



## PRESS RELEASE

### 'FAIR ENCOUNTERS'

#### FIRST SOLO SHOW BY DIRK EELEN AT HUSK GALLERY 10 NOVEMBER – 21 DECEMBER 2019

Husk Gallery has the pleasure to present Dirk Eelen's first exhibition in the gallery at Rivoli Brussels. *Fair Encounters* is the Belgian painter's solo show with a complete series of new works, all with references to the seventies and eighties.

*Fair Encounters* is a solo exhibition with two recent series of paintings by Dirk Eelen. The Belgian painter worked intensely on a series of new oil paintings for the exhibition at Husk Gallery in Brussels. In line with previous works, he presents childhood memories as well as frozen images of time. Nostalgia represents the central thread in Dirk Eelen's recent works. In both series, he merges personal and collective memories.

The discovery of an old 8 mm film about a Flemish school fair from Eelen's youth served as the initial starting point for *Fair Encounters*, the first series of works. Among others we can see the artist as one of the toddlers in a specific temporal context. In a way, the seed for later friendships and relationships is captured on film. Dirk Eelen captures the ambiance of this animated event in a number of frozen images with vaporous colour. The bustling atmosphere, the visitors, the children, etc. evoke the personal history, including all the whether or not chance encounters.

In *Untitled*, the second series, he submerges the spectator in a Lynchian universe. In this enigmatic series, Eelen provides the spectator with little guidance. The basis for this series was a documentary film, yet no reference to time and place is given. The locations and characters are unrecognisable. Some of the images might suggest that the story is set in the seventies or eighties. The works trigger an uncomfortable feeling, the gloomy colours create a tense atmosphere, similar to a menace. An empty room, views on the motorways, a forest landscape, a young woman, etc. What is the correlation? What is the story behind these images? As a spectator, you are automatically in search of a narrative in this intriguing series.

Dirk Eelen is an artist pur-sang with a broad oeuvre of paintings. The Belgian painter explores specific themes and uses 8 mm films and/or photographs for his paintings. He investigates their narrativity via a thorough selection of stills or photographs, which he presents in series. His iconography is mainly figurative in a representative meaning. He creates series with portraits of human figures, natural landscapes and scenes of contemporary history. His style is a reminiscence of the masters of Spanish painting of the 17th century. The smooth surface of his oil paintings relates to their Tenebrist style with dark backgrounds. In first instance, it appears as if Dirk Eelen's paintings are characterised by a subdued colour pallet and modelling light, which provides the subject with a soft touch. Dirk Eelen presents a contemporary perspective to painting by the representation of his own perception of personal and collective memories with an extraordinary intimacy.

**Dirk Eelen** (°1974, Leuven, Belgium) lives and works in Leuven. After graduating in archaeology at KU Leuven University, he followed his passion for painting by obtaining a master's degree of Visual Art at Sint-Lukas Brussels. Since 2004 he is a full-time painter. Solo exhibitions include *Shallow Waters* (2019) and *Nuit debout* (2018) in Gallery 15/17, Antwerp, Belgium; *Il faut cultiver notre jardin* in Chateau de Voltaire, Ferney-Voltaire, Switzerland (2016) and *Syria - as seen on YouTube* in the Egg, Brussels, Belgium (2013). He has also taken part in several group exhibitions in Belgium and abroad.

#### Opening weekend

Sunday 10 November 2019 from 3 to 7 pm

Monday 11 November 2019 from 1 to 7 pm

#### Opening hours

Gallery opening hours during exhibitions > Thursday, Friday and Saturday from 1 to 6 pm

Rivoli Open Sunday > 1 December 2019 from 2 to 6 pm

**For further inquiries:** [info@huskgallery.com](mailto:info@huskgallery.com) – Tel. +32 478 52 16 46 – [www.huskgallery.com](http://www.huskgallery.com)

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