

Jenkin van Zyl: Surrender

19 January – 4 March 2023

Opening reception | Thursday 19 January 6-8pm



Jenkin van Zyl's first solo exhibition at Edel Assanti transforms the gallery into an engulfing environment built around a new single channel film, *Surrender*.

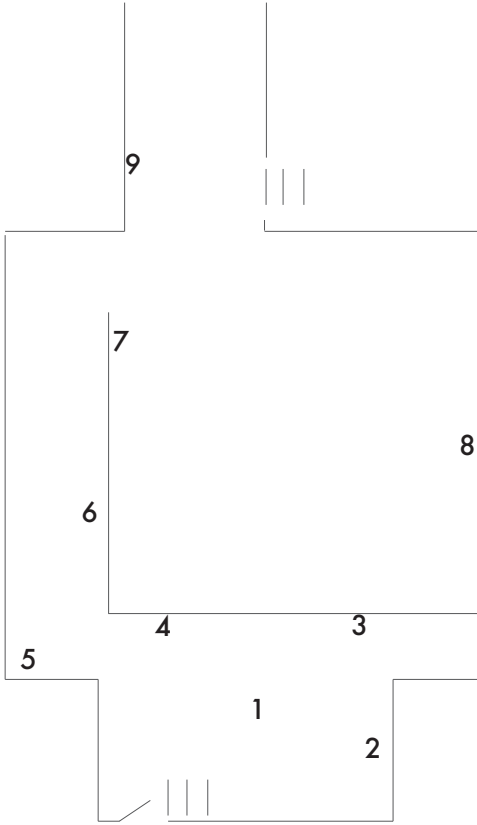
The exhibition is entered via the gaping jaws of an enormous inflatable rat sculpture, whose fleshy innards create a sculptural walkway leading to the inner sanctum of a love hotel, festooned with a canopy of bunting. At the centre of the installation, four beds mirroring one of the scenes from van Zyl's film serve as a viewing platform for the projection. Characteristic of his psychotropic style, the film melds the 20th century phenomenon of dance marathons – gruelling endurance competitions wherein couples participated in non-stop dancing for hundreds of hours – with the cryptid lore of the “rat king”.

Conjured with a queer irreverence attentive to the power of role-play and fantasy, the film undertakes a carnivalesque exploration of abandoned yet grandiose neoliberal landscapes; an underworld revolt of transient spaces encompassing the hotel, the stage and the set. The dance floor is the focal point of the film, where four rat couples expend themselves in increasingly bewildering tournaments that play with the limitations and expansiveness of the body. Within the exhibition, the rats' competitive challenges are memorialised in a separate mirror-lined trophy room, where plinths formed from towers of energy drinks glisten and interact with smoke drawings.

Jenkin van Zyl is an artist and filmmaker based in London with a multidisciplinary practice comprising film, performance, writing and sculpture. Van Zyl's work combines these disciplines in hallucinant, immersive installations, typically centred around film. Van Zyl's diverse frame of reference gives birth to fantastical communities inhabiting fleeting spaces: ghouls breeding cakes in aircrafts, inflatable beasts in a desert fortress, or rats writhing in love hotels. Binaries are displaced by instability, deviance and multiple selves. Beyond the screen, the protagonists and their worlds have a material legacy as “escapees”, in the form of sculptures and objects that pervade van Zyl's oeuvre.

Jenkin van Zyl (b. 1993) received a postgraduate degree from the Royal Academy of Arts, London in 2021 and was the recipient of the RA Gold Medal Prize. Recent exhibitions include *The Horror Show!*, Somerset House, London (2022); *Barbe à Papa*, CAPC Musée d'art Contemporain de Bordeaux (2022); *Machines of Love*, Tramway, Glasgow (2021); *Hors Pistes*, Centre Pompidou, Paris (2020); *Kiss My Genders*, Hayward Gallery, London (2019); *Oblivion Industry*, The Horse Hospital, London (2019). In March 2023, van Zyl will design the set for *Oozing Gloop* at Battersea Art Centre. Van Zyl lives and works in London.

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1. *Palace of Wasted Footsteps II*, 2023, Inflatable, bouncy castle blower, variable dimensions, ed. 3 + 2 AP

2. *Cryosuit*, 2023, Mismanufactured sleeping bag, transparent padlocks, seatbelts, energy drink canister, dog tag, hooks, 65 x 40 x 40 cm
25 5/8 x 15 3/4 x 15 3/4 in, ed. 8 + 2 AP

3. *One-half-of-GRACE canister*, 2023, resin, Citadel paint, Lamson pneumatic tube canister, 12 x 6 x 6 cm, 4 3/4 x 2 3/8 x 2 3/8 in

4. *Grace*, 2023, steel and plastic doorbell

5. *One-half-of-GRACE delivery box*, 2023, Lamson pneumatic tube system delivery box, resin, Citadel paint, Lamson pneumatic tube canister

6. *Rat King*, 2023, Lamson pneumatic tube system, variable dimensions

7. *P.E.E.P. Survival Cabinet 1*, 2023, Medicine cabinets, electroplated trophy, 2-way mirror, LED strip light, P.E.E.P. matchbook, 36 x 24 x 11 cm, 14 1/8 x 9 1/2 x 4 3/8 in, ed. 3 + 2 AP

8. *Surrender*, 2023, 4K single channel film, 48:46 min, ed. 3 + 2 AP*

9. *The Victory Ball*, 2023, Risograph print, perspex frame, holographic security sticker, 42 x 62 cm, 16 1/2 x 24 3/8 in. ed. 100 + 2 AP

* Credits for Jenkin van Zyl, *Surrender*, 2023:

One-half-of-GRACE played by Alex Margo Arden

One-half-of-GRACE played by Ted Rodgers

One-half-of-FAITH played by Emma Belabed

One-half-of-FAITH played by Max Cookward

One-half-of-JENNIFER played by Ayo Babatope

One-half-of-JENNIFER played by Finn Love

One-half-of-SAMANTHA played by Wet Mess

One-half-of-SAMANTHA played by Webster Opiyo

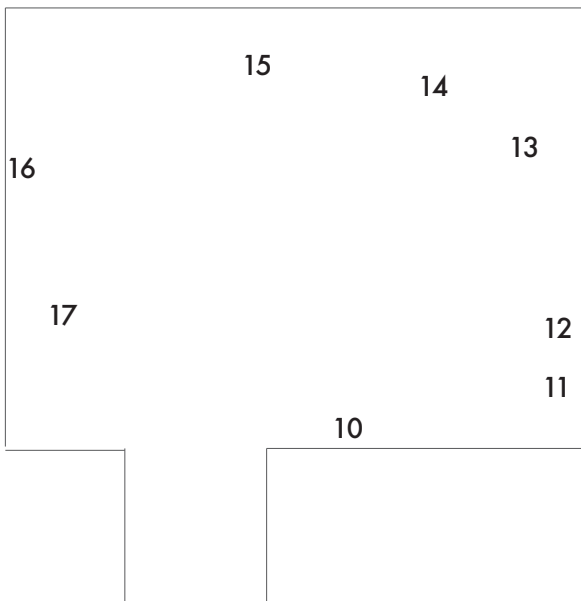
Maids, P.A.I.N. Nurses, Referees, Bellhops and Chauffeurs played by Theodore Pantelopoulos and Eugenia Shishkina.

Production crew: Baran Caliskan, Sam Keelan, Liv Preston, Agnieszka Szczotka, Jordan Tannahill, Betsie van Zyl, Piet van Zyl, Magda Viljoen, Magnus Westwell and David Wilson.

Primary camera, edit, sound design, set and costume by Jenkin Van Zyl

Second camera operation by Kevin Brennan.

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10 & 16. *Everybody Loves a Winner (ONE-HALF-OF-SAMANTHA)*, 2023, Resin, Citadel paint, ribbon, Lamson pneumatic tube canister, amyl nitrate, LED light, rosettes, paper, perspex cylinder, stickers, Limitless Growth energy drinks, pneumatic tube, Variable dimensions

11 & 13. *Everybody Loves a Winner (ONE-HALF-OF-JENNIFER)*, 2023, Resin, Citadel paint, ribbon, Lamson pneumatic tube canister, amyl nitrate, LED light, rosettes, paper, perspex cylinder, stickers, Limitless Growth energy drinks, pneumatic tube, Variable dimensions

12 & 14. *Everybody Loves a Winner (ONE-HALF-OF-FAITH)*, 2023, Resin, Citadel paint, ribbon, Lamson pneumatic tube canister, amyl nitrate, LED light, rosettes, paper, perspex cylinder, stickers, Limitless Growth energy drinks, pneumatic tube, Variable dimensions

15 & 17. *Everybody Loves a Winner (ONE-HALF-OF-GRACE)*, 2023, Resin, Citadel paint, ribbon, Lamson pneumatic tube canister, amyl nitrate, LED light, rosettes, paper, perspex cylinder, stickers, Limitless Growth energy drinks, pneumatic tube, Variable dimensions