

Marcin Dudek: NEOPLAN

31 May - 1 September 2023

Opening reception | Wednesday 31 May 6-8pm



Edel Assanti is pleased to present Marcin Dudek: *NEOPLAN*. The artist's sixth exhibition with the gallery runs concurrently with his solo show at Kunsthal Extra City, Antwerp, and the launch of his new monograph.

NEOPLAN harnesses the raw energy of a football fan club on the road to support their team at an away game in a hostile rival city. The imposing shell of a disused and disassembled tour bus runs across the gallery, branded "Neoplan" and painted with the snarling dog logo of Bucharest team FC Dinamo.

Dilapidated and bearing scars of its former life transporting fans and players across eastern Europe, the bus is closed on the side facing the gallery's entrance, whereas its other side has been completely removed, allowing exploration of its interior. Once entered, the bus unfolds into a world unto itself. Inspired by Polish artist Bronislaw Wojciech Linke's surrealist painting, *Autobus* (1959-1961), featuring a city bus overflowing with a slew of nightmarish spectres and human-object hybrids, the bus's interior is an echo chamber of visceral emotion and collective expression associated with the journey towards match day confrontation.

Inside the installation, bus seats anthropomorphize and contort, morphing into a section of stadium terracing representative of the final destination. Suspended above the bus, a large textile serves as its roof, constructed from second-hand clothes stitched together. Tracksuits, hoodies, jerseys and trainers are stitched together, acting as a haunting flag or monument to the crowd that inhabited this space.

NEOPLAN continues Dudek's practice of creating "memory boxes", installations archiving lost spaces specific to his own experiences yet emblematic of the latent toxicity and violence associated with the construction of group identity. Splayed across the gallery floor, several seats serve as sites for small film works, interacting with three wall-based collage works.

Diagrammatic in their form, each piece delves into individual biographies of several self-proclaimed football hooligans and thugs, putting faces to the narratives explored. The collages and installation are punctuated with fragments of stadiums, tickets, banners and other ephemera that comprise Dudek's vast ongoing research archive devoted to the subculture that possessed him during his teenage years as a member of a notoriously violent Krakow football fan club.

On the occasion of the exhibition's opening Dudek will perform a three-minute smoke grenade intervention. Using flares customarily ignited at football matches, a trail of thick orange smoke will create a claustrophobic atmosphere in the space, leaving a residue across the works and infusing the walls with the odour of fire and sulphur serving as an evocation of the volatile atmosphere associated with rival contests.

Dudek (b. 1979, Krakow) studied at the University of Art Mozarteum, Salzburg, and Central Saint Martins, London, graduating in 2005 and 2007 respectively. Forthcoming institutional solo shows include Kunsthal Extra City, Antwerpen, Belgium (2023) and IKOB, Eupen, Belgium (2023). Recent solo exhibitions include *Ultrasraina*, Centre Wallonie-Bruxelles, Paris, France (2021); *The Crowd Man*, MWW Wroclaw

Contemporary Museum, Wrocław, Poland (2019); *The Lure of the Arena*, MNAC National Museum of Contemporary Art, Bucharest, Romania (2019). Selected group exhibitions include *Art of the Terraces*, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, UK (2022); *Collapsing*, TEA Tenerife Espacio de las Artes, Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Spain (2022); 8th Biennial of Painting, Museum Deinze and Museum Roger Ravel, Deinze, Belgium (2022); *FUCK YOU*, Kunstenhuis Haralbeke, Belgium (2021); *DOPPELGÄNGER*, Entreprenre & KANAL-Centre Pompidou, Brussels, Belgium (2021); *Psychic Wounds: On Art & Trauma*, The Warehouse, Dallas, USA (2020); *Giochi Senza Frontiere*, Palazzo Mazzarino, Manifesta 12, Palermo, Italy (2018). Dudek's work is included in international collections including MWW Wrocław Contemporary Museum, Wrocław, Poland and National Museum of Contemporary Art, Bucharest, Romania. Dudek lives and works in Brussels.

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