



Images courtesy of Friedman Benda

KOEN VAN DEN BROEK: INSOMNIA AND THE GREENHOUSE

In a series of breakthrough exhibitions over the past decade, van den Broek has established a reputation as a major force in Antwerp and as one of the leading painters of his generation in Europe. Van den Broek's work transforms seemingly familiar images into compelling contemplations of surface, line, and technique.

His paintings depict shadows, cracks, fragments of architecture and generic landscapes, but reverberate with presence, traces of human encounters, suspense and imminence. Though devoid of people or explicit narrative, he suggests experience by both layering and disconnecting colors, marks, perspectives and planes. It is this range of perceptual possibilities and spatial opportunities that is the primary subject of his work.

Van den Broek takes road trips and frames ideas in on-going photographic diaries. Impressions of journeys are remembered, re-imagined and re-experienced. Contours are lost and edges are obscured. Line and form correlate only vaguely to reality and the world in the painting corresponds not to any place of origin but to the artist's vision.

Insomnia and the Greenhouse presents the full range of van den Broek's oeuvre. The *Insomnia* works, executed in Antwerp, are monumental, their grand-scale (8 1/2 x 13 feet) and various perspectives are reminiscent of film takes, or camera positions. In "No Service," an enormous mountain looms within a seemingly shifting foreground and distance and the viewer has to continuously re-adjust focus between the virtuosity of painted brushwork and the dominance of an over-arching image.

The *Greenhouse* works, including *Star Island #1* (5 x 3 feet) are more intimate works, nuanced paintings, executed during the artist's residence in Williamsburg, New York. Van den Broek (b.1973) lives and works in Schilde, Belgium. He has a Bachelor in Engineer Architecture, and studied at The Royal Academy of Fine Arts, Antwerp, the Academy of Visual Arts St. Joost, Breda, and the Higher Institute of Fine Arts Flanders, Antwerp. He is currently an instructor at the MAD faculty in Belgium.

The artist's work is in significant private collections as well as the permanent collections of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Los Angeles; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco; Astrup Fearnley Museet fur Modern Kunst, Oslo; Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens, Deurle; Samsung Museum of Modern Art, Seoul. Van den Broek is currently in two museum exhibitions in Antwerp, at the MAS and at the MHKA. In 2008, van den Broek collaborated with John Baldessari on "This an Example of That," an exhibition at the Bonnefanten museum, Maastricht. In 2009, he was the subject of an extensive retrospective at the Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst (SMAK) at which point, "Crack," a monograph on his work, was published.

