

Baronian Xippas

Press Release

Takis
Robert Devriendt
5 April - 18 May 2019
Baronian Xippas

Opening: 4 April 2019,
6pm

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New Brussels gallery Baronian Xippas opens with two solo exhibitions by Takis and by Robert Devriendt

Baronian Xippas, the new Brussels gallery being launched by Albert Baronian and Renos Xippas, will open its doors on April 4 with two solo exhibitions, Takis and Robert Devriendt. The inaugural exhibitions embody Baronian Xippas' vision for a new gallery that is at once bold and ambitious yet grounded in tradition.

Located in the former space of Albert Baronian gallery, Baronian Xippas gallery is a unique collaboration between two major figures in the contemporary art gallery world. Combining the strength of their 80 years of experience and expertise in the art world, Baronian and Xippas join forces, knowledge and passion to create a powerhouse on the international art scene.

The inaugural exhibitions by Takis and by Robert Devriendt exemplify the ambitions of the gallery: to mount great exhibitions with the leading artists of each gallery, while building on their common vision, shared values and a belief in adopting an open, human and accessible approach.

Takis

The Greek self-taught sculptor, Takis (b. Vassilikis Takis, 1925, Athens) has created some of the most powerful, innovative - as well as playful - works of 20th century art. Through them, he has reinvented the formats of painting, sculpture and music in relation to energy.

Whilst Takis is considered to be one of the rare innovators in sculpture today, alongside Calder, Brancusi and Giacometti, the liberation of the forces of nature prevails over aesthetic form in his work. Takis' pieces, made up of industrial or mechanical parts, are situated at the crossroads between art, technology and science. In this exhibition, Baronian Xippas presents *Magnetic Fields*, Takis' most recent works together with an ensemble of *Signals*. With his work, Takis makes invisible energies palpable and invites the spectator to enter into a wordless, energetic dialogue with the sculptures.

In 1954, Takis moved to Paris, where he joined Brancusi's studio for a few months. He soon met Yves Klein and the other artists who became known as the Nouveaux Réalistes and triggered a certain fascination amongst the writers of the Beat Generation. From then onwards, he has divided his time between Paris and Athens and exhibited in Paris, London and New York. Takis has devoted most of his artistic life to researching magnetism. His work was influenced by the invention of the radar in 1955, together with his discovery of the magnetic field in 1958. The intangible and invisible magnetic energy became his primary material, which he stages in different ways to make it observable. Beyond earthly phenomena, Takis' work opens up a universal, and therefore timeless dimension. It is not time, but energy, the mysterious force which determines the world. Acting in magnetic fields, sculpture is above all a means to awaken feelings of space in the spectator. Not seeking to dominate matter, but on the contrary, to liberate the invisible forces present in the world, Takis follows Plato's idea whereby "the artist is one who takes the invisible and makes it visible"¹.

His works are now in the permanent collections of the most important museums of the world, such as the George Pompidou Centre in Paris, the MoMA and the Guggenheim Museum in New York, the Menil Collection in Houston, the Tate Modern in London, the Peggy Guggenheim Collection in Venice. In France, Jeu de Paume, Palais de Tokyo and the Fondation Maeght have organised large retrospective exhibitions dedicated to the artist.

Tate Modern will host a major retrospective of his work in July 2019.

¹ Takis, past and present. A conversation with Maïten Bouisset. Takis, Xippas Gallery, Paris, 1991, p.22

Robert Devriendt

The Belgian artist Robert Devriendt (b. 1955) is known for his meticulous small paintings. With a keen eye for detail, for tactile rendering and with a refined technique, he investigates how images work and how they come to be interpreted.

This exhibition at Baronian Xippas gallery presents *Through the eyes of David X*, the second part of *The Missing Script*, an ongoing project where all paintings are related to each other. The first part, entitled *Blind Seduction*, was presented at Albert Baronian in 2017. David X is one of the favourite alter egos of Robert Devriendt. As the artist states: ‘When I look with the eyes of this fictional character, images arise that are as urgent as the contents of dreams. These images do not correspond to politically or ethically correct standards, but can be described as meta-romantic.’

The paintings of Robert Devriendt combine cinematic qualities with the pure craft of painting. Both his editing technique and imagery are at least partly reminiscent of film as he employs codes typical of that medium. The artist arranges the paintings like a director would order scenes to tell a story. The paintings draw their force from the mutual combinations, associations which connect them. It is the sequence which determines the contents of the images. What occurs between the images is therefore particularly important.

Because the artist wants to examine our way of looking, he returns to these cinematic elements. By freezing the images the viewer is given time to look in depth. The selections, cuts and repetitions add another dimension to everyday reality. In doing so, *The Missing Script* is trying to figure out how the relentless flood of imagery presents itself to our thoughts and way of thinking, even to our perception in general. Robert Devriendt exposes how to be detached from today’s constant flow of stories, how to select certain tracks, to filter and put them in a different context to create our own history; a dramatic story open to interpretation.

The Missing Script is a large ongoing series the artist has developed over the span of several years. There is no fixed script. The images in *The Missing Script* aren’t arranged chronologically, the paintings do not follow a logical order as they would in a well outlined plot. Instead, they are numbered according to their completion date. Possible storylines arise during painting through meticulous combining and staging of the characters on set. And eventually, it is the viewer who gradually fills in the script. The result is a movie that plays out in the viewer’s head.