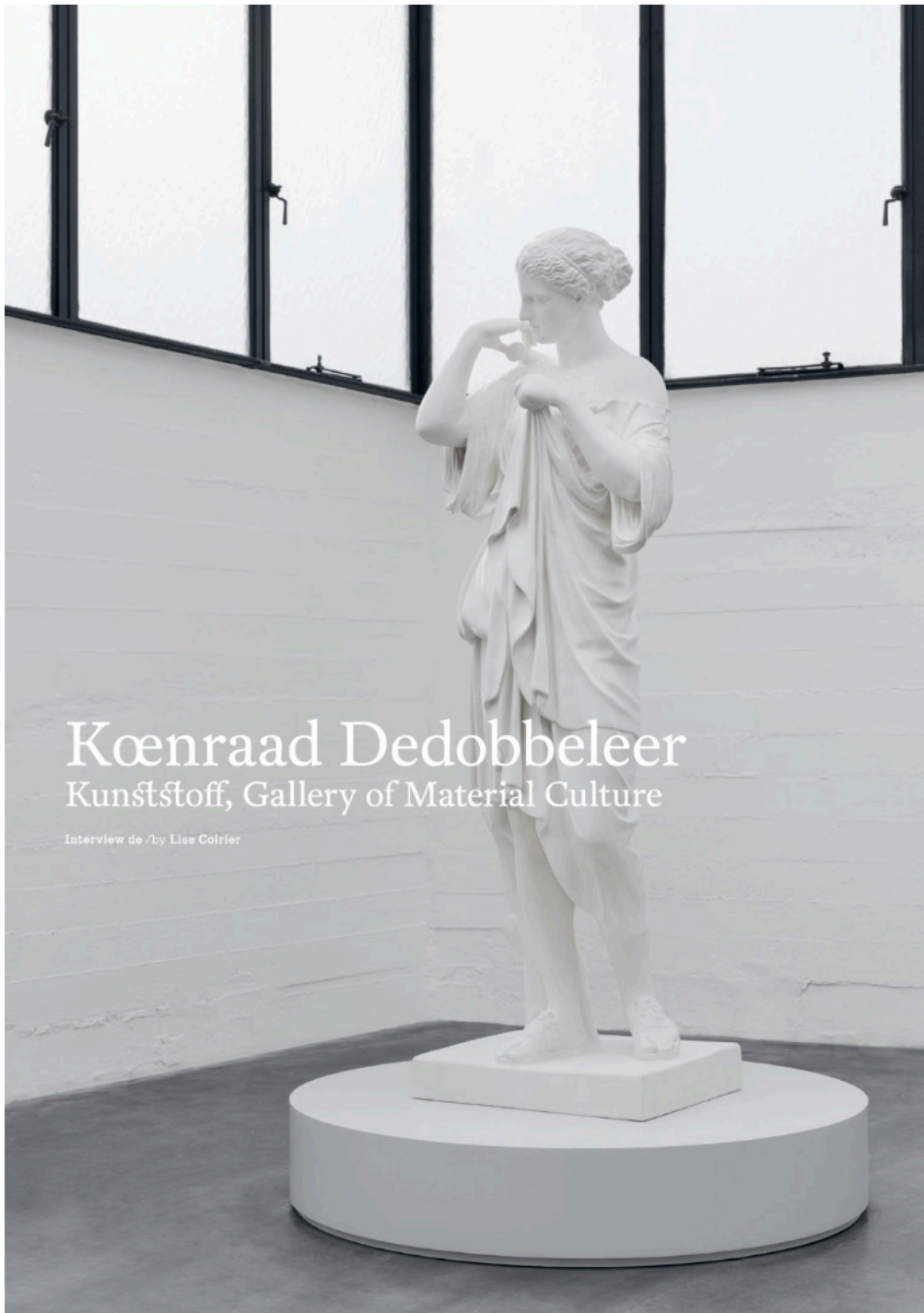




Koenraad Dedobbeleer
TL mag, 2018
(author: Lise Coirier)
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Koenraad Dedobbeleer

Kunststoff, Gallery of Material Culture

Interview de /by Lise Coirier

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✦ The plaster cast of the goddess Diana, titled "Nominal Representation" invites you to enter into Dedobbeleer's sphere of reflection around our Western Culture. Is our culture foundational, permanent, unchanging? He plays around the idea of the faces that were often changed on the statues in Ancient Rome in public space and decided at the end to portray here the face of his wife, Valerie Mannaerts. Art history, art mythology and how to frame and display the objects are central to his installations which have been first exhibited at Wiels Contemporary Art Centre in Brussels, before moving to the Kunst Museum Winterthur (through April 22, 2019), and then onto the Kunstverein in Hanover (July-September 2019). Supported by Henry Moore Foundation, CLEARING, Brussels/New York and other institutional partners, in his recent publication and this retrospective publication, Brussels-based artist, Koenraad Dedobbeleer, has brought together around 40 'living' artworks, interplaying with the man-made manipulations of nature and artefacts. Beyond the still-lives or the readymades, they are all appealing to our collective values and underlying material culture. TLmag spoke to Dedobbeleer at the opening of his exhibition at Wiels, or as curator Zoë Gray calls it, an "indoor sculpture park or architectural promenade... which evokes the classical museum display and furniture, as well as our more domestic environment," with a collection of books and a stove.

TLmag: You are fascinated by art history and mythology. How would you draw a portrait of your artistic identity and research in our contemporary times?

Koenraad Dedobbeleer: We cannot forget history. The present is actually based on a conception of what preceded. I have no special fascination for history as such: I'm not an historian nor do I see myself as nostalgic. It simply strikes me as unavoidable. Time, on the other hand, is what they are and we all try to deal with them, I guess.

TLmag: How do you connect your artworks to each other knowing that you include in your artistic process various media such as sculptures, photographs, a slide projection, a collection of books, works on paper and even the creation of a real functional stove?

KD: I assume that they connect themselves, or it is rather you, the viewer, that makes the connections.

TLmag: Would you talk about your practice that blends fine arts, design, architecture and scenography? How is your work being presented in Wiels in Brussels? What are the next steps to this exhibition "Kunststoff - Gallery of Material Culture"?

KD: It is a mashup of many elements and disciplines. Many things surround us and seem interesting. It appears that I am unable to make a choice. Displaying the work makes them finally meaningful in the sense that they only really can exist when they are shown or are being public. The exhibition is the essence of the work and the core of my praxis.

TLmag: You have a huge sense of humour and play with the ambivalence and dichotomy of mass produced objects and unique pieces. What is your primary mission as an artist?

KD: Just having a good time. These dances are ancient. We're just having a good time.

TLmag: Have you ever worked or co-created art pieces in connection with archaeologists? Would you be keen to get involved in this kind of collaboration?

KD: I don't know. Depends on the person. Why not?

TLmag: How would you define yourself if speaking about being an 'artist-archaeologist' today?

KD: I don't feel like one. ✧

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 #koenraadedobbeleer