



Daniël Dewaele

The Passage Room – About Bruges and Other Places – Help Station Square and Bruges Train Station

'What if Bruges' five million annual visitors were to stay?' This is the premise of the Bruges Contemporary Art and Architecture Triennial 2015. The Belgian artist Daniël Dewaele takes this hypothetical scenario literally and explores its ramifications in three projects. He poses questions to visitors that prompt them to speculate about their new citizenship of Bruges.

Projects with a social dimension

Daniël Dewaele sees himself as a pacesetter. His artistic practice focuses on developing projects. All his undertakings reveal a strong commitment to social issues. The topics that arise from the Triennial's theme, therefore, are pertinent to Dewaele: population growth, the resultant increase in urbanisation and the impact on a historic city such as Bruges. The residue of Dewaele's projects primarily consists of photographs and documents but also of collections of opinions. He uses sociological methods, such as interviews and surveys, to gather this information. He also uses this approach for his Triennial project: Dewaele invites people to respond to questions as though they were candidates for Bruges citizenship.

The Passage Room (to become a new citizen of Bruges)

This work comprises a container that is installed on the square in front of the train station, where large numbers of tourists and commuters pass every day. The container is open and accessible to everyone. It forms a participative space.

Inside, there is a display with questionnaires and several booths so that people can fill in the questionnaires in privacy. Visitors then deposit the completed forms in a box. The questionnaires are translated into nine languages, including Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, English and Spanish. Questions include: 'If you were to live here, in what language would you like to be addressed?', 'If you were to live here, what mode of transport would you like to use?' and 'If you were to live here, which religion would you like to profess?' The answers are subsequently presented on a wall of the container.

This open container can be perceived as a transitional space in which people share their most basic requirements for joining Bruges society. The sum of all the responses to the questions should provide a picture of the imaginary 'candidate's' sensibilities



About Bruges and Other Places

Daniël Dewaele hands the stage to the public during a video in which people on the street answer the question: 'If you lived here, what aspect of your own culture would you not wish to give up?' The video is being screened in the Bruges train station.

Help

Dewaele also designed badges with the text 'Help, I'm the 5,000,000th resident of Bruges'. This text is translated into the nine languages of potential future residents of the city (including Spanish, Arabic, Chinese and Hindi). The badges are available from all the triennial information counters.

These three projects dovetail perfectly with the Triennial's theme. However, Dewaele is not a utopian. He does not conjure images of the future, nor think in metaphors. He harbours more of an ethical viewpoint than an aesthetic one and deals with the here and now. True to his artistic practice, Dewaele's projects engender more questions than they attempt to answer.

Bio Daniël Dewaele

Daniël Dewaele (°1950, Knokke, BE) began his career as an artist in the mid 1970s. His work consists of installations, performances, videos and photography. While the media he uses has varied over the years, the search for the meaning and value of art and its resulting social relevance are consistent themes in his work.

In the late 1970s, Dewaele began a series of works that use the word 'art' as though it was an institution that had a viewpoint to defend: the slogans 'Art against Apartheid' and 'Art against Unemployment' were stencilled on to banners and carried at demonstrations. Words and language fascinate Dewaele, especially abstract word pictures, that is, an indecipherable language that can only be appreciated aesthetically. On the occasion of Bruges 2002, Cultural Capital of Europe, he negotiated front-page space in the major newspapers for an article in the language of a fellow citizen from an immigrant background. He thus confronted the average Dutch-speaking newspaper reader with the frustrating experience of being unable to participate. Dewaele turned the tables and thereby underlined the chasm between art and society.

Daniël Dewaele has been handing out cards printed with the words '*You are my favourite work of art*' at private views since the 1970s. This statement remains relevant. It tells us everything we need to know about his perspective on art as well as his warm appreciation for humanity.

www.bamart.be/persons/detail/nl/130



Visitor information

20.05 - 18.10.2015

The Passage Room
Stationsplein, Bruges
Open Tue-Sun 9.30 am-6 pm
#THEPASSAGEROOM

About Bruges and Other Places
Ticket hall, NMBS station, Bruges
Open Monday-Sunday 8 am-24 am

Help
Badges: available from all Triennial info counters

Further press information

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Bruges Contemporary Art and Architecture Triennial 2015 **20 May – 18 October 2015**

What if Bruges' five million annual visitors were to stay? What if a small, preserved, historic city should suddenly become a megapolis? This is the premise for the Bruges Contemporary Art and Architecture Triennial 2015. Eighteen international artists create new works that form an art trail through the city centre. Three indoor exhibitions provide the opportunity to further explore and contextualise the topics. Bruges is transformed into Urb Egg: the Triennial cracks the egg of Bruges in order to reinvent the city from the inside out.

Information and programme: www.triennalebrugge.be
Facebook: Triennale Brugge 2015
Twitter: #TRIEBRU15



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