

Parasol unit

foundation for contemporary art

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PARASOL UNIT IN ZUOZ

David Claerbout: *The Pure Necessity*

22 December 2019 – 7 March 2020

Location: Chapel of San Bastiaun, Zuoz, Switzerland



David Claerbout, *The Pure Necessity*, 2016. Single-channel projection, 2-D animation, stereo sound, 50 min. Courtesy of the artist.

Parasol unit foundation for contemporary art is pleased to present its second international project, *The Pure Necessity* by David Claerbout. The treasured Romanesque Chapel of San Bastiaun, in the village of Zuoz, Upper Engadin, Switzerland, provides a serene environment in which to view this intriguing work.

The starting point for Claerbout's full-colour 2D animation is the 1967 Walt Disney classic film, *The Jungle Book*. In his almost hour-long adaptation Claerbout reshapes the sentimental story of a young boy abandoned in the jungle as one in which the noisy, anthropomorphised troupe of dancing and singing animal characters behave as their species would do naturally. The original film's favourite characters Baloo, Bagheera and Kaa, whose delightful musical routines and witty dialogue have warmed the hearts of children and adults for decades, now behave like real animals, that is a bear, a panther and a python.

The choice to work with The Jungle Book was not accidental. The story is that of the strong and potentially cruel helping the weak, until emancipated and ready to face modern life. Around 1967, the individual did not look anything like the individual of today. The individual was a single brick in the architecture of society, today the individual is that society, millions of them. **David Claerbout**

Along with his team of professional 2D animators, David Claerbout has meticulously redrawn by hand each frame of the original film before assembling them to create an entirely new experience. His film, with none of the narrative thread and comical antics of the original, focuses on the animals with their actual characteristics. As the film unfolds against backgrounds recognisable from the Disney film, Claerbout captures the animals as they meander through the jungle – sleeping on branches, drinking from springs, slowly observing one another – accompanied by the sounds of their natural habitat. Their movements are created with such precision and duration that viewers are able to observe the drawings in detail. The reconstruction, although it appears somewhat familiar, has been given a different existence and thereby becomes a reflection on the distance between sentimental fantasy and reality.

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Silence and time are key elements of investigation in Claerbout's works. Here, tranquillity prevails, emphasising the ambient sounds of the jungle. The passage of time is cunningly conveyed as the animals at times appear almost motionless, behaving in a manner in complete opposition to the rambunctious characters in Walt Disney's version. Claerbout's works often depict some everyday activity or familiar event but as time slowly passes the viewer is faced with the dilemma of how to process this altered reality and the artist's intention. The works shift our established understanding of time and narrative and the relationship between them.

The exhibition is curated by **Ziba Ardalan, Founder, Artistic and Executive Director of Parasol unit**, and is the foundation's third collaboration with the artist David Claerbout.

Parasol unit would like to thank the village of Zuoz for their openness, support and generosity.



NOTES FOR EDITORS

Artist biography

David Claerbout, born 1969, now lives and works in Antwerp, Belgium, and in Berlin, Germany. His work is held in major public collections worldwide, including among others: Centre Georges Pompidou Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris, France; Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich, Germany; Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, Canada; The Museum of Contemporary Art, Los Angeles; and Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, USA. Claerbout has had numerous solo exhibitions internationally, including at: Kunsthau Bregenz, 2018; Schaulager, Basel; MNAC, Barcelona, 2017; Städel Museum, Frankfurt; KINDL, Berlin, 2016; De Pont Museum of Contemporary Art, Tilburg, Netherlands, 2009 and 2016; Kunsthalle Mainz, Mainz, Germany, 2013; Secession, Vienna, Austria, 2012; Tel Aviv Museum, Tel Aviv, Israel, 2012; Parasol unit foundation for contemporary art, London, UK, 2012; SFMOMA, San Francisco, 2011, USA; WIELS, Brussels, Belgium, 2011; Pompidou Centre, Paris, France, 2007; Kunstmuseum, St Gallen, Switzerland, 2008; and Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, Netherlands, 2005. From 1992 to 1995, Claerbout studied at the Nationaal Hoger Instituut voor Schone Kunsten in Antwerp, and from 2002 to 2003 he participated in the DAAD: Berlin Artists-in-Residence programme.

Exhibition Details

Promoted by: Parasol unit foundation for contemporary art, London

Curator: Ziba Ardalan

Address: Chapel of San Bastiaun, San Bastiaun 3, 7524 Zuoz, Upper Engadin, Switzerland

Opening times: Every Saturday and Sunday: 4-6:30 pm

During Engadin Art Talks - 25 and 26 January 2020: 10 am-6 pm

22 December 2019 - 5 January 2020 and 1-23 February 2020: Tuesday-Sunday: 4-6:30 pm

Admission: Free entry

For further information or visual material please contact

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About the Chapel of San Bastiaun, Zuoz, Switzerland

The **Chapel of San Bastiaun** is a late Romanesque chapel built in the thirteenth century in the village of Zuoz in the Upper Engadin region of Switzerland. It has an original stained-glass window by the artist Gian Casty, and fragments of frescoes from the fifteenth century. After the Reformation the chapel was dedicated to St Sebastian. In 1963, it was bought by the Municipality of Zuoz, and after thorough restoration, the chapel once again became a reformed parish church.



About Parasol unit

Founded in 2004, **Parasol unit foundation for contemporary art**, London is a non-profit art institution and registered educational charity that operates purely for public benefit. Every year the foundation organises challenging and thought-provoking exhibitions by British and international contemporary artists who work in various media. Thanks to an innovative model between private funding and public support one of London's most vibrant contemporary art spaces has come to exist and thrive.