

*MAC's*

MUSÉE DES ARTS  
CONTEMPORAINS

GRAND-HORNU

# Matt Mullican

## Representing the Work

16.02 > 18.10 2020

PRESS RELEASE







Photography of Oscar Monsalve / Courtesy de NC-arte.

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The MAC's is organising the first monographic exhibition of work by Matt Mullican in a museum in Belgium. Born in 1951 in Santa Monica, the American artist now lives and works in New York and Berlin. In the early 1970s, Mullican was marked by his studies with John Baldessari at the California Institute of the Arts. Since the 1980s, his work has been exhibited regularly throughout the world, including at major collective events such as Documenta (1982, 1992 and 1997) and the Venice Biennale (2013), along with solo exhibitions, notably his immense retrospective at the Hangar Biccocca in Milan (2018).

Having developed historically from the Picture Generation, Matt Mullican's obsessional, encyclopaedic work is a response to conceptual art through the way it places importance on the image, sensation and subjectivity. Drawing on the world around him for the raw material of his creation, the artist points out, *"Everything that I have to catalogue is actually found where I live. When I say 'where I live', I am speaking of both the physical and the psychological world."*

Beyond this body-mind dualism, Matt Mullican in fact extends his representation of the universe to five worlds, represented by five colours: green symbolises nature, blue represents daily life, yellow signifies art, black relates to language and red evokes subjectivity. This cosmology, which found its first expression during his youth, along with his two principal artistic developments in 1973 and 1983, constitute the veritable driving force of a fundamentally existential work which applies his graphic principles (colour chart, pictograms, lists, etc.) to a broad array of supports: books, flags, posters, stained-glass, an architectural pavilion, noticeboards, tapestries, light boxes, virtual spaces, etc.

Added to this diversity of media are his numerous 'talks', in which he



Matt Mullican was born in Santa Monica (United States) in 1951, the son of the modern artists Luchita Hurtado and Lee Mullican. He lives and works in New York and Berlin.

Since 1973, Matt Mullican has had a number of monographic exhibitions around the world, in both museums and galleries.

In 2019, he exhibited his work at NC-arte in Bogota; in 2018, he took over the immense space of the HangarBiccoca in Milan. In 2010, the 12 by 2 exhibition at the IAC in Villeurbanne confronted the works of Matt Mullican with those of "That Person" and in 2005, the Ludwig Museum in Cologne organised *Learning from That Person's Work*, a solo exhibition of works created by "That Person", the character who appears when Matt Mullican is hypnotised.

His work is found in numerous international public and private collections, notably the MoMA in New York, the Tate Modern in London, the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, the Haus der Kunst in Munich, the Centre Pompidou in Paris and the MAC's.

recounts the history of his work and his on-stage 'performances under hypnosis', when he turns into someone he calls 'That Person', an alter-ego who interprets, often in a caricatural manner, the various situations that arise. During his first experiment under hypnosis, *Entering the picture: Entrance to Hell* (1976), Matt Mullican was seated facing a painting by Piranese into which he entered through thought to create a real-time, detailed description of it to his audience. Since then, he has regularly repeated this technique, enabling 'That Person' to appear, a sort of subjective double, who experiences emotions or even creates works of art that are different to those of Matt Mullican.

In 1987, the American artist pursued this to-and-fro between real and imaginary worlds, when he created an imaginary city through the intermediary of super-computers. Here he was subconsciously prefiguring the virtual spaces of present-day video games, whose landscapes are formed as the player advances through them. Likewise, the specific symbols of his cosmology are also reminiscent of the icons and pictograms on our smartphone screens, which lends a truly visionary dimension to his work: *"I think my work has a close connection with contemporary life, with what is happening in the world today and what people are having to deal with, what children have to cope with and what my children are facing nowadays, when you think about the internet and the way in which their world could be defined."*



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## Practical Information

### THE MUSEUM

The MAC's is housed in the former colliery premises at Grand-Hornu, an outstanding example of European industrial heritage, listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2012. Since it opened in 2002, the museum has received over a million visitors, produced more than 85 exhibitions and promoted numerous artists from the Wallonia-Brussels Federation. Thanks to major international artists, including Anish Kapoor, Christian Boltanski, Giuseppe Penone and Tony Oursler, who have presented their first major exhibitions in Belgium here, the reputation of the MAC's now reaches far beyond our national borders. Inspired by the unique architectural and historical context of Grand-Hornu, its collection has developed according to themes that connect with the preoccupations of many contemporary artists, including memory, technology and community.

### LOCATION AND TICKETS

Chairman: Claude Durieux

Director: Denis Gielen

Address:

Site du Grand-Hornu

Rue Sainte-Louise, 82

B-7301 Hornu (near Mons)

Tel: +32(0)65 65 21 21

Fax: +32(0)65 61 38 91

E-mail: info.macs@grand-hornu.be

Opening times:

Every day from 10am to 6pm, except Mondays, 25/12 and 01/01.

Entrance fee:

- Combined ticket for the Grand-Hornu site / MAC's / CID : €10
- Reduced / group price (minimum 15 people): €6
- School group: €2
- Free for children under 6 and adults accompanying school groups