

# KETELEER GALLERY

With *The Space Between Us*, Keteleer Gallery presents an exhibition that unfolds at the intersection of art, architecture, and the urban landscape. The work of gallery artists Luc Deleu & T.O.P. office, John Kørner, Luca Monterastelli, and invited artists John Körmeling and Koen van den Broek promises a multifaceted exploration of the urban fabric. At the heart of the exhibition lies the concept of 'space' and the diverse ways in which it can be visualized, interpreted, and experienced.

The five artists engage with an urban context, responding to the layered forms and structures of the contemporary urban environment. They closely examine its mutable, erratic spaces, exploring and drawing inspiration from the myriad forms comprising urban society. This ranges from both conceptual and concrete fascinations with public spaces, traffic infrastructure, architectural volumes, or post-industrial aesthetics, to a critical attention to processes of change in the urban living environment and the pursuit of social interaction. Instead of merely serving as representation or imagery, the artists employ their work as a means for investigation, introspection, and reflection.

Luc Deleu (b. 1944. Duffel, BE) is a Belgian conceptual artist, architect, and urban planner, as well as the senior figure among the artists represented by Keteleer gallery. When Deleu and his wife Laurette Gillemot founded T.O.P. office in 1970, they were acutely aware of the societal power of architecture, as well as the importance and urgency of harnessing it. For Deleu, architecture is an uncompromising tool to interpret and continuously question the scale of the world. Armed with a relentless yet humorous logic, a deep belief in individual freedom, and a strong commitment to ecology, T.O.P. office continues to challenge both citizens and politicians—always uninvited, but simply because it's necessary. The fact that most of their projects will never be built has become secondary. They exist and persist, demanding attention.

In the exhibition, Luc Deleu & T.O.P. office presents works out of the series *Scale & Perspective* and his *Proposals 1972-1980, Revisited 2002*, on an image from *Darling Springs*, a digital laboratory model, a virtual 3D scheme of a city, as general as possible, to continue to organize and shape our common world. Completed in 2024, *Darling Springs* is the culmination of many different aspects of the work of Luc Deleu & T.O.P. Office, created over a period of more than fifty years. Early 2025, Hopper & Fuchs is publishing a comprehensive retrospective covering sixty years of T.O.P. office / Luc Deleu.

John Körmeling (b. 1951. Amsterdam, NL) is an architect and artist based in Eindhoven, known for his innovative approach to large-scale public art and urban design. His work lies at the intersection of architecture, art, design, and urban planning, with a focus on the concept of "space" and how we engage with it. Körmeling's projects are characterized by a blend of idealism and humour, often offering creative and unorthodox solutions to urban challenges related to space, housing, and mobility.

Körmeling practices a form of "conceptual" architecture that defies conventional categorization. Through his ironic and witty designs, he simplifies complex issues and highlights the absurdities within them. Some of his most notable works include *Happy Street*, the Dutch pavilion at Expo 2010 in Shanghai, and *Drive-in Wheel*, featured in Panorama 2000 in Utrecht. In Belgium, he is well-known for the striking yellow beach pavilion in Knokke, created in collaboration with Compagnie O architects, and *Artiesteningang*, a highly photogenic piece in the Middelheim Museum.

John Kørner (b. 1967, Århus, DK) is a Copenhagen-based artist best known for his vibrant and bold paintings. At first glance, his work appears playful and light, but beneath the surface, Kørner addresses pressing societal problems like prostitution, war, consumerism, and climate change. For more abstract and difficult-to-visualize problems, Kørner often uses colourful ovals of varying sizes to symbolize these challenges.

In his ongoing series *Understanding the Impact of Architecture* and his recent cardboard sculptures, Kørner explores how architecture influences society. With more than half of the world's population now living in cities, urbanization has led to the rise of immense buildings made of materials like glass and concrete. Kørner examines how these structures affect us: Does scale alter our perception of buildings? Can architecture become overbearing? What is our relationship to nature within urban spaces? Rather than providing clear answers, Kørner presents these questions or 'problems', inviting viewers to reflect on them.

Luca Monterastelli (b. 1983, Forlimpopoli, IT) is crafting a distinct contemporary sculptural language. His vertical, often vaguely anthropomorphic forms invite viewers to engage closely, creating formal paradoxes that challenge perception. Monterastelli draws from modernist materials and fragmentary visuals, invoking symbols of power and monuments—only to subtly dismantle them. Through his assembled materials and cast forms, he creates new visual imagery, stripping away predetermined narratives and hierarchies to explore open-ended meanings.

His sculptures and bas-reliefs are an interplay of geometric shapes, where bold material choices blur the lines between substances like concrete, marble, or iron and steel. Rooted in his fascination with architectural layers, Monterastelli reflects on the contrasting styles found in Italy's provinces—an influence stemming from his early disdain for Rationalist architecture and the fragmented landscapes of his youth. His work thrives on the tension of forcing together elements that seemingly don't belong, generating powerful and unexpected visual experiences.

Belgian artist Koen van den Broek (b. 1973, Bree, BE) has established himself in the contemporary art world by merging the boundaries between figurative and abstract painting. His distinct sense of abstraction draws from the modern urban landscape, focusing on often-overlooked spaces where infrastructure, architecture, and nature converge. Van den Broek's paintings capture the geometric forms and spatial relationships of these transitional areas, encouraging viewers to reflect on the aesthetic and conceptual significance of the urban periphery.

Though he began his career with photography as a foundation, van den Broek's practice has evolved beyond it. His method of painting and working continues to transform, reflecting a desire for artistic growth and reinvention. In this exhibition van den Broek exclusively showcases new drawings inspired by a fresh approach to painting, embracing an intuitive and less controlled visual language. By combining mixed techniques, he bridges the materiality of his paintings with the rough textures of urban asphalt, exploring the deeper connections between material and form.

The exhibition will be on view 7 December, 2024 – 11 January, 2025.