

Daniel Dewar &
Grégory Gicquel



The
Wet
Wing

30.03 → 24.08.2025

Vleugel 58



A catfish slides along the river floor,
a yellow light shimmers across the water,
smoke billows from a brick chimney.
Human hands feed the fire, log after log.
The furnace transforms wood into heat,
slowly firing stoneware ceramics.
River water, once mixed within the wet clay,
is burned off and turned into steam.

Daniel Dewar and Grégory Gicquel's collaborative practice employs traditional craft tools, materials and techniques in order to explore humankind's kinship with – and division from – nature. The handcrafted works probe our relationship to production and consumption: what is the value of artisanal skill in an age of automation? What does a rural or locally-situated approach to art making mean in a networked, globalised artistic sphere?

For their solo exhibition *The Wet Wing* at Z33, Dewar and Gicquel present a series of site-specific works including a monumental silk painting, stoneware ceramic jars and

hand-carved sculptures in pink marble. The painting streams through the five galleries of the historic Vleugel 58. Depicting a river scene with freshwater fish and vegetation, it is formed through seeping blobs of colourful ink. The painting's deliberate placement within the galleries encourages visitors to follow a set path, mirroring the current of a river.

The Wet Wing proposes a realm of impermanence and constant change: slippery substances and fluid shapes. Along the way, we encounter forms in transition: connected by material affinities, deepened by artisanal techniques.



Flipper, 2022. Rosa aurora marble, 44 x 98 x 32 cm.
Courtesy the artists. © Benjamin Baltus

A green glimmer greets viewers at the entrance to the exhibition as we catch sight of the monumental silk painting. Underwater vegetation such as lily pads and pondweed plants appear first within the murky scene.

The painting was produced in several stages in the artists' Brussels studio. The composition was first drawn onto silk with water-repellent *gutta*, creating outlines to corral the flow of watery ink. A wonderfully imperfect system, the ink sometimes leaks out of one shape and invades another. Unique textures and visual depth is achieved through the use of sprayed water and bleeding colours. The painting, like a river, is a mixture of stoppages and flows, winding along currents to its next destination.

Against this backdrop stands a single flipper carved in pink marble. An appendix to the human foot, the flipper indicates both our lack of aquatic adaptations and our desire to imitate marine life. Between nature and culture, the flipper acts as a tool for visitors navigating *The Wet Wing*.

In the second gallery, two central figures emerge. One is a freshwater mirror carp depicted in the silk painting. Dotted with textured scales, it appears as if caught in an evolutionary transition, migrating between worlds. The other is a stoneware vessel adorned with an amalgamation of human torsos and snails. This vessel is the first of six, which increase in size across the galleries, creating a sense of growth and progression. These ceramics, crafted in a wood-fired kiln built by the artists in rural Brittany, feature irregular watery glazes that enhance the material's riverine origin, and also hint at the water they could potentially carry.

Moving through the galleries, the immersive arrangement of murals enhances the sensation of being submerged. A school of shimmering mirror carp emerge from the riverbed. Known for their smooth, silky bellies, with texture that is more similar to that of human skin than that of other fish. The shared texture of the carp skin and the silk painting further enhance a feeling of mimesis and interconnection.

Wood-fired kiln,
Courtesy the artists.



Studio view,
Courtesy the artists.



Stoneware jar with body fragments and snails, 2024.
Wood-fired stoneware ceramic, 72 x 62 x 62 cm.
Courtesy the artists. © Benjamin Baltus

In the final, largest gallery, a fourteen-metre-long painting of a catfish dominates the space. The catfish, like the carp, is a bottom-dweller. With its long whiskers the catfish manoeuvres along the river bed, near the mud, clay, and silt. Accompanying this gigantic fish are two marble sculptures composed of snail shells, human torsos and pectoral muscles. As if dug out of the earth, their clumpy forms might even recall *regurgitalite*, the fossilised remains of animal stomach contents.

Interestingly, marble too has an aquatic origin: it is formed from the sediment of ancient oceans and transformed by high temperatures and pressures over the course of millennia. There is a material flow to the elements of the exhibition: water, silt, clay, ceramics, rock, crustaceans, fish, flesh, blood. Taken together as a *mise-en-scène*, they become a playful testimony to Aristotle's concept of matter: everything physical is made of the same basic substance.

Through a fluid underwater prism, *The Wet Wing* reveals the subtle connections that link species, materials, and ideas, questioning our place within the built environment and the natural world. Created both as a specific response to the architectural space of Vleugel 58 and as a continuation of their artistic enquiries, Dewar and Gicquel's immersive waterscape invites reflection on modalities of production and representation. The artworks synergise and expand the logics of depiction and form: are we entering an aquatic landscape, a geological time capsule or a hall of decorative arts? Materially charged and physically demanding, the artists' commitment to craft is undeniable. To craft is to flow, through twists and turns, through sweat, labour, and time. To craft is to give shape, and to be shaped by the process of life.

Studio view. © Lola Pertsowsky



Biography

Based in Brussels and Brittany, the British-French artist duo Daniel Dewar (1975, UK) and Grégory Gicquel (1975, FR) have been working together since their student days in the late 1990s. Since then, the duo have exhibited widely and internationally in venues such as: MACRO – Museum of Contemporary Art, Rome; Culturgest, Lisbon; the Secession, Vienna; Kunsthalle Basel, Basel; Portikus, Frankfurt; Witte de With, Rotterdam; WIELS, Brussels; Musée Rodin, Paris; the Palais de Tokyo, Paris. In 2012 they were recipients of the prestigious Prix Marcel Duchamp.

Curator

Kevin Gallagher

Graphic design

Bureau BoschBerg

Text

Kevin Gallagher

The artists would like to thank:

All those who contributed to the production of the artworks in the exhibition, in particular Ailsa Cavers, Tristan Dassonville, Olga Mathilde Gärtner, Olivier Levêque, MAJUBOIS, Stefan Tulepo, Benjamin Rouault, and Manon Simons.

Their galleries: Antenna Space, Shanghai, C L E A R I N G, New York/Los Angeles, Loevenbruck, Paris, and Jan Kaps, Cologne.

And the entire team of Z33.

This is a publication of Z33. This publication was published on the occasion of the exhibition *Daniel Dewar & Grégory Gicquel: The Wet Wing* (30.03.2025 to 24.08.2025) at Z33, Hasselt, Belgium.

HOUSE FOR
CONTEMPORARY ART
DESIGN & ARCHITECTURE

Z33

