

The Last Cowboy

Aaron-Victor Peeters invites



UITSTALLING
ART GALLERY

Aaron-Victor Peeters

Joris Van de Moortel

Lisse Declercq

Lukas Gilissen

Niels Vaes

Peter De Meyer

Vincent Egon Verschueren

In 'The Last Cowboy' Aaron-Victor invited 6 artists to join him in an exhibition where artists explore the disappearance of the mythical figures that once formed the foundations of our collective imagination.

From cowboys to explorers, these figures that shaped our image of freedom, adventure, and heroism are also the product of stories that do not always reflect reality. The cowboy, as we know him, is actually a construct of cinema and folklore, a product of a society that wanted to create a certain ideal.

The Last Cowboy questions us: what remains of these figures, and what does this tell us about how we construct history and identity? In a time when the boundaries between truth and myth are becoming increasingly blurred, we reflect on what it means to enter the "last frontier" of our stories.



AARON-VICTOR PEETERS

Peeters is known for his unique exploration of the car as the ultimate metaphor for being on the road—transforming it from a simple vehicle into a powerful symbol of status, desire and myth. From the most unexpected angles, he dissects the car as a sacred cow, machine, alternative living room, and even an erotic object.

Following in the footsteps of modern and contemporary artists like Edward Kienholz, Wolf Vostell, and Andy Warhol, Peeters creates works that reflect the mechanical anatomy of cars, the social and cultural possibilities they represent, and their often unspoken emotional or erotic connotations. His practice moves effortlessly between sculpture, performance, and post-pop art, bringing fresh and provocative insights into everyday objects. In Peeters' world, a Mercedes engine block becomes an icon, while fuel tanks—suspended upside down and adorned with collages of naked women—explore the boundaries of taboo and artistic freedom.



This piece is inspired by the secret rooms that used to be found in video stores. These rooms include pornographic films. As children, we would often try to see what was beyond the curtain in this chamber. However, the artwork is merely a front for this chamber, which represents the desire for a God or truth in film, as well as all that cinema attempts to offer us. A search that frequently yields no results.

Untitled (Hardcore films, continuous show), Mixed materials, Approx 300x300cm



Selfportrait as cowboy - Polaroid, 2 x 9x10,5cm

These polaroids fit in a series of work where I collect old clothing and dress up as different figures throughout history. Just like little kids I transport myself in time and place while dressing up for no particular occasion.



'Wauw amazing', Portrait of Eddy Wally - Acrylic on canvas, 40x29,5cm, 2016

Eddy Wally is often seen as the self-proclaimed Flemish Elvis Presley. Eddy Wally built his fame by dressing himself in glitter costumes and using iconic filler words and claiming to be the voice of Europe. This portrait is based on a meme that was shared worldwide on social media towards the end of his life. The reality is that Eddy Wally's music has never been listened to as often as the internet meme was shared.



Before I turn 50 - Motorcycle with stone ball and chain, size varies, 2025

My mother always claimed she wanted a motorcycle before turning 50 years old. So one day I decided to buy her a motorcycle. In my artistic practice I am often occupied with the dream or the idea that an object transcends. The motorcycle has unfortunately never been driven, due to the lack of knowledge about the motorcycle I had. Inspired by the Daltons from Lucky Luke comics, I have chained the engine to a stone ball. This ball is the proverbial "block on the leg" a dutch saying that means "a liability". In society we are often confronted with dreams and expectations, that we can not always fulfill.





The Last Cowboy - Indian ink on paper, 6 × 79×47cm, 2025

These portraits are made from cheap masks that you can often find in carnival shops. These masks offer a cheap solution for boys and girls who want to follow their dream as a superhero.



Donald Duck - Oil and carpaint on canvas, 100×94,5cm, 2022

This painting is part of series where I portrayed childhood heroes.



JORIS VAN DE MOORTELE

HELL ON EARTH, in search of PUR, NUR and FUR

Joris Van de Moortel works on a multidisciplinary oeuvre that explores the boundaries of art forms and challenges conventions. His chaotic aesthetic and deep-rooted creative urge form a unique universe that opens a critical dialogue on the complex relationships between nature, culture, art, religion and contemporary society.

The studio and exhibition space function as a modern alchemist's laboratory, a place in which imagination and reason merge, and a mine from which the artist extracts materials and ideas. Van de Moortel transforms them into mystical feelings and thoughts, resulting in artworks that guide us in a rapidly changing world.

The artist explores the intricate and layered relationships between past, present and future, and how they shape us as we navigate between life and death, history and progress, ruthlessness and hope. In 'Hell on Earth', S.M.A.K.'s main front gallery is transformed into a sacred, total installation. New oil paintings, watercolours, models, sculptures and tarot cards meet film, performance, sound and music in a setting that testifies to a profound search for a new myth and spirituality, a fresh paradigm to encompass reality between past and future.

'Hell on Earth' is not so much an observation of the surrounding chaos, but rather an invitation to reflection and action. Where are we? According to Van de Moortel, we are in the NUR, between the PUR and FUR. But where precisely is that? Accompany the artist on his pilgrimage, of which this exhibition is a stopover, as he urges us to recognise our responsibility for restoring balance to the environment. For this restoration, we must find and reclaim our **soul**, reconnect it with the **soil**, and plant our **heart** in the earth like a **seed**.

This exhibition is a call to shatter the apathy and ignorance that grips our society. It conjures an apocalyptic image that reflects our current times, but also marks a new beginning. One in which art is the ultimate vehicle for revealing the journey's deeper meaning as a collection of imagined memories.

Is this the last cowboy?

Material: guitar, neon, wax, hat, steel, amplifier, looper, guitar case, wax candle, oil on linen, wood, 12 string semi-acoustic guitar, 2025

Courtesy Joris Van de Moortel & Galerie Nathalie Obadia Paris/Brussels





Baby

50×70cm - Oil on linen, 2024

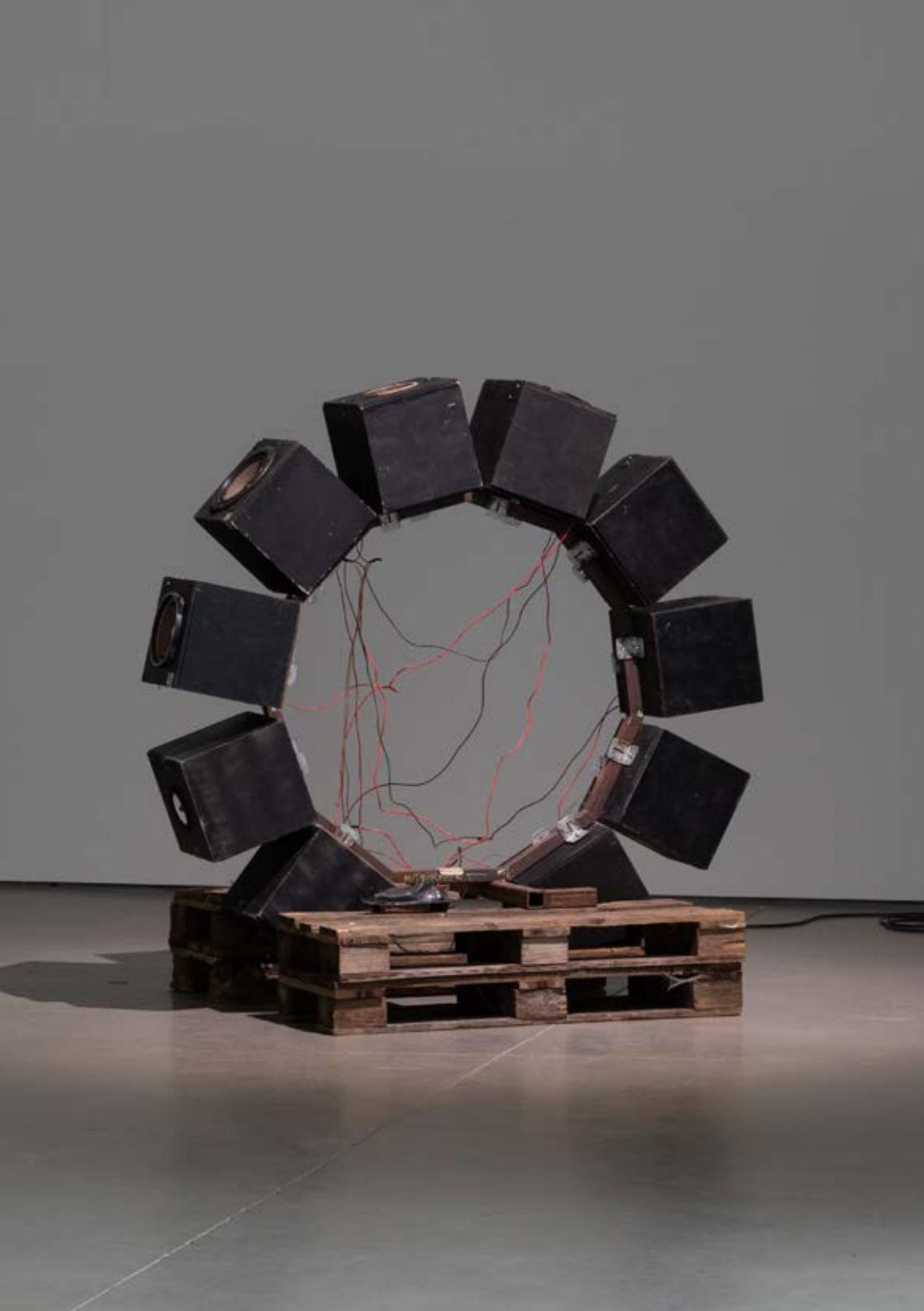
Courtesy of the Artist and VETA by Fer Francés.

LISSE DECLERCQ

German-born, Belgian artist Lisse Declercq is known for the visual pleasure within her artistic practice and for the specific methods in which she works.

Declercq elaborated her painting techniques and foundations by watching makeup tutorials on Youtube. She bends this language to stage social selfies, an awareness of a certain reality, and its effects on ways of looking.

In this culture of the copy, this millennial painter moves between fantasy and reality while calling into question authenticity. Declercq questions the longing for perfection, the copy-paste Instagram/ media aesthetics as an impossible, endless battle of unwillingly and unknowingly playing a part in a “reality show” in a virtual media reality.



LUKAS GILISSEN

Lukas Gilissen tries to see his artistic practice as a game in which no idea is too absurd and no destination too far away. Within his young practice, he tries to translate vague boyhood dreams into discoveries around camaraderie, freedom, and play. These themes translate into sculptures, performances, and happenings with an interest in appropriate aesthetics, honesty, and a yearning for roughness.

Circle Array

Circle Array is a sound installation where Lukas drew his inspiration from the rave culture, where entire walls are built with speakers. By placing these speakers in a circle, Lukas gives a nod to science fiction with portals to other worlds. What these other worlds are, Lukas leaves up to the viewer.





ROUGHHOUSE 2 Video, size varies

ROUGHHOUSE 2 is a short film that originated from a performance in which Lukas engages in an old-fashioned wrestling match with friends. In a world where machismo is banished, Lukas seeks the aesthetics and beauty hidden in boyish wrestling and testing each other's boundaries.







Heart of Darkness with Some Princess
Acrylics and spraypaint behind glass - 80×106cm, 2022

NIELS VAES

Niels's work blends experimental paintings, sculptures, and graphic interventions, often in installation-like combinations. His process starts with intuitive material experiments, yielding images between figuration and abstraction. A prime example is his reverse glass series, using acrylic and collage behind glass, achieving a digitally suggestive finish. Beyond glass, Niels crafts sculptures and ceramics, infusing the familiar with innovative perspectives. His art aims to resonate through texture, shape, and color, exploring human-image connections.

Niels aims to intrigue the viewers by inducing estrangement and disorientation, inviting them into diverse worlds of personal, historical, and social narratives. Folklore and cultural traditions inspire his exploration of history's impact. He delves into contradictory themes like creation and violence, bridging the past and the present.

Drawing from artistic legacy, Niels seeks to create deeply rooted yet innovative works, bridging tradition and modernity.





WE ARE ALL HANGMAN
 Ceramics - 40×40×35cm, 2021



Welcome to the chakra party
 Mixed media - 170×90×220 cm, 2025



PETER DE MEYER

It is not easy to categorise the carefully constructed oeuvre of Peter De Meyer (b. 1981) into one box. De Meyer plays with the unwritten rules of minimal art and conceptual art, thereby stripping them of a sometimes stifling seriousness. In this way, he exposes a lack of sense of perspective, humour, poetry, or romantic enthusiasm in the art world. In his installations, sculptures, objets trouvés, and conceptual interventions, De Meyer introduces small shifts in context and meaning. Through a subtle play of associations with objects, he pierces through common expectations. In this way, De Meyer exposes, among other things, the vanity that lies behind the stereotypical 'roles' of gallery owner, art lover, and artist. By constantly putting his audience off balance, the artist invites them to approach 'Art' (with a capital A) with a healthy sense of perspective.

Text by Dennis Van Mol

Big Bang

Aluminium - 120×70×90cm, 2021

Big Bang is a baseball bat mounted on a tripod as a telescope. The work draws attention to the overwhelming power of looking and the viewer, thereby referring to the way we construct history and identity in different times.

My arrow

Metal and plastic - 89×3×3cm, 2019

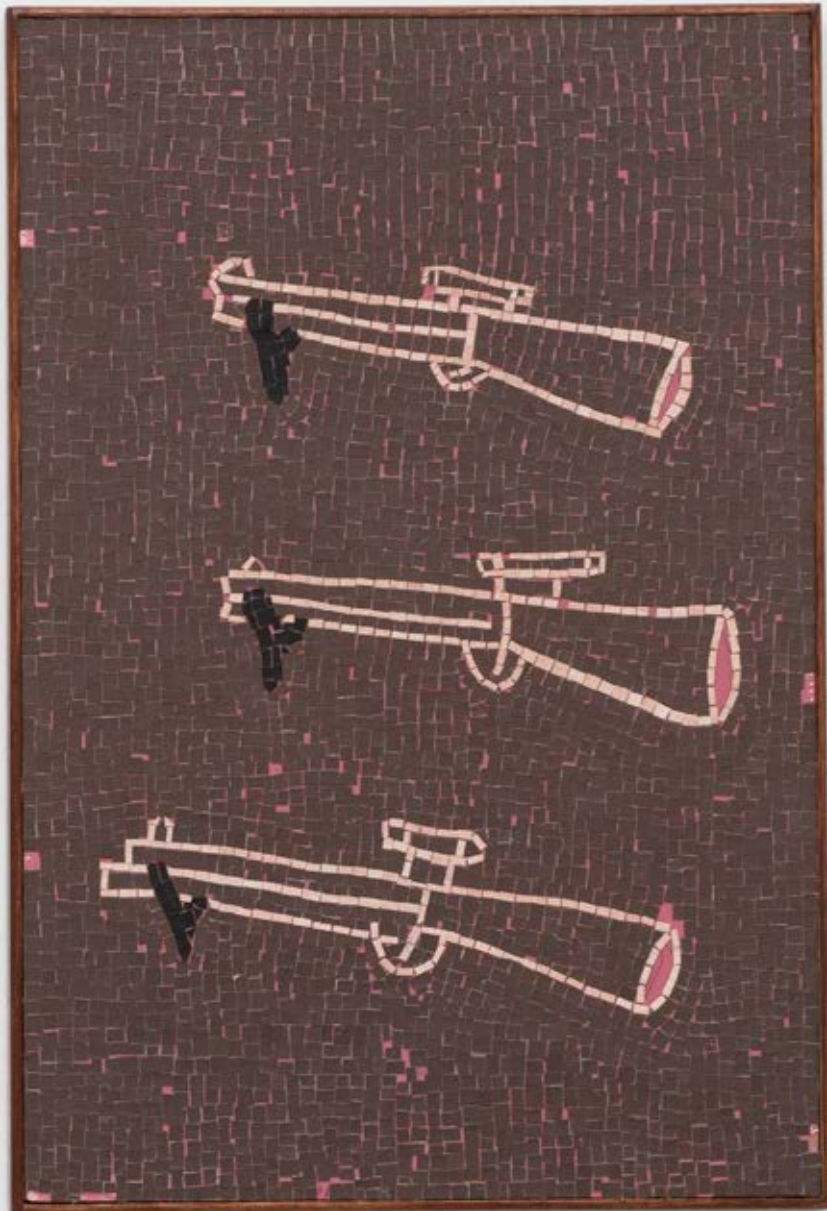
My arrow are two fused arrows pointing at each other. The work refers to an inner tension, an inner conflict. The fact that the arrows point towards each other can be seen as a futile action, since the goal will never be achieved. It fits beautifully with the theme both literally and figuratively, with the tension between reality and fiction, reality and ideal.



VINCENT EGON VERSCHUEREN

Vincent Egon Verschueren (b. 1991) is an artist based in Antwerp. His practice draws mostly from found imagery taken from film, television, the internet, and art history, which he reworks across media such as painting, video, and photography. By layering and reinterpreting these found visual elements, he explores how personal perspectives and collective symbols merge and shift.

He holds a Master's degree in Philosophy from the University of Antwerp and a Master's in Visual Arts from Sint Lucas Antwerp. His work has been exhibited at venues including SECONDRoom, CID Grand-Hornu, and Onboards Biennale. In 2021, he was awarded the jury prize at Onboards Biennale.



For these two paintings, Vincent Egon Verschueren revisited drawings he made as a child in primary school. These early drawings—often filled with violence, weapons, and heroic figures—reflect how deeply film, comics, and the news influenced his imagination at a young age.

In *Riding Horse* and *Three Guns*, Vincent Egon isolates and reinterprets a single fragment from these childhood images: not the central figure, like a cowboy or soldier, but a secondary element—a horse or a weapon—is extracted and reconstructed in a mosaic of painted linen.

Through this act of reconstruction, Vincent Egon not only seeks to look at the visual language of his childhood but also to show how archetypes, symbolism, and mythology are internalized and reproduced. Each work is both a tribute to and a re-coding of what was once seen, drawn, and re-seen as a child, an echo of early image-making that was shaped by culture and memory.

Three Guns

Wood and wooden frame, acrylic, watercolor, linen - 42x28cm, 2025



Riding Horse
Wood and wooden frame, acrylic, watercolor, linen - 42×28cm, 2025



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