

**Exhibition documentation**

Bas vd Hurk

Organising the Non-Obvious I

ZINGER*presents*, Amsterdam

18 March – 24 April 2010

**Exhibition Texts Bas vd Hurk**

**Bas van den Hurk**

'Organising the Non-Obvious I'

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Opening 18 March 17.30 – 20.00h.

ZINGERpresents is pleased to announce *Organising the Non Obvious I*, the debut exhibition of Bas van den Hurk at ZINGERpresents. The artist will for his exhibition bring together an installation of new works that tear away at the formal and formulaic conventions of painting.

“From the fuliginous flatness of the fifties to the pop op minimal sixties right on through the now-you-see-it-now-you-don't seventies”, This blurb lifted from the back flap of my fittingly worn 1989 Black Swan copy introduces *'The painted Word'*<sup>1</sup>, a book that describes modernism's purported colonisation by a select stronghold of cultural theorists in the latter part of the last century. I purposely throw up this stark but bleak work of social criticism by Tom Wolfe, as when confronted with the work of Van den Hurk the feeling encroaches upon you that your guided through the same tunnel as Wolfe puts you through, in his 120 pages of art world exposé. Where Wolfe mob handily lines his victims up chronologically, Van den Hurk handles his painting like a producer would composing a mash-up; Delicately allowing his protagonists to dance alongside another between the cracks and on the graves of outworn ideological and theoretical models.

Van den Hurks paintings with their unnerving but beguiling sense of déjà vu absorb a multitude of connotations in a non-conformist manner. In many ways Van den Hurk hands his audience the keys to the kingdom. A sequence of recognizable influences *CHECK*, subversive yet delicate collage elements *CHECK*, defaced surfaces *CHECK*, all perfectly palpable and understandable. But whilst the keys to the kingdom are dangling in front of your eyes, like the gold chains and kitsch necklaces that dangle from the canvasses, you become aware you have only entered Level One. By the time you realise your facing an uphill battle closer aligned to Scientology than Kafka, the work starts throwing up a conundrum of philosophical debates about its own presence and validity of existence. Plato, Benjamin, Borges, de Man and all the others whom ask questions that require no answers are brought into play to both clarify and obscure the hidden motives behind the fundamentals of these unassuming modest works. Whilst the keys are still dangling within touching distance, one realises to get to the essence of these works will mean getting to the essence of art, debunked of the fraudsters that Wolfe singles out and away from flat-pack prescribed ideologies, here you are alone, Level One, with some serious auditing to be done and no e-meter<sup>2</sup> to hand.

Steven van Grinsven, 2010

An essay by New York based curator Jan van Woensel will accompany the exhibition.

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<sup>1</sup> The painted Word by Tom Wolfe, 1975, originally appeared in Harpers Magazine in April 1975.

<sup>2</sup> The Hubbard Electrometer (E-meter) is an electronic device for measuring the state and change of state of humans used in the 'religion' of Scientology

## **Muddy Disco**

*An introductory text about the work of Bas van den Hurk by Jan van Woensel*

“Stick out your tongue”, the opening song of New Wet Kojak’s 1995 self-titled album, begins with a smooth bass line instantly overpowered by a horrific, shrieking saxophone. Scott McCloud’s deep, sensual voice sings “You know, when the puzzle pieces, all fit into places, I love you baby”. New Wet Kojak is drugged-out, groovy lounge rhythms and melodies with a thin veil of early U2 that is both strange and creepy. With their loosely scattered hints of muddy rock, funky beats, seductive voice and lyrics, and jazzy smoothness, the band’s unusual and eccentric musical style reminds me of the work of Dutch painter Bas van den Hurk.

Like New Wet Kojak, Bas van den Hurk’s work doesn’t have a uniform style; he makes use of a variety of recurrent traditional and untraditional artistic elements. Whereas at first sight the artist’s paintings look like the temporary and fragmented results of an enduring investigation of the limits of abstract painting, they also offer escapades into other concepts and visual directions. Effortlessly and virtuously, Van den Hurk combines muddy paint with brightly colored scrap paper or fragile feathers, collaged fragments with lipstick, and canvas with necklaces. These combinations of media and technique offer an intriguing insight into the painter’s work and artistic research that is not as much about the end result as it is about the blend of elements, debris, fragments, impulses, sketches and thoughts. By doing this, the artist critically questions the moment upon which a painting, or any artwork, reaches its eventual state of balance or unbalance; the moment when the painter has to recognize the painting as a thing *an sich*, even though it will always remain something embedded in a state of uncertainty and temporality. In this way the imperfection of a painting will reveal its true perfection, and the fragility of the used mixed media will reveal the artworks’ solid constructions. In a self-written text, van den Hurk comments that his artistic process is “about working with the longing itself”. The artist refers to his two parallel but autonomous projects as “Organizing the Non-Obvious I” and “Organizing the Non-Obvious II” as events, rather than finished, definite presentations of his recent work. Like an event, his painting is a temporary and time based work, and longing is the state of mind in which the artist finds himself. This longing implies the inevitable passing of time and the gradual movement towards a certain desired fulfillment that, when finally reached, ultimately brings an end to the desire. But Bas van den Hurk chooses to creatively work with this longing, within the time and space of it, and with the feeling of not yet reaching his destination or goal. This artistic and conceptual state of conscious hesitance and restraint is of great importance in the oeuvre of the artist. On one hand, it is an oeuvre that experiments and leaves things undecided, undefined, uncommitted, and unbound, and on the other hand it is rooted in a longing for an ever-postponed organization of those scattered elements, with the event (of painting) as the only alternative presentation format. This thoughtful interplay with the position, meaning and value of his paintings, but also his personal artistic process is charged with a positive potentiality, rather than a desire to traditionally define.

Bas van den Hurk’s oeuvre is one that moves in all directions, often in unpredictable manners and with sensitive attention for the non-obvious. Through this process the artist reaches the boundaries of his painterly experimentations, trying to avoid the puzzle pieces from fitting in their assumed places. By leaving things undecided, scattered and seemingly unintentional, Bas van den Hurk postpones his oeuvre constantly. He uses the uncomfortable space of longing as his resource for artworks that continue to intrigue.

Jan Van Woensel is an independent curator based in New York City, U.S.A  
Text edited by Lynn Maliszewski

**Exhibition Installation Images Bas vd Hurk**



Bas vd Hurk  
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Installation view ZINGERpresents, Amsterdam  
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**Exhibition Individual works Bas vd Hurk**



Bas vd Hurk  
Untitled  
2010  
Stretched fabric on stretcher  
40 x 40 cm



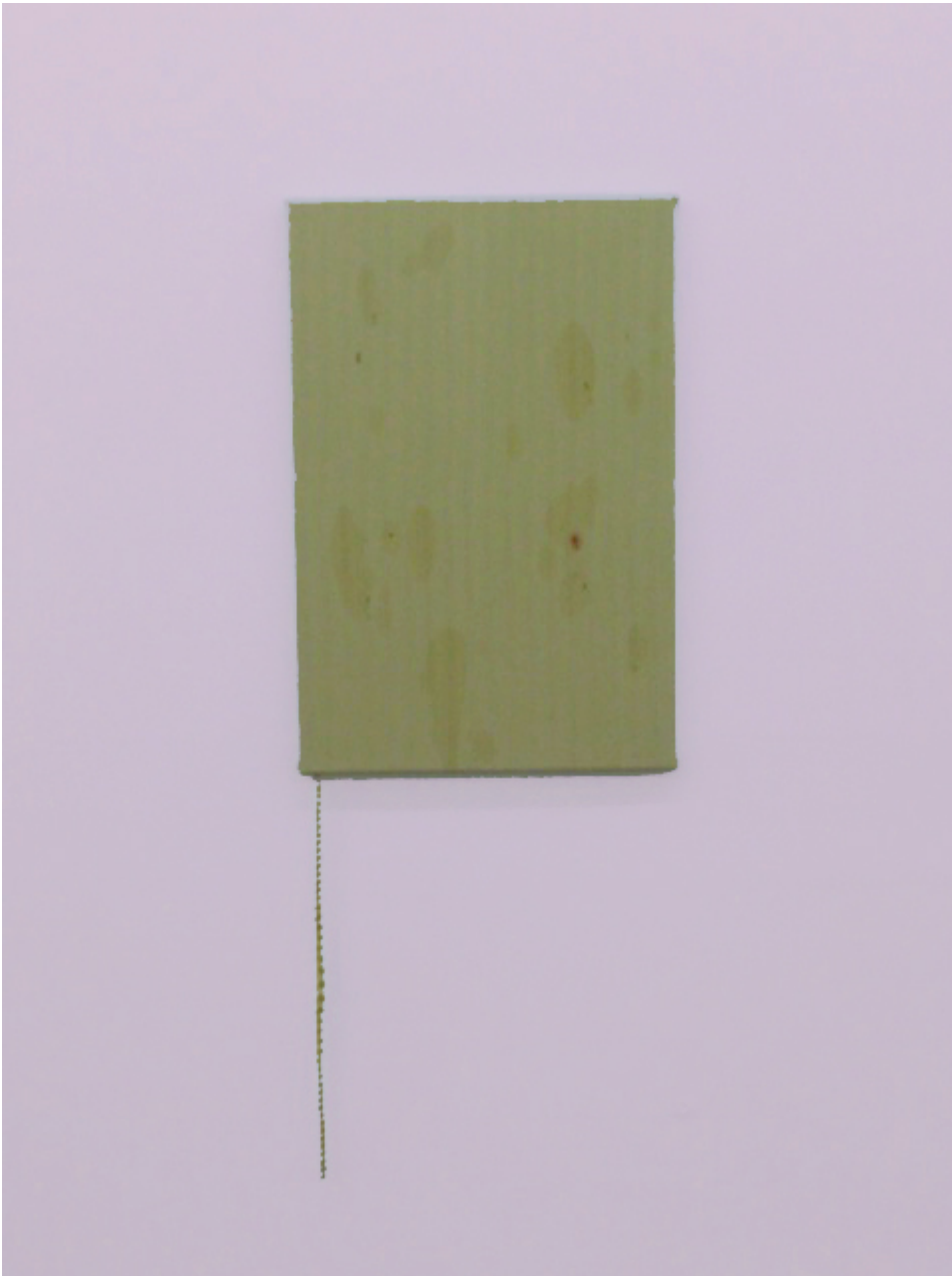
Bas vd Hurk  
Untitled  
2010  
Oil on canvas  
100 x 80 cm



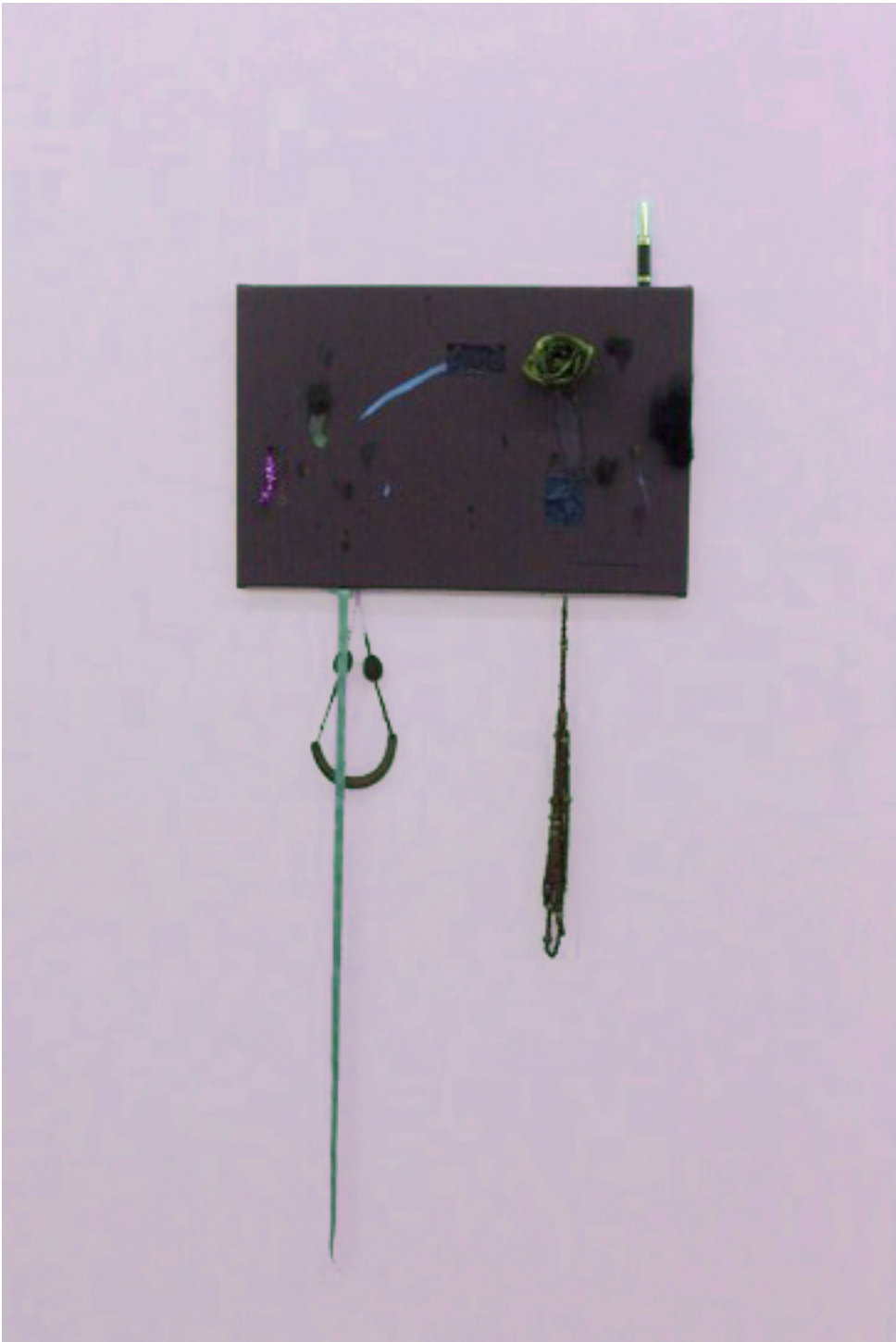
Bas vd Hurk  
Untitled  
2010  
Oil and acrylics on fabric on stretcher with pendant  
100 x 80 cm



Bas vd Hurk  
Untitled  
2010  
Oil on canvas  
40 x 30 cm



Bas vd Hurk  
Untitled  
2010  
Medium on fabric on stretcher with pendant  
60 x 60 cm



Bas vd Hurk  
Untitled  
2010  
Oil, wrappers, fabric, eyeshadow and oil on canvas with pendants  
40 x 60 cm

**CV Bas van den Hurk**

**Bas van den Hurk**

Tilburg, The Netherlands

Education

MA Philosophy, University of Amsterdam

BA Philosophy, University of Tilburg

Fine Arts, St Joost Academy, Breda

Solo Exhibitions

2010 Organising the Non-Obvious II, Rod Barton, London

2010 Organising the Non-Obvious I, ZINGER*presents*, Amsterdam

2009 New Work, Kokon, Tilburg, The Netherlands

2006 Film V, Kokon, Tilburg, The Netherlands

Group Exhibitions

2010 One place after Another, Curacao, Dutch Antilles

2010 Platinum Metre, Aschenbach & Hofland Galleries, Amsterdam

2010 B-sides and Rarities, Extra City, Antwerp

2010 @ Temporary Gallery Cologne, Cologne

2010 Making Do: Uses and Tactics II, Kaplans, Chicago, USA

2010 Making Do: Uses and Tactics I, BKKc, Tilburg

2010 The Non-Obvious Bar, Boadicea, London

2010 The Destroyed Room, Perron 58, Tilburg

2010 The Destroyed Room, The Forgotten Bar, Berlin

2010 WhatBar #6, Perron 58, Tilburg

2009 B-sides and Rarities, Lokaal 01, Breda

2009 Auf der Spitze des Eisbergs, Rod Barton, London

2009 Encountering the City, City Art Gallery, Breda

2009 3.3. Gallery 48, Breda

2009 On a clear day I can see forever, The new sentimentality, BCM, Tilburg

2009 Gallery, Gallery, Gallery 48, Breda

2009 Puebla, Mexico & Centro Cultural Huamanga, Ayachucho, Peru

2009 Se Permuta, Museo de Arte Contemporaneo, Oacaca, Mexico

2008 Boznov, Residence Boznov, Czech Republic

2008 But if not, not, Metafora, Barcelona

2008 038, Book launch Fonds BKVB, Amsterdam

2008 U Hosencongres, NS 16, Tilburg

2008 Chevou, Residence Chevou, Chevou, France

2007 BigPOWERSmallWORKS, Kathereze, Tilburg

2007 Hermitage van Helmond, Helmond, The Netherlands

2007 Travaillan, Travaillan, France

2007 GHB, Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, The Netherlands