

Forward!

Ahmet Ögüt's most ambitious solo presentation to date

07.03 – 14.06.2015

Ahmet Ögüt's most ambitious solo presentation to date opens in the Van Abbemuseum on 7 March. *Forward!* will bring together a number of key projects from the past several years alongside new site specific commissions created for the Van Abbemuseum. These projects will be presented throughout the museum's Old Building but will also spill out beyond its ten galleries in surprising ways. The 34-year-old Kurdish artist works across media and platforms, realizing projects within and outside the walls of the museum: in the street, on stage, in lectures halls, or through film. The artist uses allegory, humour and satire, inviting us to take a fresh look at the world around us.

The title of the exhibition playfully draws on the rhetoric and history of socialist solidarity and progress, sentiments that are both espoused and interrogated in Ögüt's projects. Specifically, it is a reference to a work from 2012, *The Castle of Vooruit!* In which a workers co-operative in Ghent floats on an enormous helium balloon. This 10-metre high floating rock, inspired by the famous Belgian surrealist painter Magritte, is being erected outside Ghent for the first time and will hover above the Van Abbe for the duration of the show. *Forward!* also expresses Ögüt's interventions in and observations of society, which he often frames with new contexts, setting our perceptions and pre-conceptions in motion in surprising ways. In *Fahrenheit 451: Reprinted* a fire engine becomes the focal point for issuing copies of banned books, and in *Guppy vs Ocean Wave: A Bas Jan Ader Experience* Ögüt placed a boat on the lake outside the Van Abbe to resurrect the story of the Dutch artist who famously died at sea. The extraordinary dynamism of Ögüt's work can be felt in the exhibition through the great diversity of projects, which reveal his ability to address audience and ideas in multivalent forms.



Ahmet Ögüt, *The Castle of Vooruit!*. commissioned by S.M.A.K. for TRACK, photo by Dirk Pauwels

Reverb: from the museum to the stage and back again

A major new commission for the exhibition is *Reverb*, a multi-track musical composition which will be played live in the Eindhoven Muziekgebouw on 7 March. For this work Ahmet Ögüt has collaborated with the band Fino Blendax whom he recently performed with at the ICA in London. This new composition will also form a soundtrack to the exhibition playing throughout the galleries. Conceived as responses to the works and ideas in the exhibition, *Reverb* is indicative of Ögüt's constant wish to work in a cross-disciplinary manner and reach new audiences.



Ahmet Ögüt, *Fahrenheit 451: Reprinted*, 2013. Mobile instant printing a selection of banned books in collaboration with Espoo Fire Department. In partnership with book publisher Leevi Lehto (NTAMO). Costume design: Emine Ekmen. Graphic design: Pia Männikkö. Commissioned by Checkpoint Helsinki. Photo: courtesy of the artist

Learning Room: thinking forward

Pedagogy has played a central component of Ahmet Ögüt's practice and development as an artist over the past several years, either through teaching himself in schools across Europe or through setting up long terms educational projects. These have included *Silent University*, an initiative, which draws on the knowledge of

immigrants to set up ad hoc teaching structures and seminars which is now active in Stockholm, Berlin and London – or the *School of Urgencies*, a programme for a group of cross-disciplinary students in Istanbul. In the Learning Room, one of the galleries of the exhibition, Ögüt will lead a week-long workshop for students of the Dutch Art Institute, amongst others, during the first week after the opening. He will take a language course in Dutch himself, which will conclude with an open tour for visitors at the end of the second week. Throughout the exhibition the Learning Room will be open for University and High school students to experiment with learning.

About Ahmet Ögüt

Ahmet Ögüt was born in in Diyarbakir, Turkey in 1981 and studied at the Hacettepe University en the Yildiz Technical University. From 2007 to 2008 he studied at the Rijksacademie in Amsterdam. His work has been included all over the world including the biennales of Venice (2009), Berlin (2008), Santa Fe (2008), Thessaloniki (2007) and Istanbul (2005). His practice captures the imagination in unique ways, tackling complex political and economic themes with a lightness of touch. For example, in 2008 he presented *Ground Control* at the Berlin Biennale, where he covered the whole of the ground floor of the Kunst-Werke with asphalt. In Turkey, asphalt laying was a means of homogenizing the country in its rapid quest to modernize, metaphorically covering over some of its diverse history in the process. Recalling conceptual practices of the 1960s the work also critiques the institutions and its potential to flatten ideas, concepts or histories. *Ground Control* will be recreated in the final room of *Forward!*.



Ahmet Ögüt, *Ground Control*, installation view at Kunst-Werke, 5th Berlin Biennial, photo by Uwe Walter

The Van Abbemuseum has a long standing relationship with the artists, having previously exhibited *Black Diamond* in Het Oog in the summer of 2010, and *Guppy 13 vs Ocean Wave, a Bas Jan Ader experience* in August 2012, a work which was subsequently acquired for the museum's collection. The realization of *Forward!* is

therefore indicative of the Van Abbe's approach to working with artists over a sustained period and at formative moments in their careers.

Curators: Nick Aikens and Annie Fletcher
Curatorial Assistant: Lena Reisner

Design exhibition and campaign: Peter Zuidervijk, Collective Works, the Hague

Funds:

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For the editors:

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Van Abbemuseum

The Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven is one of the first public museums for contemporary art to be established in Europe. The museum's collection of around 2700 works of art includes key works and archives by Lissitzky, Picasso, Kokoschka, Chagall, Beuys, McCarthy, Daniëls and Körmeling. The museum has an experimental approach towards art's role in society. Openness, hospitality and knowledge exchange are important. We challenge ourselves and our visitors to think about art and its place in the world, covering a range of subjects, including the role of the collection as a cultural 'memory' and the museum as a public site. International collaboration and exchange have made the Van Abbemuseum a place for creative cross-fertilisation and a source of surprise, inspiration and imagination for its visitors and participants.

Van Abbemuseum

Bilderdijklaan 10
Eindhoven, The Netherlands
www.vanabbemuseum.nl

Opening hours

Tuesday to Sunday 11.00 – 17.00
Every first Thursday of the month the museum is open until 21.00.

Admission

Adults: € 12,- / Groups of 10 or more: € 9,- / Young people from 13-18 years, students / Eindhoven city pass (stadspas) holders: € 6,- / Museumkaart, children under 13 years of age: free of charge. / Family pass (2 adults and max. 3 children until 18 years): €18,-
First Thursday evening of the month from 17.00-21.00: free of charge.