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Institut français des Pays-Bas

the wet wet wanderer is curated by Natasha Hoare.

Para | Fictions

the wet wet wanderer is part of *Para | Fictions*, a cycle of sustained investigations taking as its focus the relationship between literature and visual art through the practice of ten artists; Daniel Dewar & Grégory Gicquel, Calla Henkel & Max Pitegoff, Mark Geffriaud, Laure Prouvost, Oscar Santillan, Dineo Seshee Bopape, Lucy Skaer and Rayyane Tabet.

Para | Fictions is supported by AMMODO.

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Laure Prouvost *the wet wet wanderer*

27 January – 2 April 2017

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“When I double speak, laughing and vomiting by the swing-bridge, then my language exits through a trapdoor.”

the wet wet wanderer is a new work by Laure Prouvost developed from a sequence selected from the seven part feature-length film *The Wanderer* (2012). The latter mis-translates fellow artist Rory Macbeth’s mistranslation of a Kafka novella from German with no knowledge of the language or a dictionary. In the ‘wet sequence’ section of the film we follow the progress of Gregor, a tortured writer daubing paper with squid ink; a novel in the making, a mind unraveling, time stalled, distended, and looping.

Prouvost’s installation transforms the ground floor of Witte de With into a sodden sub-aqueous bar, laced with squid ink and dotted with vodka fountains. Plays of projected light cast over objects intensify intoxicatedly as day moves to night. Combining sculpture, video and sound, the form of a mundane high street commercial space is defamiliarized and shot through with a Kafkaesque narrative overlay that metamorphoses literature into space, film into sculpture. Here language is as slippery as a squid, function as deceitful as fiction.

the wet wet wanderer follows previous works in Prouvost’s oeuvre in building an immersive installation with which to frame audio and film works. These set an encompassing mood and wrong-foot interpretation, seducing and provoking the viewer to become an active part of the fictions she concocts. Here, wetness is the central theme in a melancholic and visceral space of rain, water, fish tanks and the body of the squid. In our protagonist Gregor the trope of the tortured alcoholic writer and doomed lover is absurdly magnified to melodramatic proportions. The figure of the squid, a primordial creature that simultaneously embodies both pulpy disgust and aquiline beauty; twin bodily affects engendered by the work. The squid has long been a fascination to Prouvost as a creature whose highly developed consciousness precedes our own by millions of years; here the sea as the birthplace of the mind cues the complexity of the act of creation.

Included works:

Citizens or Gods (2017), *the wet wet wanderer* (2017), *resin piece 3 & 4 (language exit)* (2017), *Untitled* (2017), *Exhaust drawings (Naomi)* (2015), *Exhaust drawings (Yannick)* (2015), *Metal men - Surfer with mop* (2015)

All works courtesy of the artist, carlier | gebauer, Berlin and Nathalie Obadia, Paris / Brussels

Laure Prouvost

Laure Prouvost (b. 1978, FR) is working between Antwerp and London. In 2011 she received the Max Mara Prize for Women, after which Prouvost was the first French artist to win the prestigious Turner Prize for contemporary artists living in Great-Britain.

Upcoming solo exhibitions include a year-long commission at Haus der Kunst, Munich; in addition to a major touring exhibition which will travel through MMK Frankfurt, Frankfurt; Kunstmuseum Luzern; and Le Consortium, Dijon. Additional upcoming solo exhibitions include Hangar Bicocca, Milan; Fahrenheit, Los Angeles; Centre for Contemporary Art Lاذnia, Gdansk and Walker Art Centre. Minneapolis and Experimental Media and Performing Arts Center (EMPAC), Troy.