality *XOBBEKOPS* is a 1 x 1 m model. The idea is one day to produce it full scale, as it is shown on the module. This would become a 'space' of 2,5 x 2,5 metres you could enter from the side. But like all of my works you can approach this one from different angles, too. To me *XOBBEKOPS* is both a space, a model, a sculpture as well as a preliminary sketch for a building. At the same time it hangs between abstraction and figuration. It is linked to architectural and sculptural theories. And again, this way it can be placed within a very large context. Of course you are aware that you have to work towards such a challenge one step at a time. And first I have to gain a lot more experience before I will be able to effectively build a complete environment.

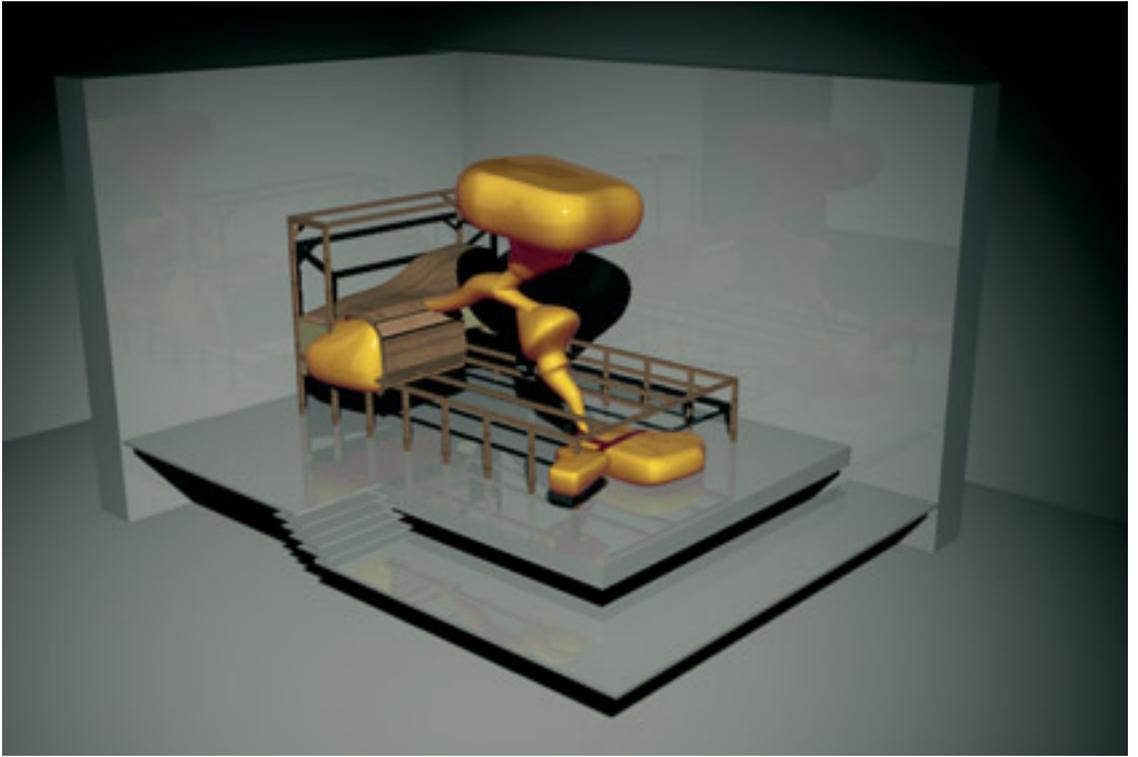




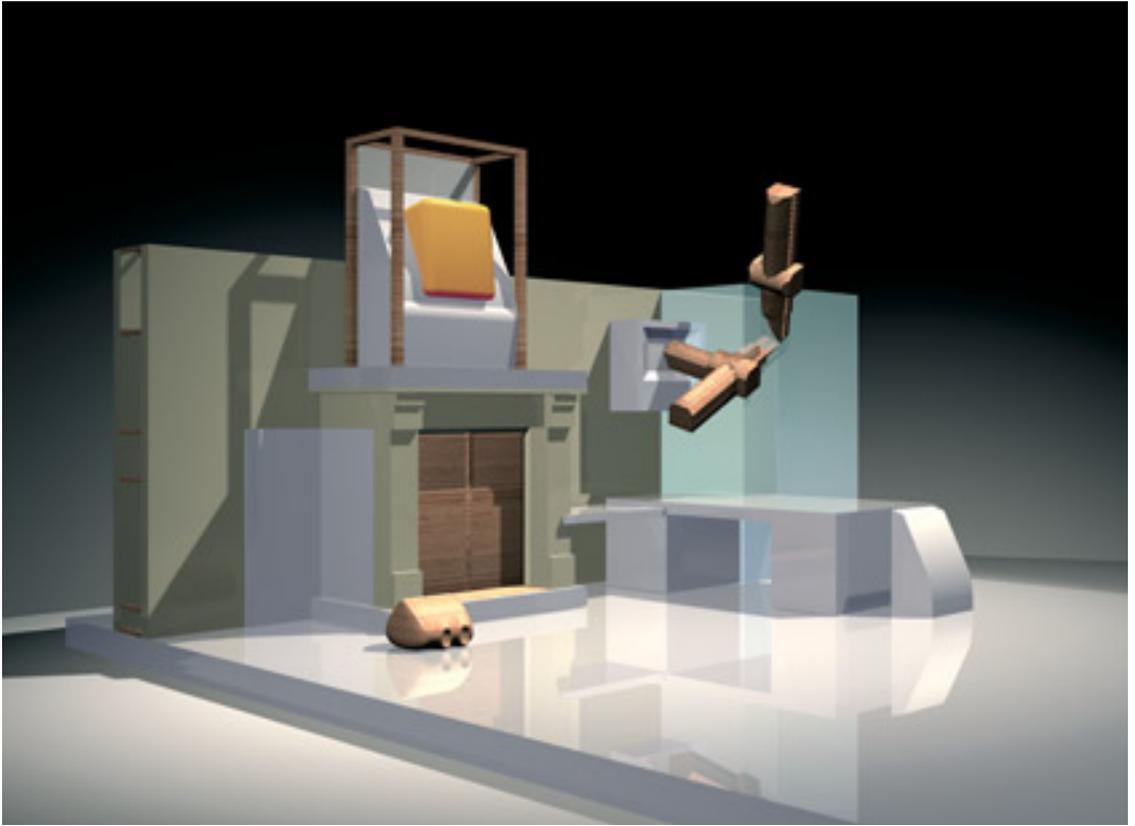
GNI\_D\_GH\_44b\_DEC2003, 2003  
C-print mounted on pvc  
78 x 100 cm, framed 102 x 124 cm



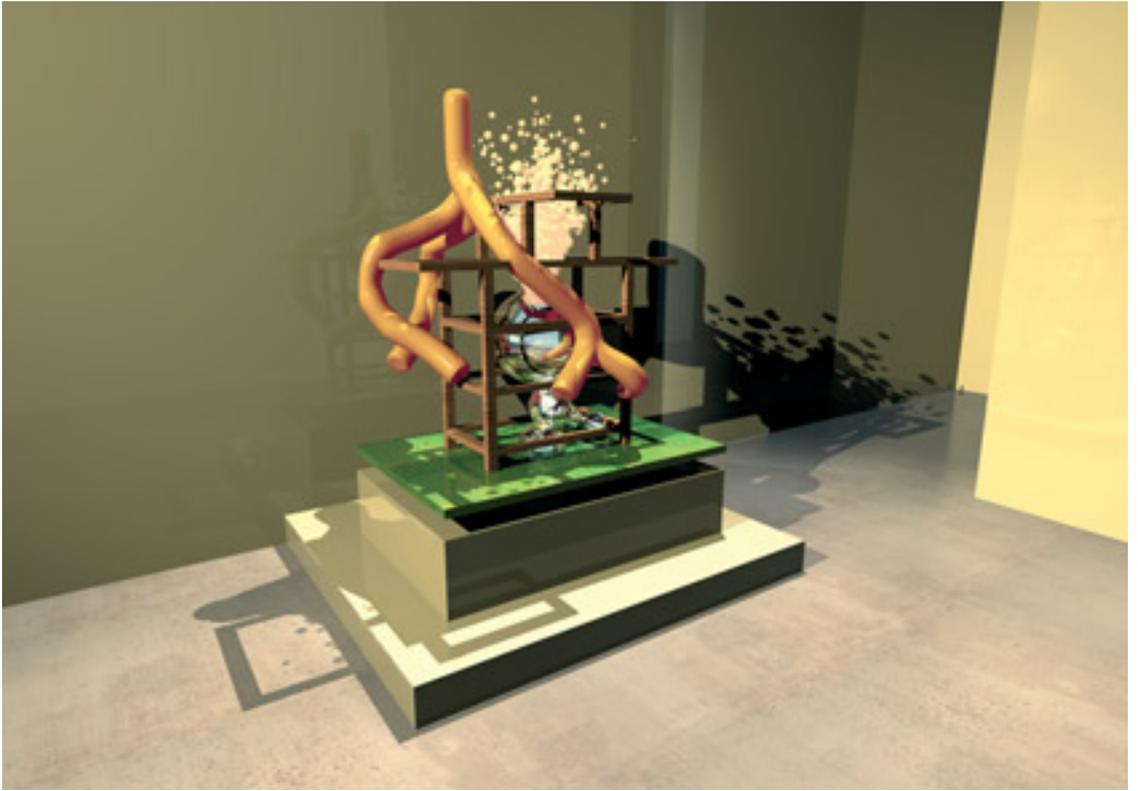
GNI\_D\_GH\_53\_DEC2003, 2003  
C-print mounted on pvc  
80 x 109 cm, framed 104 x 133 cm



GNI\_D\_GH\_102\_DEC2003, 2003  
C-print mounted on pvc  
80 x 120 cm, framed 104 x 144 cm



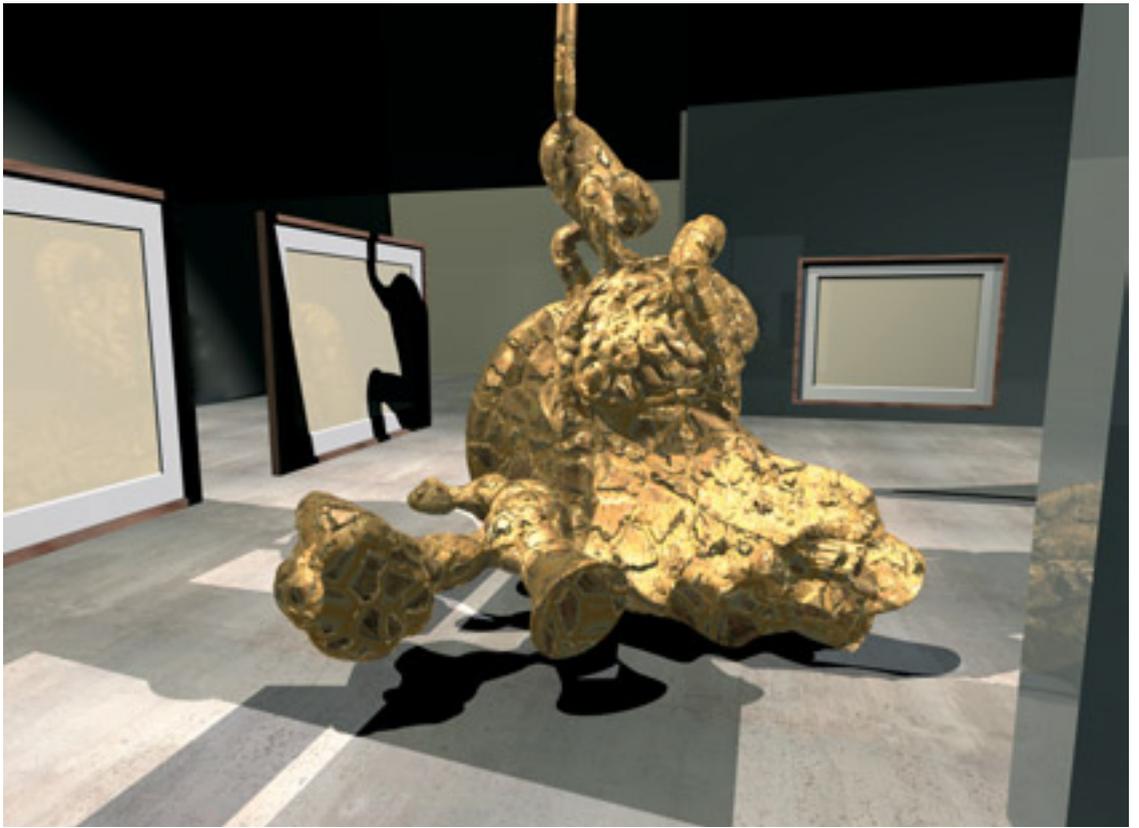
GNI\_D\_GH\_133\_JAN2004, 2004  
C-print mounted on pvc  
80 x 106 cm, framed 104 x 130 cm



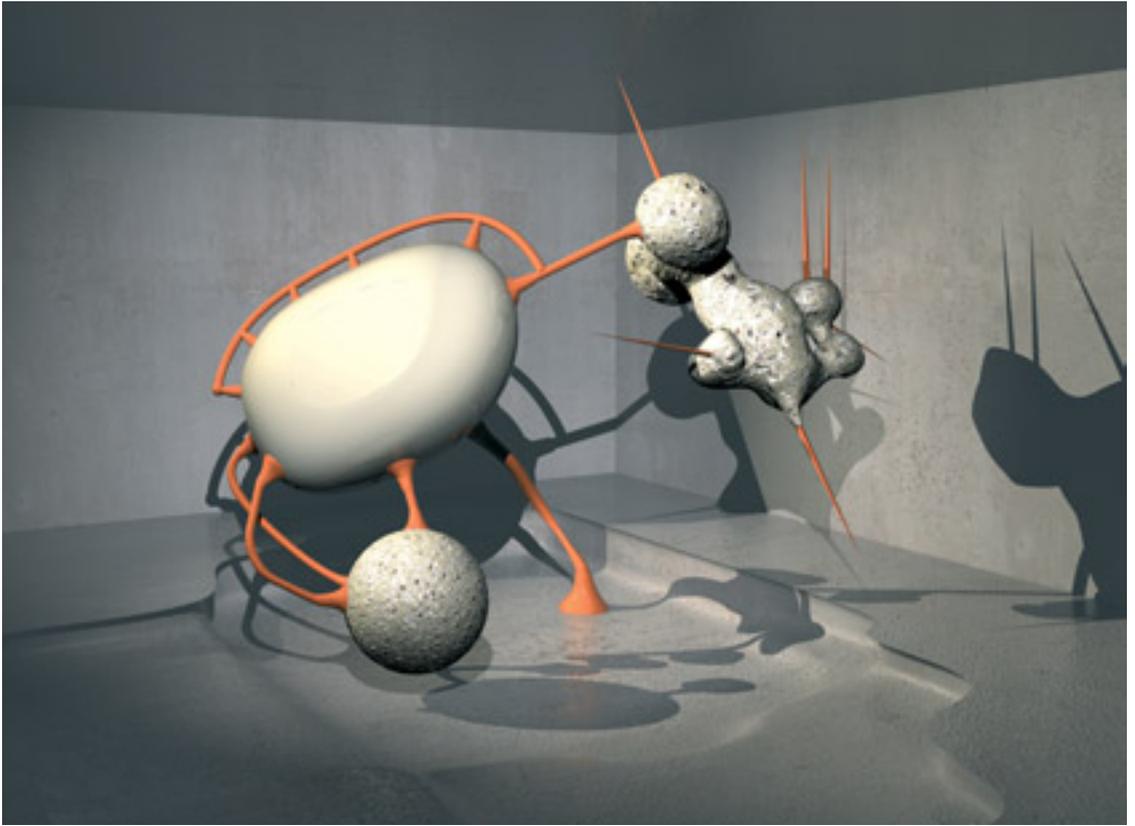
GNI\_GH\_174b\_APR2004, 2004  
C-print mounted on pvc  
80 x 112 cm, framed 104 x 136 cm



GNI\_GH\_55\_MAR2004, 2004  
C-print mounted on pvc  
80 x 109 cm, framed 104 x 133 cm



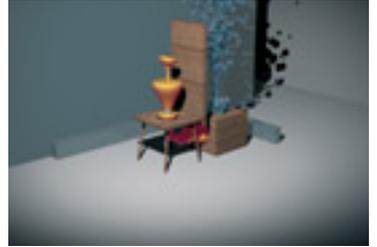
GNI\_GH\_8\_MAR2005, 2005  
C-print mounted on pvc  
80 x 109 cm, framed 104 x 133 cm

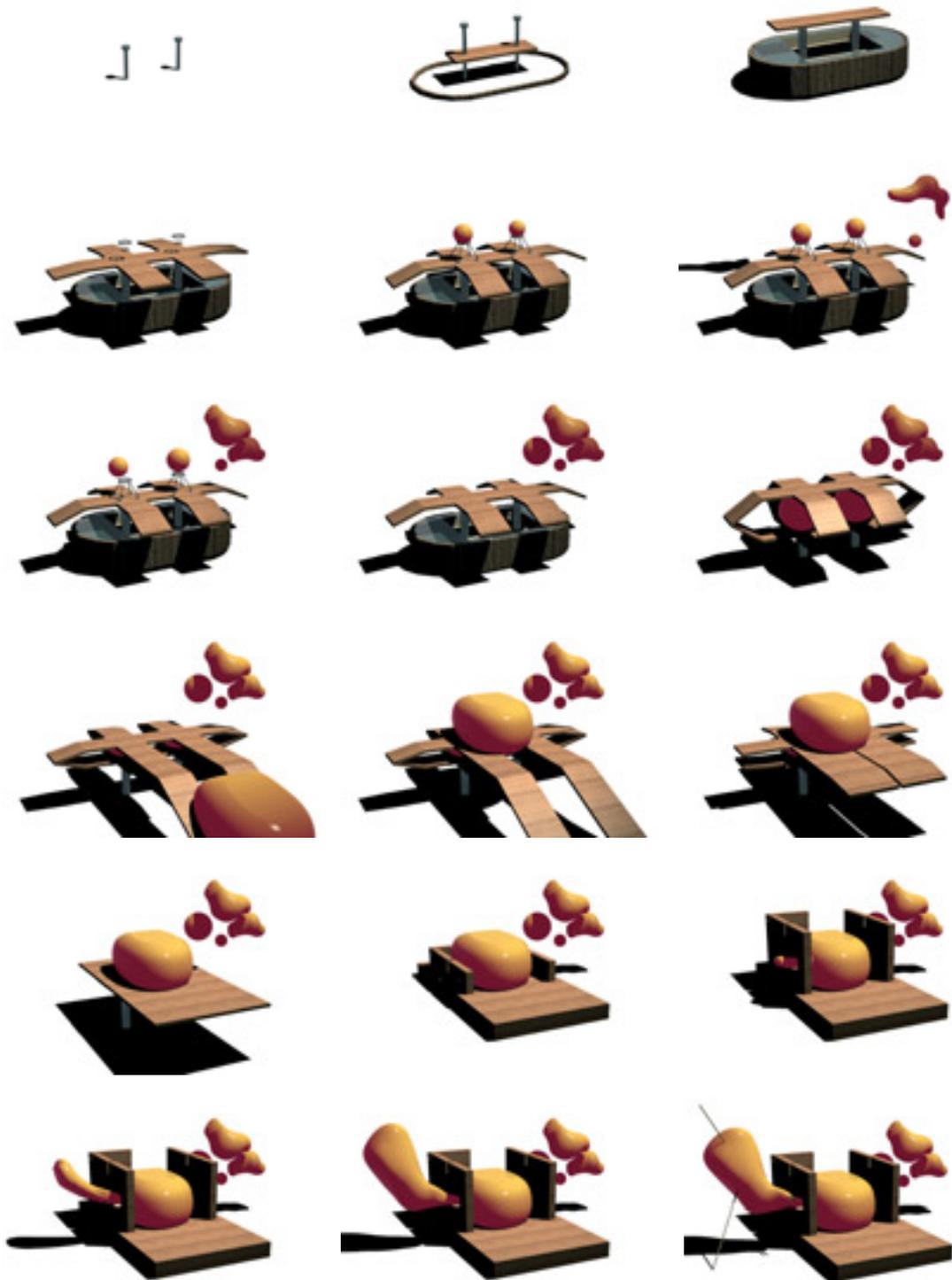


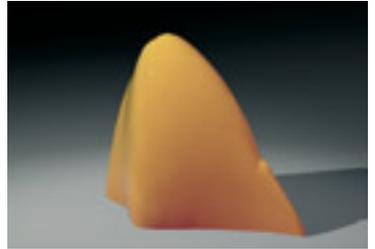
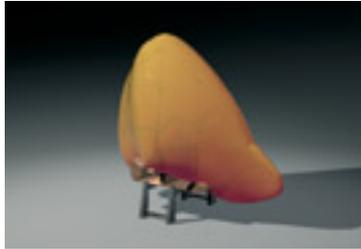
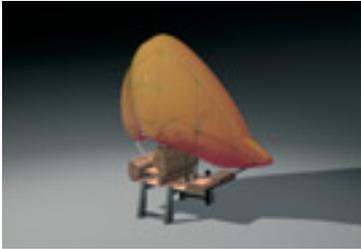
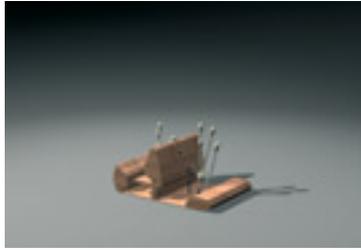
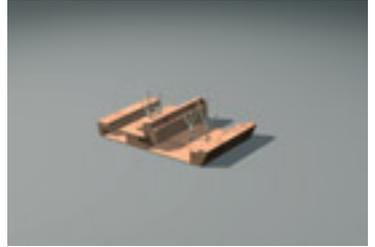
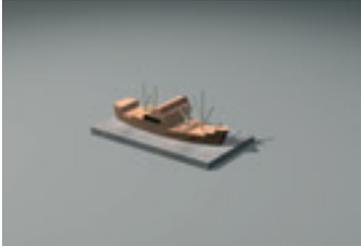
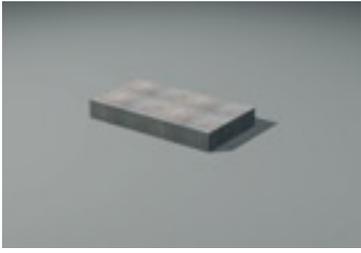
GNI\_GH\_86\_SEP2004, 2004  
C-print mounted on pvc  
60 x 84 cm, framed 84 x 108 cm

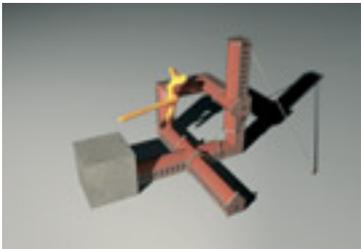
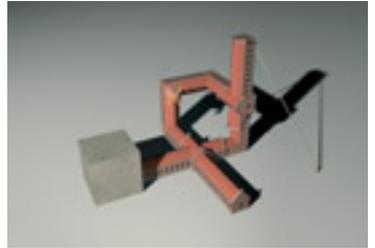
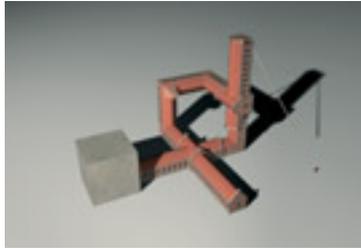
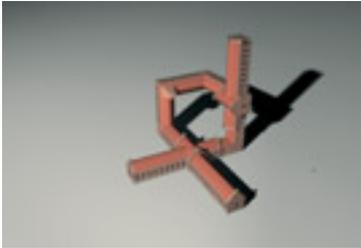
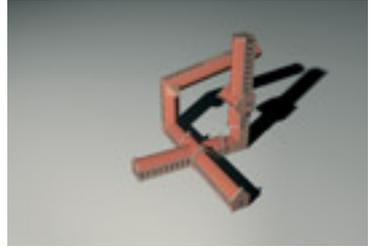
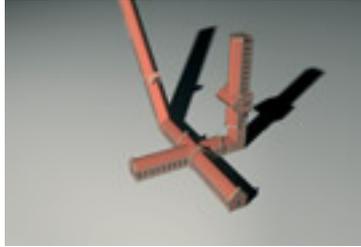
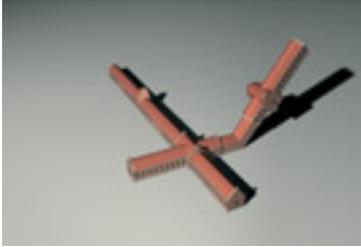




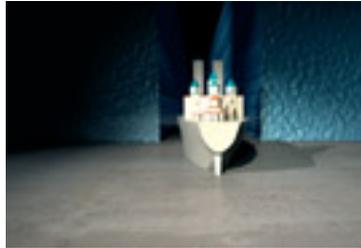
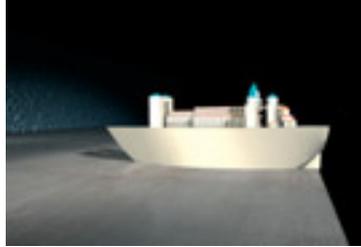
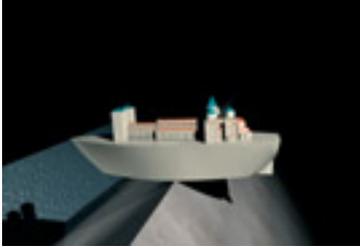
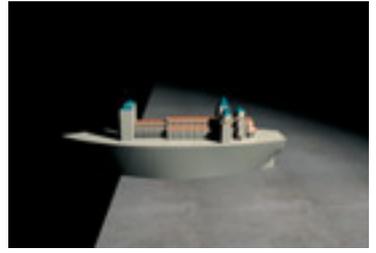
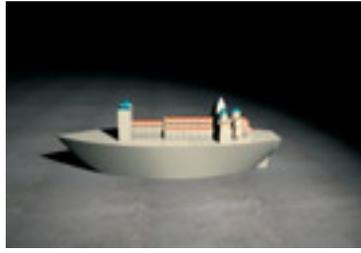
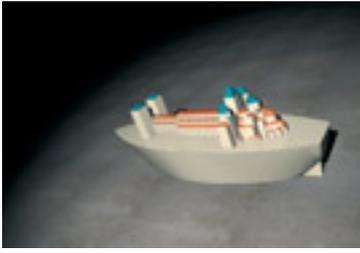












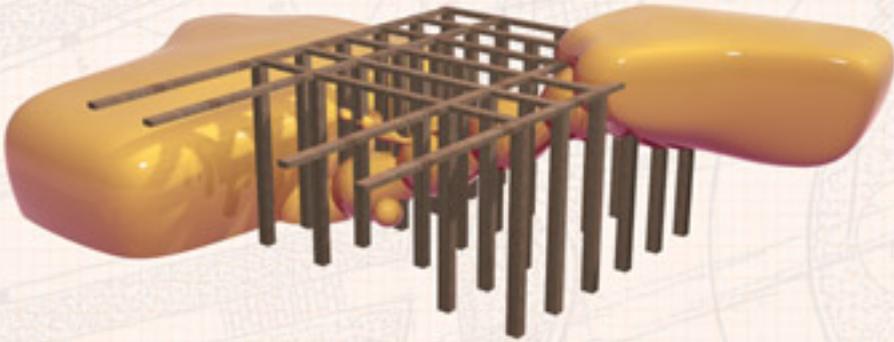




# 'ED ORBICU'

ED ORBICU  
Scale model plan: 1:50  
Material: polycarbonate, aluminum, wood  
Date: 02 - 07 - 05  
Height: 10 - 12 - 05

Perspective



001 D CH 02.01 dec2003

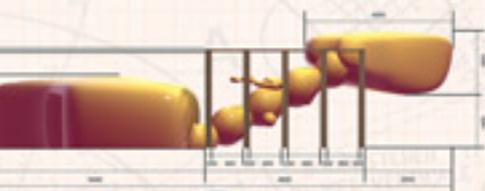


001 D CH 4.01 sep2004

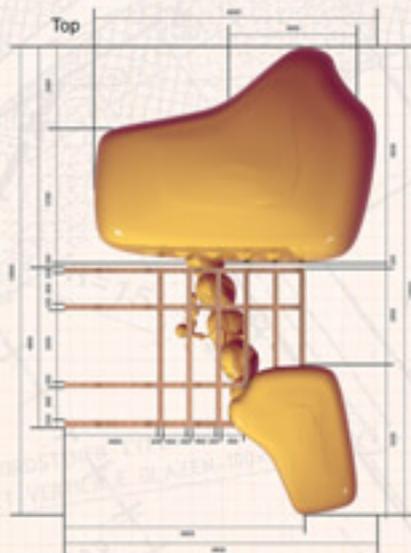


001 D CH 11.01 sep2004

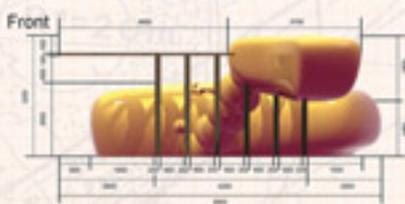
GNI\_S\_WT\_10\_JUL2005, 2005  
C-print mounted on pvc  
45 x 85 cm framed 69 x 109 cm



GNI D GH 82 8F dec2003



GNI D GH 83 8F dec2003



GNI D GH 81 8F dec2003



GNI D GH 8 8F sep2004



GNI D GH 111 8F mar2004



GNI D GH 6 8F sep2004

# 'Elbatargscu I'

2005  
 2005  
 2005  
 2005  
 2005

Perspective



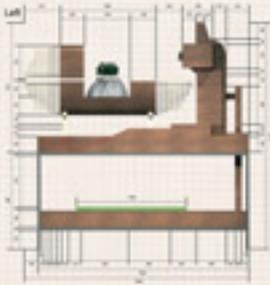
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002 002 002 002 002



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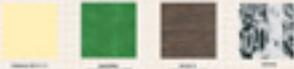
004 004 004 004 004



005 005 005 005 005



006 006 006 006 006



GNI\_S\_WT\_09\_MAR2005, 2005  
 C-print mounted on pvc  
 73 x 73 cm, framed 97 x 97 cm

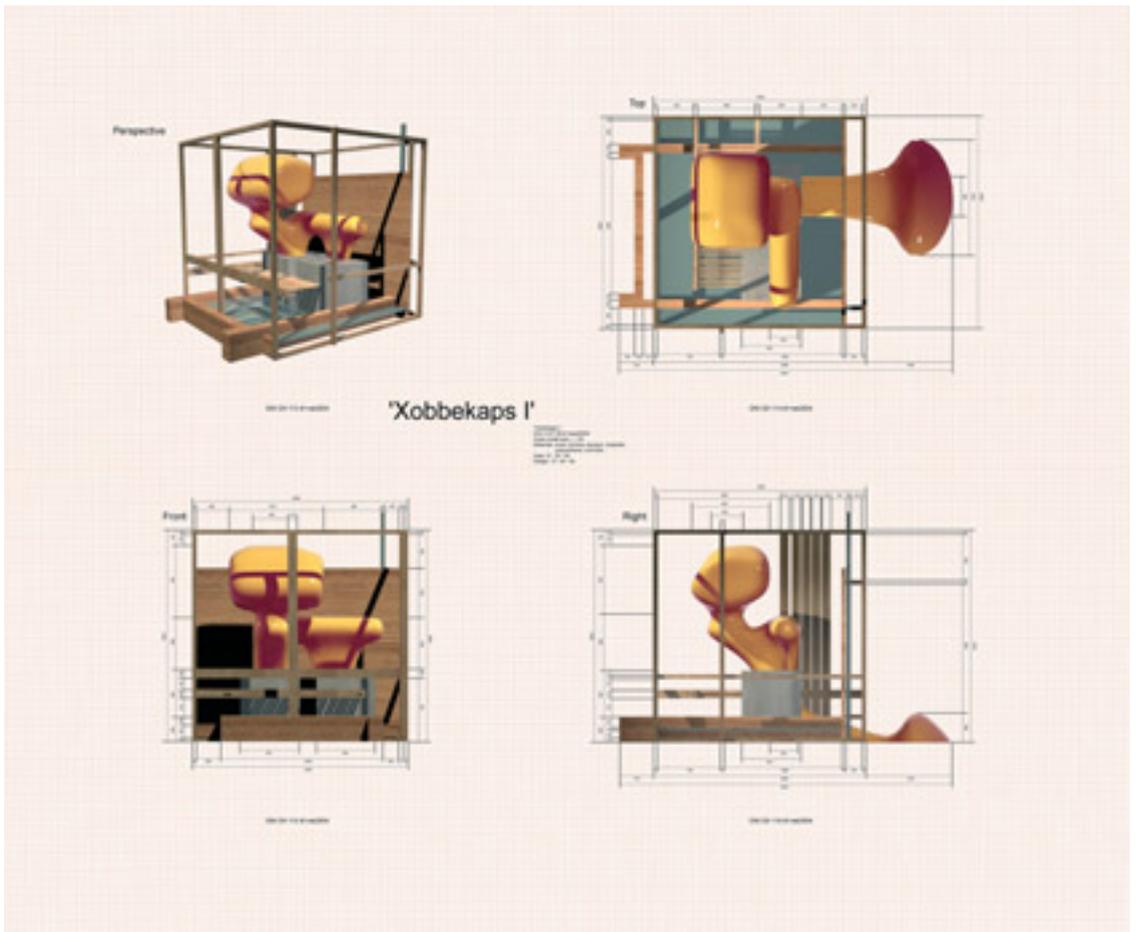


ELBATARGSCU 1, 2005

Wood, formica, iron, plaster, grassfiber, polyurethane and polyester

210 x 200 x 90 cm

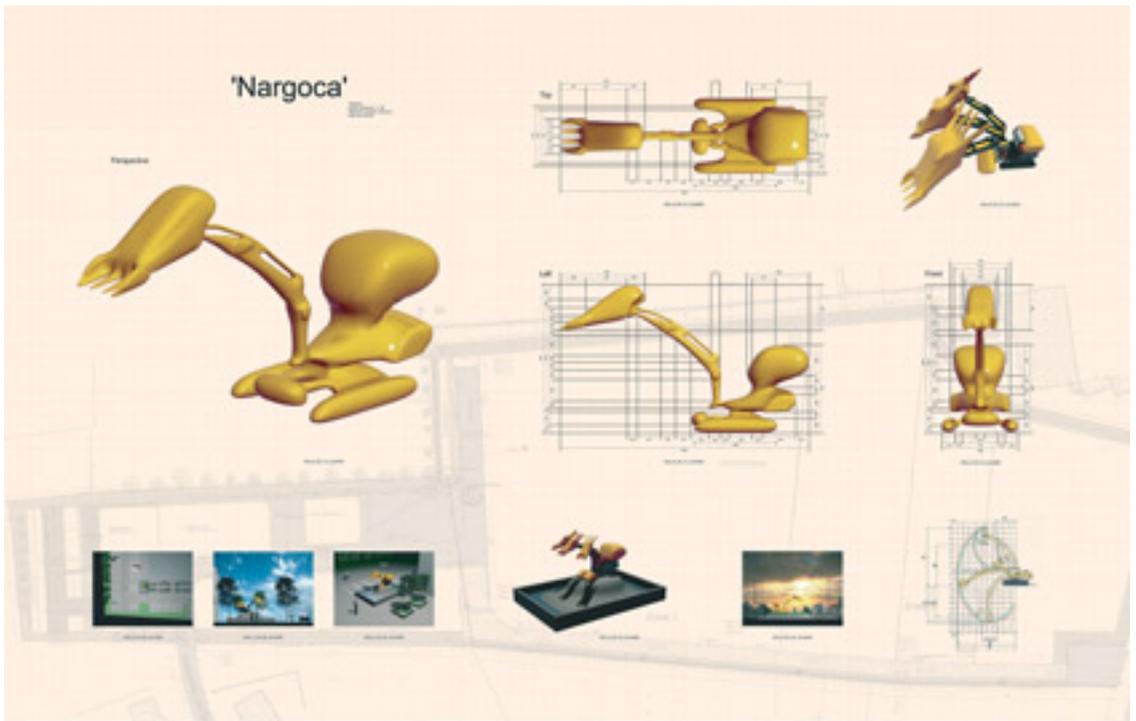
Collection: Province West Flanders, B



GNI\_S\_WT\_08\_MAR2005, 2005  
C-print mounted on pvc  
55 x 70 cm, framed 79 x 94 cm

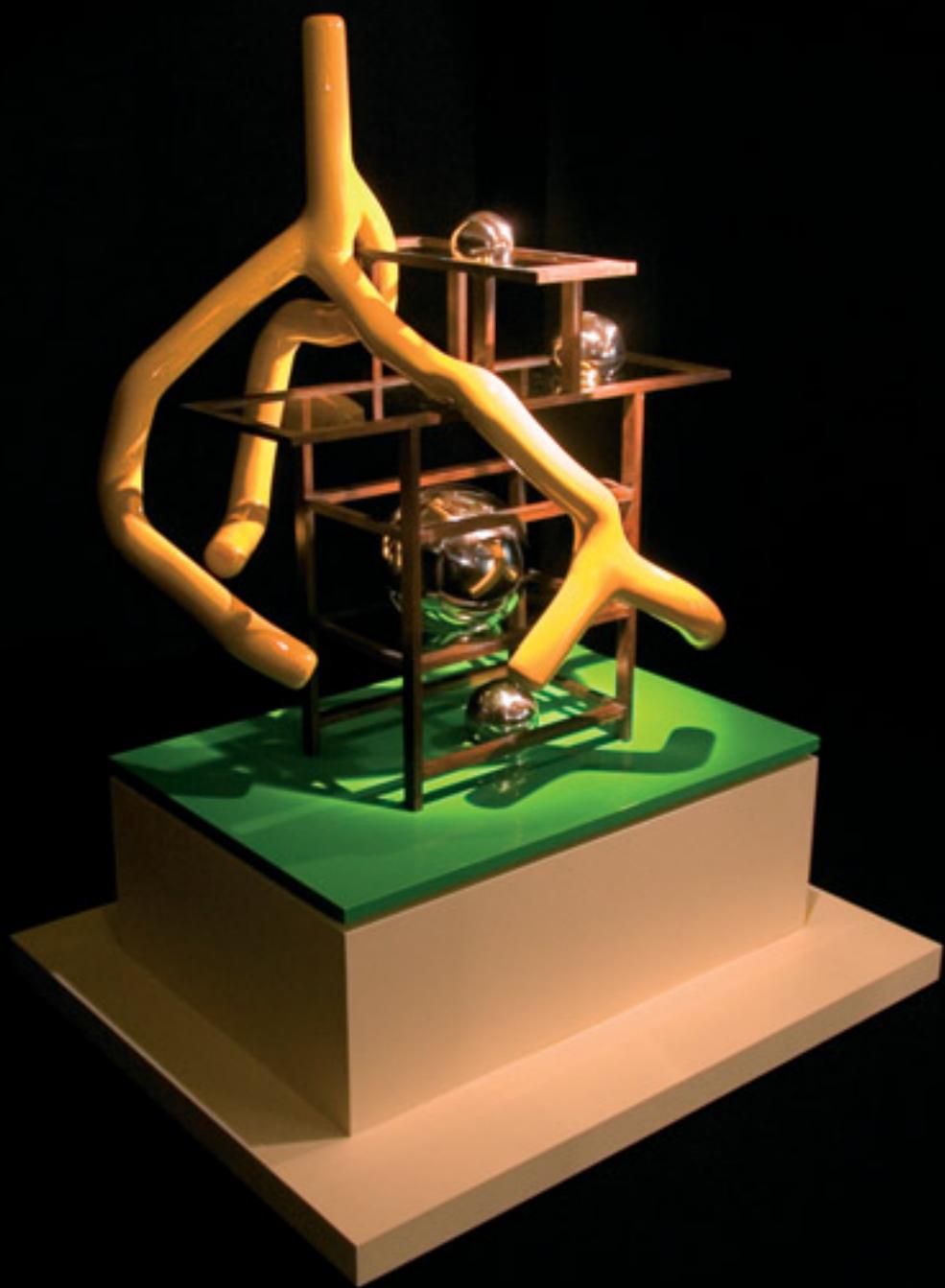


XOBBEKOPS, 2004-2006  
Wood and polyester  
120 x 156 x 100 cm



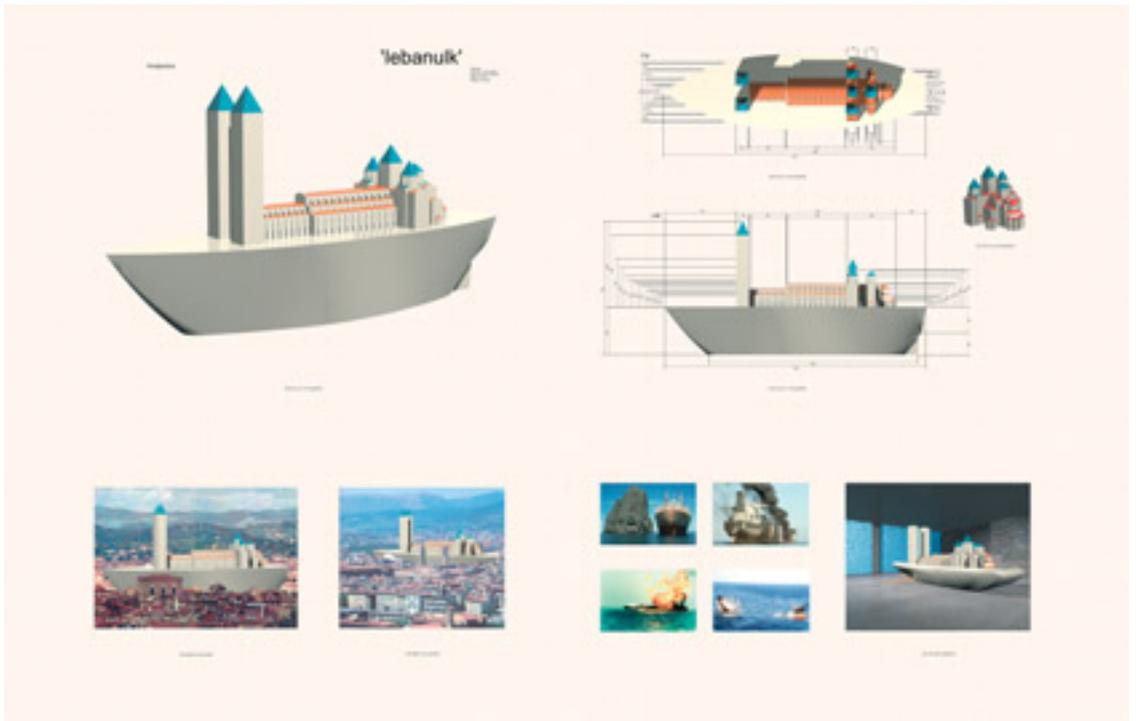
GNI\_S\_WT\_16\_AUG2006, 2006  
 C-print mounted on pvc  
 59 x 96 cm, framed 83 x 120 cm

> SALB FURCHAK, 2004-2006  
 Wood, plexi, mirror balls, polyurethane and polyester  
 239 x 190 x 160 cm

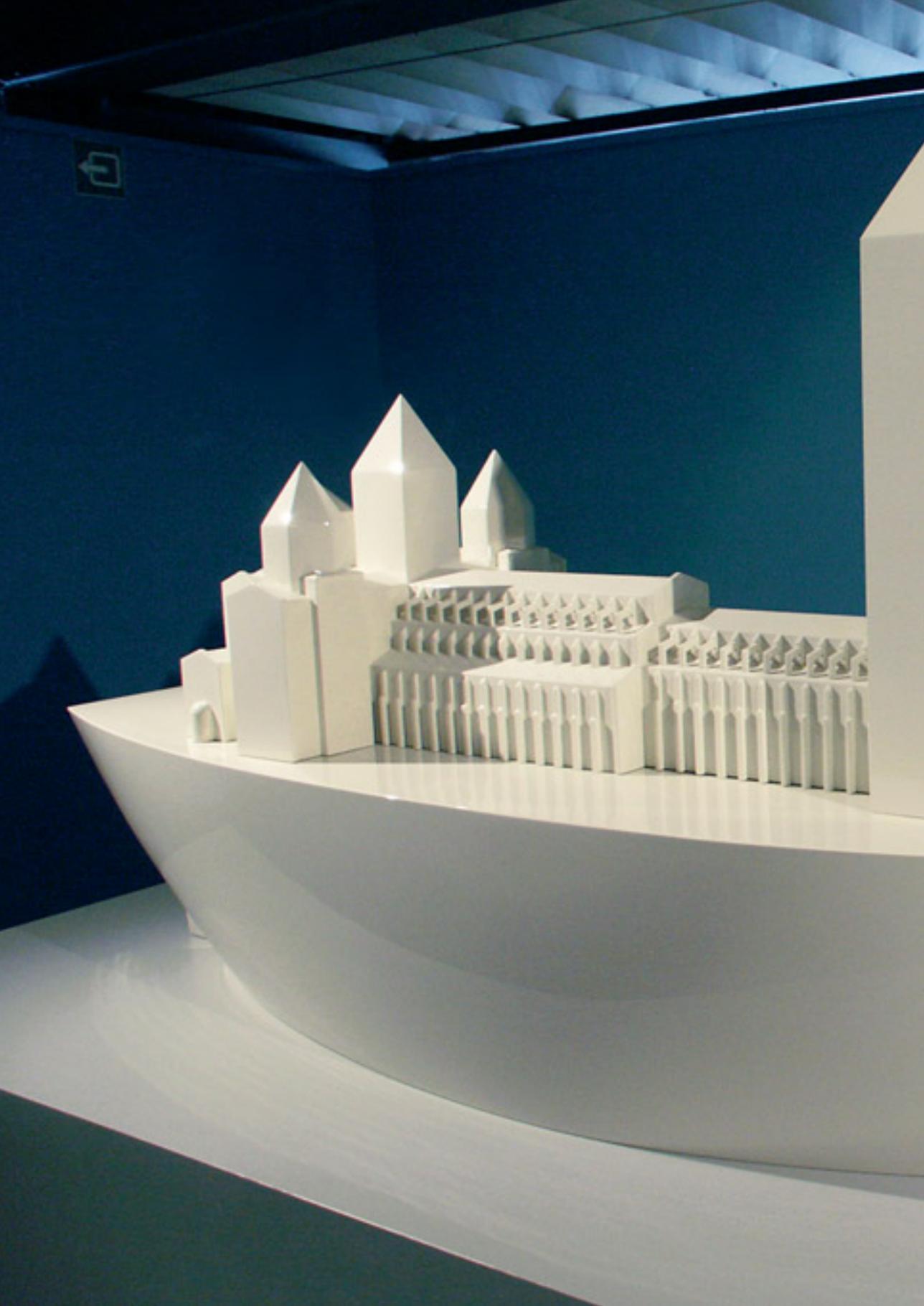


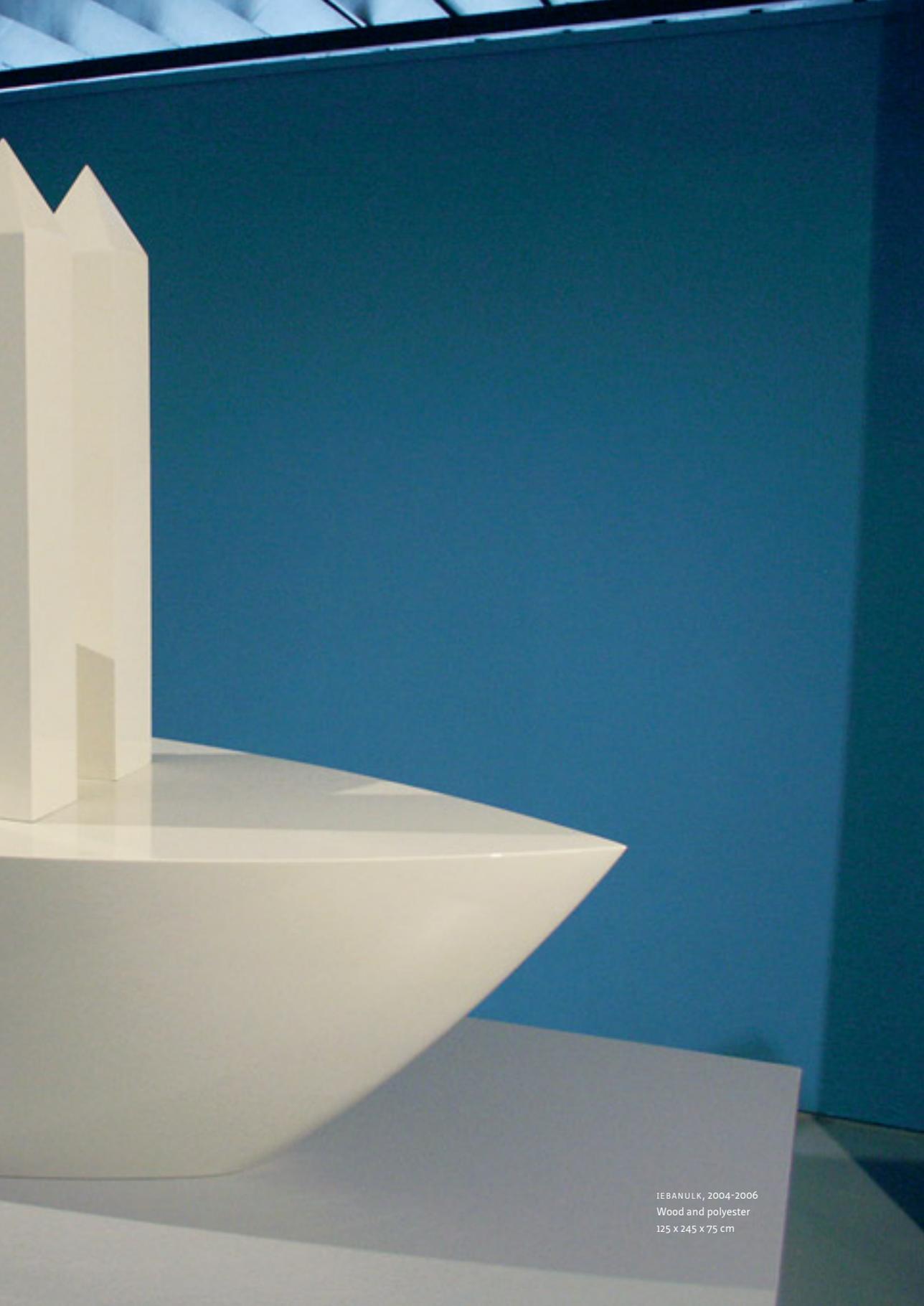


Exhibition views: GNI-RI feb2006, Kunst-Zicht – Gent, B, 2006



GNI\_S\_WT\_15\_JAN2006, 2006  
 C-print mounted on pvc  
 84 x 126 cm framed 108 x 150 cm





IEBANULK, 2004-2006  
Wood and polyester  
125 x 245 x 75 cm

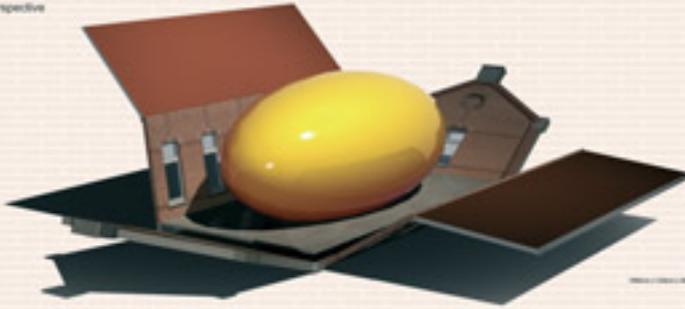
# 'Siutobs'

1.000  
 1.000  
 1.000  
 1.000  
 1.000



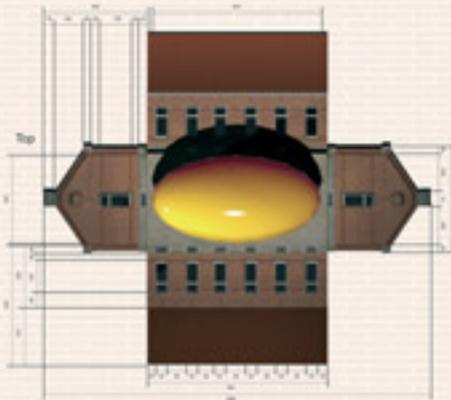
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Perspective



001\_01\_01\_01\_00000

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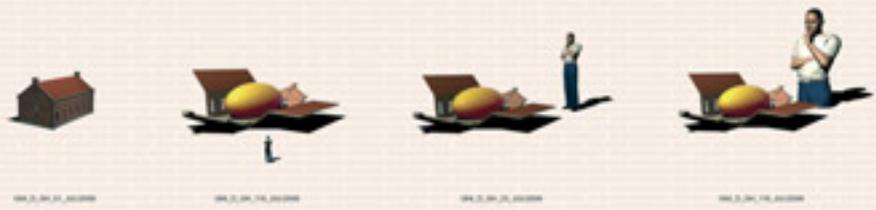
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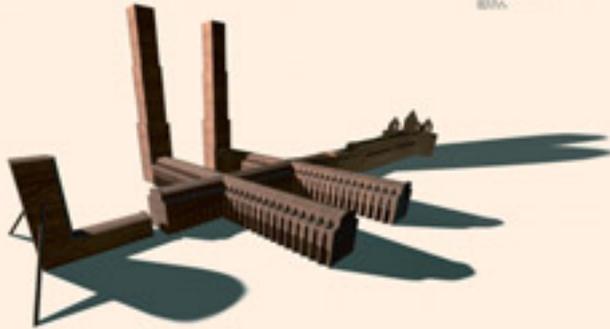
SIUTOBS, 2006  
Bricks, concrete, wood, iron, polyurethane and polyester  
55 x 192 x 135 cm

< GNI\_S\_WT\_18\_SEPo6, 2006  
C-print mounted on pvc  
83 x 56 cm framed 107 x 80 cm

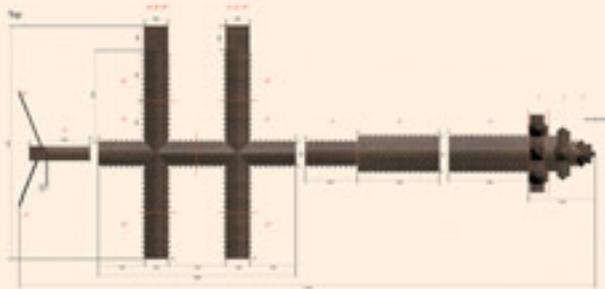
# 'IENULK'

2004-2006  
 330 x 1100 x 475 cm  
 Godshuis - St. Laureins, B

Perspective



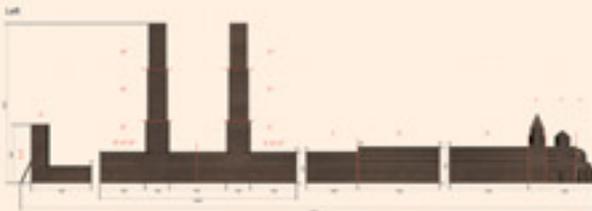
WOLFF PÖLLERER ARCHITECTS



WOLFF PÖLLERER ARCHITECTS



WOLFF PÖLLERER ARCHITECTS



WOLFF PÖLLERER ARCHITECTS



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WOLFF PÖLLERER ARCHITECTS



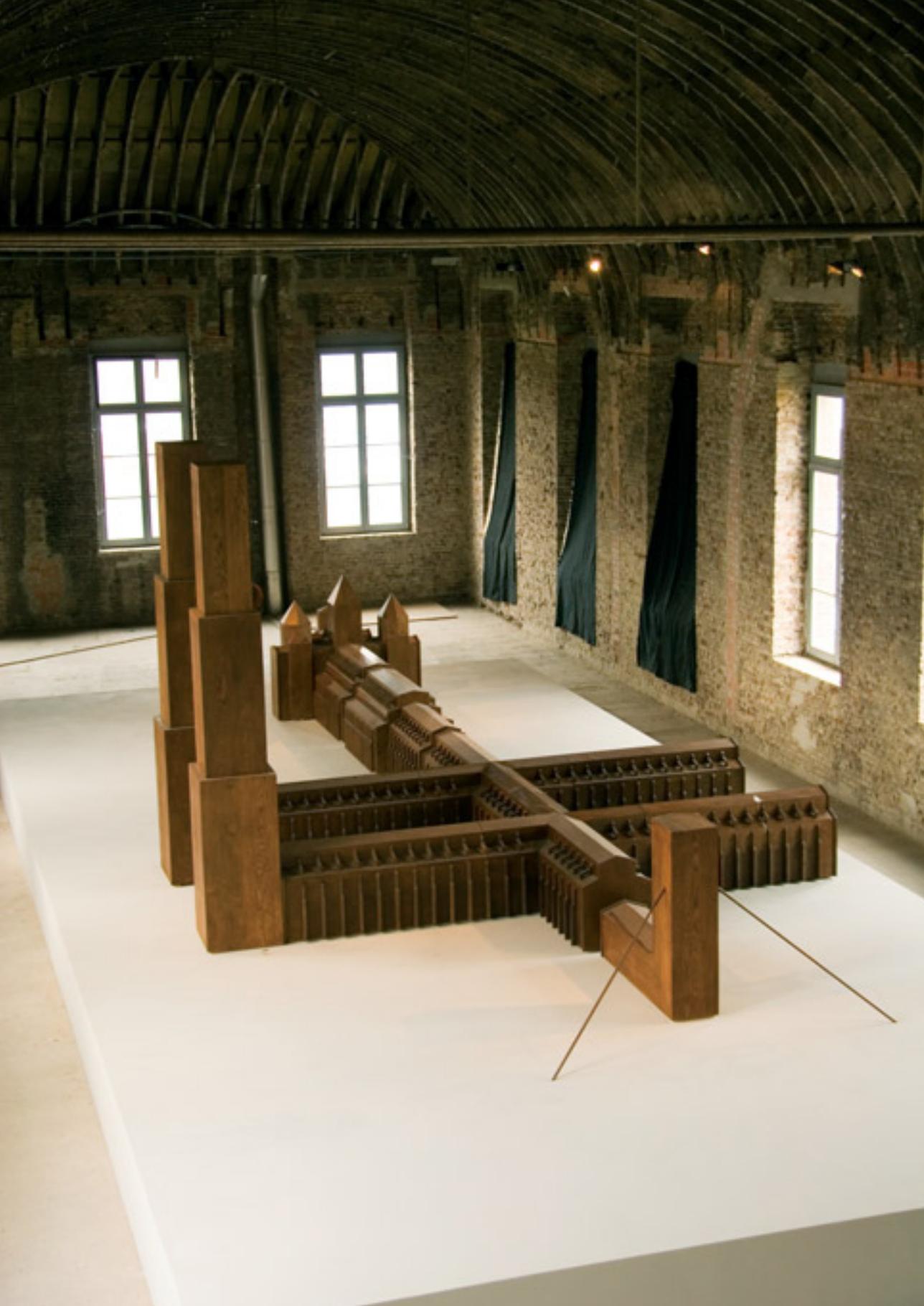
WOLFF PÖLLERER ARCHITECTS

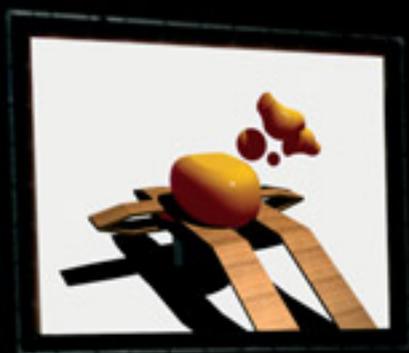


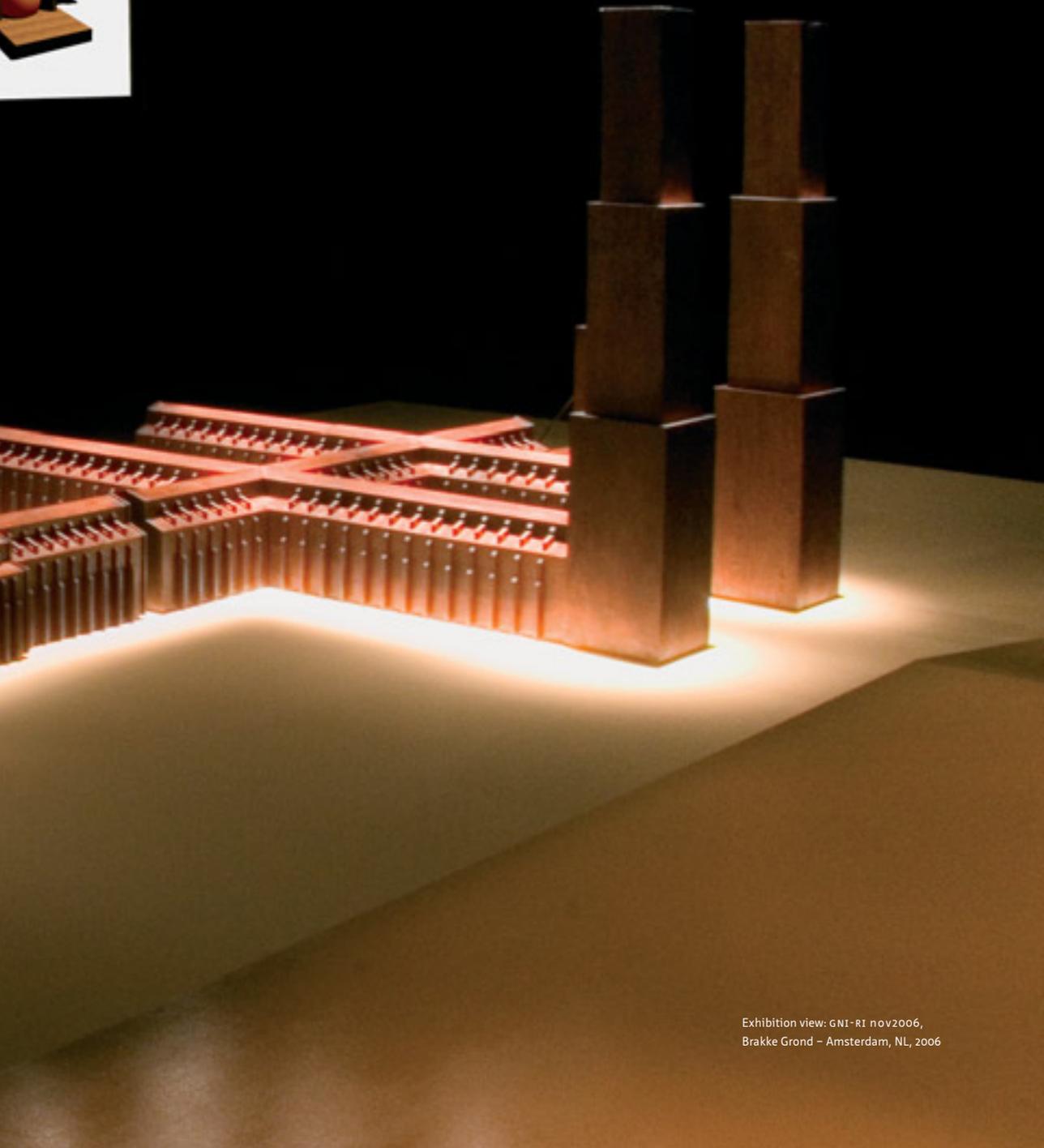
WOLFF PÖLLERER ARCHITECTS

GNI\_S\_WT\_19\_AUG06, 2006  
 C-print mounted on pvc  
 81 x 112 cm framed 105 x 136 cm

> IENULKAR, 2004-2006  
 Wood (oak), 330 x 1100 x 475 cm  
 Exhibition view: Persévérance,  
 Godshuis - St. Laureins, B, 2006







Exhibition view: GNI-R1 nov2006,  
Brakke Grond - Amsterdam, NL, 2006







## Biography (Selection)

### Nick Ervinck

Born 1981 in Roeselare, Belgium

lives and works in Kortemark, Belgium

1999-2001 University College Ghent, Faculty of Fine Arts: 3D

2001-2003 University College Ghent, Faculty of Fine Arts: Mixed Media

### Solo exhibitions

- 2004 Unlimited #8, The young ones, Art concern, Kortrijk, B  
Digital images and filmstudies, Kunsthalle Lophem, Lophem, B  
(curated by Roland Patteeuw)
- 2005 GNI-RI feb2005 – PART II, KC nOna's nOva, Mechelen, B  
Re-animating the City – PART I, Tijdelijke-Kunst-Zone, Ghent, B  
(curated by Guy Bovyn)  
GNI-RI may2005, Koraalberg – Antwerp,
- 2006 GNI-RI feb2006, Kunst-Zicht, Ghent, B  
(curated by Guy Bovyn)  
GNI-RI nov2006, Brakke Grond, Amsterdam, NL
- 2007 GNI-RI mar2007, Paparazzi\_, The Hague, NL

### Group exhibitions

- 2003 Provinciale prijs voor Beeldende Kunst West Flanders,  
cc Scharpoord, Knokke, B and Kapel van de Groeningeabdij, Kortrijk, B  
Coming People, SMAK, Ghent, B  
Grand Tour, Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Ghent, B  
Utopie van de Periferie, Aalst, B (curated by Jan De Nys)  
The sublime was yesterday – PART I, Tijdelijke-Kunst-Zone, Ghent, B  
(curated by Guy Bovyn)
- 2004 Summer exhibition, Koraalberg, Antwerp, B
- 2005 Art Brussel, with Koraalberg, Brussels, B  
Prix Godecharle, Koninklijke Academie voor Schone Kunsten, Brussels, B  
Suger-free, Netwerk, Aalst, B (curated by Paul Lagring)  
De Vizo verzameling, Galerie van Design Vlaanderen, Brussels, B  
Young Artists, selected by Philippe Van Cauteren, Ghent, B  
Mixed Media 2D, Art Track, Ghent, B  
Placenta 6, Antwerp, B
- 2006 Filiaal van de hemel, Stedelijk Museum Lokeren, Lokeren, B  
(curated by Christophe De Jaeger)  
Prix Médiatine, Wolu-Culture, Brussels, B  
Persévérance, Godshuis, St. Laureins, B (curated by Astrid David)  
Art Amsterdam, with Buro Empty, Amsterdam, NL  
Vision on creation, Mijngedouw Winterslag, Genk, B (with Flacc)

- Work, Buro Empty, Amsterdam, NL  
 Aanwinsten 2001-2005, collectie Provincie West Flanders,  
 Lakenhalle, Ypres, B  
 Ephemerality, Menen, B (curated by Christophe De Jaeger)  
 The Fortis Young Ones Award, Lineart, Flanders expo, Ghent, B  
 Progress, Provinciale prijs voor Beeldende kunst,  
 West Flanders, Be-Part, Waregem, B
- 2007 Open huis, Flacc, Genk, B  
 Art Brussel, with Koraalberg, Brussels, B  
 Art Amsterdam, with Koraalberg, Amsterdam, NL  
 Architect@Work, Xpohallen, Kortrijk, B

## Awards

- 2002 Four annual Provincial Prize for Fine Arts West Flanders: nominee  
 2005 Prix Godecharle: 1<sup>st</sup> Prize Sculpture  
 2006 Prix Maïis from the City of Brussels  
 The Fortis Young Ones Award: nominee  
 Four Annual Provincial Prize for Fine-Arts West Flanders: laureate

## Press, Publications

- 2003 Tania Ghyselinck, 'De wereld volgens Nick Ervinck',  
 Sabam Magazine, n° 32  
 Nick Ervinck, 'Coming People', Kunst Nu, September – October
- 2004 Stefaan Van Volcem, 'Nick Ervinck maakt project voor Kunsthalle  
 Lophem', Het Volk  
 Jeroen Laureyns, 'Aktuele Kunst, Pieter Bauters & Nick Ervinck',  
 De Tijd  
 Johan Debruyne, 'Computer als schetsboek', Brugsch Handelsblad
- 2005 Luc Lambrecht, 'Ongezoete Kunst', De Morgen  
 Christine Vuegen, 'Droommachines', De Huisarts
- 2006 Daan Rau, 'De grens tussen sculptuur en architectuur'  
 Openbaar Kunstbezit Vlaanderen, n° 6  
 Sam Steverlynck, 'Kunstcircuit', Gonzo circus, n° 78  
 Marc Ruyters, 'Nick Ervinck in de Brakke Grond', <H>ART, #15
- 2007 Gerrit Vermeiren, 'Progress en eclecticisme', <H>ART, #16  
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