



PRESS RELEASE

SOLO SHOW DIRK EELEN

SURVEILLANCE

12 MARCH – 29 APRIL 2023



'Tear Gas 02' by Dirk Eelen, 2023, oil on canvas, 100x180 cm

Husk Gallery is pleased to present 'Surveillance', the third solo show with Dirk Eelen in its gallery space. Dirk Eelen presents two new series of oil paintings on social control mechanisms. Through his keen powers of observation, he once again turns his gaze to themes that are ubiquitous in our society. 'Surveillance' is an exhibition about controlling the behaviour of individuals and groups in our society. In the series 'Traangas', Dirk Eelen portrays recent confrontations between governments and insurgents in the public space in his paintings. For his second series 'Surveillance', he painted alienating images from security cameras.

In contrast to previous series such as 'Into the Gathering', Dirk Eelen did not personally stage his compositions for '**Tear Gas**'. Instead, for this series, he searched for images of riots and uprisings where the government uses tear gas to suppress deviant behaviour of groups. We're all familiar with television images and/or press photos of the police using tear gas or water cannons to suppress riots. Dirk Eelen selected various images of protests in different countries. He then consistently used the medium of oil paint to record this social phenomenon as a painter of contemporary history. He doesn't tell us the exact location or cause of these events. In this series, he depicts the chaos and disorientation that arise during these events. The gas spreading in the clouds dominates the composition of each painting. The protagonists, law enforcers versus demonstrators, are literally engulfed in this foggy atmosphere. As spectators, we watch contemporary social tumult from a safe distance, as if contemplating a sublime cloudscape by Turner or a critical moment in a historical battle.



'Surveillance 01' by Dirk Eelen, 2023, oil on canvas, 45 x 65 cm

Dirk Eelen's preference to let the spectator draw their own conclusion and provide a minimum of contextual information himself is also evident in his second series '**Surveillance**'. As in his earlier series 'Security cam', he again drew inspiration from the images captured by security cameras. Each work offers us a glimpse into various scenes: people in a swimming pool, a street scene, a flood, etc. At first glance, these appear to be stills of realistic video images, intended to detect catastrophes or intruders, but nothing is what it seems. The paintings are not based on real images. Instead, Dirk Eelen used AI to generate the photographic images. Each painting can be understood as a kind of contemporary 'ekphrasis', a concise verbal description of the subject of a painting. Dirk Eelen initially described each image to the AI software, which converted it into a fully artificial image. The artist then reproduced this image in the characteristic painting style. The artist defines the content and style, but the concrete images are fictional. It raises the question of who has ultimate control of camera recordings. By generating his 'Surveillance' images based on artificial intelligence, he imperils the authenticity of security footage. The new series of paintings is presented in a installation reminiscent of a 24/7 multi-screen control room.

Short CV



Dirk Eelen is an artist pur sang, with a wide painting oeuvre. He explores specific contemporary themes by carefully selecting and analysing stills or photographs. A keen observer of human behaviour in our Western society, he usually chooses figurative subjects, which he explores in separate, narrative series. He is notable for his classic oil painting technique and great attention to composition. His paintings with modelling lighting on a dark background are reminiscent of the 17th-century Spanish masters, among others.

Short artist's CV

Dirk Eelen (°1974, Louvain) is a Belgian artist who lives and works in Louvain. After graduating in Archaeology at KU Leuven University, he obtained a master's degree of Visual Art at Sint-Lukas Brussels. Since 2004 he is a full-time painter. In 2019 Dirk Eelen has been awarded with the first prize of the fifth Open M contest, organized by Museum M in Louvain. Solo exhibitions include *Into the Gathering* (2023) and *Fair Encounters* (2019) in Husk Gallery, Brussels, *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

Sunday 12 March 2023 from 2 to 7 pm in the presence of the artist

Extra Opening Days

16 April 2023 from 2 to 6 pm

23 April 2023 from 2 to 6 pm

Opening hours during exhibition

Thursday, Friday and Saturday from 2 to 6 pm
or by appointment

For further inquiries:

Contact Ingrid Van Hecke – Gallery Director

Mail info@huskgallery.com

Tel. +32 478 52 16 46

Website www.huskgallery.com

Address Husk Gallery

Rivoli Building ground floor, Chaussée de Waterloo 690 #12, 1180 Brussels

Facebook: @huskartgallery - Instagram: @huskgallery - #dirkeelen #surveillance