

# BONANZA

a diorama of the near

an exhibition by

artist in residence BRAM VAN BREDA

with curator CAROLYN F. STRAUSS

Our search for prosperity has shaped the landscapes we live in and becomes present in the things we surround ourselves with, the infrastructures and houses we build, the stories we tell. Today as the downside of this striving becomes apparent, we try to escape reality by losing ourselves in excess or dreaming of imaginative worlds. During his four-month residency at the Gastatelier Leo XIII, Bram Van Breda went on an expedition through Tilburg, looking for ways to cope with his new environment and a different culture. Combining his residency with a research period at the textile museum of Tilburg. A city marked by its lost textile industries and ever since is trying to rewrite its landscape. What once was a horizon filled with chimneys high in the sky is slowly being transformed by new landmarks of prosperity. Even the textile worker, who gave his whole body to contribute to industrial growth, has now become a character in a city-tale reimagined once a year through the local carnival.

*BONANZA; a diorama of the near*, brings together fragments of the past, present and future as experienced through Van Breda's intimate relation with the space of Leo XIII and the people he met during his stay. The relation between body and space is intensified as the artist lives and works with and within the Gastatelier. The space unfolds itself as a house with corridors, cellars and closets which allows one to dream (*G. Bachelard, poetics of space 1958*). The resulting constellation of works can be best described as a diorama, a three-dimensional created scene which mostly shows a situation, including objects and figures. This way of mimicking the natural world, as often used in museum contexts, is a form of ordering reality and in so doing of controlling it. Van Breda relates this to the structures he encountered during the local Tilburg Kermis, facades shaped to lose oneself in a dreamworld. All together, *BONANZA* becomes a topology of a local environment, which the artist uses to unravel underlying issues of capitalism, ecology and otherness.

## BIO

Bram Van Breda (BE) - The multi-medial work of Bram Van Breda is a continuous exploration of our surroundings and the active role object and matter play within social and cultural contexts. With a background in graphic and textile design, Van Breda uses tactility and form as a mediator between the space or context he's studying and the viewer-user. His work is often related to the act of removing, recovering, and redefining. Central to this is the idea of disorder or pollution. A concept that van Breda uses to bring together otherwise disparate fields of human activity such as anthropology, architecture and craft. [www.bramvanbreda.be](http://www.bramvanbreda.be)

Carolyn F. Strauss (US/NL) is a curator, educator, and creative facilitator whose experience traverses the fields of architecture, design, contemporary art, emerging technology, and social and environmental activism. Currently, she is also director of Slow Research Lab – a multidisciplinary, research and curatorial platform. In her presentation, she will share some of the creative investigations that Slow Research Lab has facilitated: from ephemeral, immaterial experiments to large-scale urban interventions – projects that make tangible a vision of human activity in balance with other living systems. [www.slowlab.net](http://www.slowlab.net)