

VIDEO ROOM

Jos de Gruyter & Harald Thys

Jos de Gruyter (*1965), and Harald Thys (*1966) live and work in Brussels

The collaborative work of de Gruyter and Thys casts a withering glance upon the world and the human relations that make up the fabric of life. Their videos feature everyday scenes (family, friends, hobbies, marginalisation etc.) re-enacted by amateur actors and, in some cases, even puppets.

The stories mumble and stutter along. The characters are aphasic, mute, and visibly stupid. Relationships are troubled, even bordering on the perverse. The sheer banality of the decor, or rather the backdrop, in which the action takes place, is unsettling and sinister, indicating mental and psychological states that are at once apathetic and terrifying.

It is precisely at this intersection between the physical and the mental space that their criticism of social conformity gushes forth: “The suffocating side effects of normalcy on these characters pushes them to the limit, and it’s precisely here, at the borderline between two worlds, that one can grasp onto something vital.”

Since their first joint work in 1987 (while they were both students) de Gruyter & Thys have had solo exhibitions in institutions such as PS1 MoMa, New York (2015); Power Station, Dallas (2015); Art Unlimited/ Art 41 Basel, (2014); Kunsthalle Wien, Vienna (2014); MHKA, Antwerp (2013); Kunsthalle Basel (2010). They have also taken part in the Venice Biennale (2013), at the exhibition *Slip of the Tongue* organised by Danh Vo, Punta Della Dogana, Venice (2015), and the Berlin Biennale (2008).

Films shown:

- *Die aap van Bloemfontein*, 2014. 23 min.
- *Les Enigmes de Saarlouis*, 2012. 18 min.
- *Het Geel van Gent*, 2005. 10 min.