

PRESS RELEASE

BLIND MAN'S BLUFF

24 February – 30 March 2024

Annet Gelink Gallery is proud to announce *Blind Man's Bluff*, a group exhibition on the theme of play. The exhibition features work by Ryan Gander, David Maljković, Antonis Pittas, Josse Pyl, Lara Schnitger, Sarah van Sonsbeeck, and, for the first time, Michelle Chang Qin.



When it comes to the relation between art and play, many conflicting opinions circulate. However, putting theoretical discussion aside, there are certainly similarities to be found. Both art and play involve creation and imagination, experimentation, participation, chance, or strategy. Both have a degree of unexpectedness, at times humour. Art and play also include speculation, being able to imagine what is not [yet] there, creating worlds. *Blind Man's Bluff* shows works that touch on the theme in various ways: conscious or subconscious, politically charged, by chance or within a fixed set of game rules.

Blind Man's Bluff is a way of playing tag, in which the challenger is blindfolded and thus must rely on alternative senses to find the other person. In the context of this exhibition, the game refers to the unseen and imaginary, introspection, the uncertainty of the future and the leap of faith, as well as the challenge of not knowing. From behind the blindfold, the challenger is forced to draw on their imagination, thus visualising a new version of the world around them.

In his work, **Josse Pyl** creates his own linguistic world with an internal, grammatical logic. He dissects language in all its facets - as culture, as speech, as play - and goes back to its principles: signs become letters become words, cast in a sequence, or spoken through lung, tongue, and tooth. Pyl transforms signs into material and objects into symbols, with an important role for the unsaid.

Antonis Pittas works with iconography and modernist dreams, exploring how utopian expectations can turn into their opposite. The works on display are interactive: by photographing them with flash, the image inverts, creating a play between the visible and invisible.

In his multi-faceted, conceptual work, **Ryan Gander** makes associative and visual what is generally understood as linear, rational, and linguistic. In doing so, he occasionally works with (his own) children, who he believes possess creative qualities that many adults lose the moment they acquire cultural baggage. The works on display are chapters of an unfinished collection of poetry, a fusion of language and image, humour, and poetry.

Lara Schnitger uses traditional crafts to express gender-based expectations. With sharp irony, she paints, weaves, and sews impressive and unapologetically feminist works. She mimics female sexuality and the female body, in what is considered the accepted representation of women in a patriarchal society.

Sarah van Sonsbeeck's *Moles of Modernism* are a playful ode to art history and chance. The mole is usually seen as a pest but appears to play an important role in maintaining a vital ecosystem.

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Van Sonsbeeck executed the molehills in different materials, leaving part of the outcome to chance. They have been acquired by the Kröller Müller Museum.

In his work, **David Maljković** follows a set of formal guidelines, focusing on visual language and the language of painting. In doing so, he draws on art history and the principles of painting. In *The Pictorial Code* shows a scenario of a painter in a forest landscape using a Cézannesque painting technique. Background and motif intertwine in this painting, painting and painted blend into one, in a play of revealing and concealing.

Michelle Chang Qin recently graduated from De Ateliers. In her work, she collects and explores various materials to construct places of memory, literature, and fantasy. Her recent work deals with processes and products of labour, and their absence, such as forgotten histories of collective memory or lost rituals.