



Press Release

February 2017

### **Boris Tellegen at the MIMA: A Friendly Takeover**

*For its second exhibition, the MIMA in Brussels (Millennium Iconoclast Museum of Art) presents Boris Tellegen aka DELTA, a graffiti legend, the "Dutch Master". A monumental installation spread over 3 floors offers a retrospective of his 20-year artistic journey from the street to the museum. The exhibition features the highlights of his body of work, but also gives a broader insight into his universe, such as his collection of Manga figurines or his old graffiti sketchbooks. This exhibition, from February 3 to May 28, is curated in collaboration with Daniel Hofstede.*

#### **A streetwise, transversal artist**

Tellegen first gained international fame as a graffiti artist back in the 1990s under the pseudo DELTA. In the history of graffiti, he has come to be considered as the bridge between generations.

He is one of the few artists who, by redefining the aesthetic codes of graffiti, have transformed a hermetic counterculture into a mainstream and open culture.



The effervescence of the early 2000s, driven by the revolution in the means of communication, shed light on subcultures and offered new opportunities for artists. At the same time, low-cost travel, the internet and the mobile phone changed the world view of Westerners. The planet became a village and the image associated with city trips was that of urban art, now synonymous with this new *citizenship of the world*, a way of

life defined by its empathic and participatory spirit. This context was a breeding ground for artistic experiences.

In the mid-90s, his work creating record covers for popular electronic music labels such as Ninja Tune and Delsin gave Tellegen international visibility and served as a launch pad for his career. This hoisted him up among the European figureheads of this new very cosmopolitan and transversal way of life. He extended the creativity injected into his graffiti to all other fields such as the visual arts, graphic design, architecture, music,

design, fashion and film. He has exhibited, among others, with FUTURA, Maya Hayuk, Todd James, Mode 2, Steve ESPO Powers, Barry McGee, Banksy, FAILE, Swoon, HuskMitNavn, Os Gemeos and Shepard Fairey. His works are on display in Europe and the USA, in Japan and Australia. He was part of the historical exhibitions "Backjumps: The Live Issue" in Berlin in 2003, 2005 and 2010, "Born in the Streets" at the Cartier Foundation in 2009, "Fault Zone" at the Palais de Tokyo in 2014 and "the Bridges of Graffiti" at the Venice Biennale of 2015.

Boris Tellegen aka DELTA thus truly embodies the universal "iconoclastic" attitude, namely the mobile and transversal character that is so typical of the artistic practice exhibited at the MIMA.



### **A subjective exhibition**

For this new MIMA exhibition dedicated to Tellegen, the various sculptures/installations spread over three floors, do not offer a chronological narrative of the work, but rather an impressionistic portrait. The works scattered through the installation are associated freely.

Boris Tellegen designs gigantic sculptural installations that are both aesthetic and functional. The walls remain untouched; everything happens in the centre of the room where the imposing sculpture plays with space. The sculpture has as much value as it stand as for the past works it amalgamates, sometimes even superimposed one on the other. Studio works are displayed, along with graffiti archives, a video game and artefacts of all kinds of collaborations with architects, a music label, and even brands of trainers, clothes, speakers, tiles, etc. This constellation of experiences underscores the artist's need to extend the creative field and reach out to different communities. It also highlights a desire to be part of society itself, without the filter of the confined spaces of art and its market.

Visitors strolling among, under or over the installations, will be drawn to different details and come up with their own image of Tellegen's work. Will children be more interested in clambering over the huge robot lying on the floor of the second floor,

nonchalantly letting its legs out of the building through the windows? Will graffiti artists be more attracted to the little train that runs through the body of this robot? Will the archaeologist succeed in discovering what is hidden in the thickness of the sculpture? Like DELTA/Tellegen's haphazard career, visitors are treated to a host of fun and aesthetic sensations and do not only find themselves facing a work, but living it.

### **The silent revolution**

So, who is the target of Tellegen's art? In view of his "iconoclastic" career, the intuition is to address a wide audience, to seek recognition outside the world of art, as is the case for graffiti. For an artist reputed for his work on the street, the gallery or the art museum are not the only professional outlets, the ultimate goal to be reached before turning away from his past. On the contrary, these places of art remain privileged places, they add up to renew the creative proposals and to obtain a diversity of audiences. The back and forth between the studio and commercial and non-commercial collaborations shows the willingness to speak for everyone by being accessible to everyone.

What does he think of the role of art? Again, the mobility between Tellegen's creative domains underscores his desire to be part of society as a unique element of identity for common use. The artistic identity supplants the different fields of its exercise and evens out the playing field. That is the whole point of our increasingly transversal culture that overthrows the organisation of power by redistributing it more. By seeping into all aspects of our life, art makes us more sensitive to our environment and participates in a Bottom Up revolution of individual behaviours.



Is Boris Tellegen a revolutionary? Yes, as silent as the revolution itself. For he does not express a political opinion in his work; his attitude already speaks volumes.

### **The MIMA in brief**

Unique in its kind in Europe, the MIMA, Millennium Iconoclast Museum of Arts, is a cutting-edge museum that takes the public through the history of culture 2.0, which dawned world-wide with the millennium. The creative works it exhibits freely combine musical (punk-rock, electro, hip hop, folk), graphical (graphic design, illustration, design), sporting (skateboarding, surfing, extreme sports), artistic (film, visual art, performance, comic, tattoo, fashion design) and urban (graffiti, street art) cultures. The MIMA writes a collective narrative of a culture that brings together eclectic works in an accessible and direct language.

The MIMA was launched by Michel and Florence de Launoit, Alice van den Abeele and Raphaël Cruyt.

Since 2005, Alice van den Abeele and Raphael Cruyt have been running the ALICE gallery, championing a political and contextual vision of art. They work with international artists who share an aesthetic that combines the codes of contemporary art with those of the subcultures.

Michel and Florence Launoit, lovers of contemporary art, dedicate their professional lives to artistic production in various forms (television clips, films, documentaries, theatrical and musical) through the companies TourneSol Production and Akamusic SA. Their contribution to the birth of the MIMA is completely in tune with their commitment to an inclusive rather than exclusive culture that reaches out to a broad audience, reflecting the world of today and paving the way for the world of tomorrow.

Opened in April 2016, the MIMA has already welcomed more than 40,000 visitors with its first exhibition City Lights which ends on the 24<sup>th</sup> of December.

MIMA occupies an emblematic place at the heart of Brussels: the former Bellevue breweries, on the edge of the canal, in Molenbeek. Three floors are devoted to the permanent collection and to temporary exhibitions. The museum's permanent collection will eventually cover more than forty works lent by an association of patrons. It is the main thread of a narrative illustrating a period that began in 2000 and continues today. It includes, among others, works by Swoon, Escif, Katsu, Faile, Barry Mcgee, Ari Marcopoulos, Parra, Brecht Vandembroucke, Horfee, Eddy Martinez, Daniel Johnston, Sixe Paredes, Maya Hayuk, Boris Tellegen, Fuzi UV TPK, HuskMitNavn...

MIMA is funded, in equal shares, by

- takings from the museum's operation (ticketing, shop, evening events)
- private sponsoring, friends of the museum and supplier partners
- subsidies.

### **Practical information**

Exhibition: 'A friendly takeover' from 2 February until 28 May

Address: 39-41 Quai du Hainaut, 1080 Brussels, Belgium

Museum opening times: open from Wednesday to Sunday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Closed on Monday, Tuesday and in January

Late night opening: the first Thursday of the month until 9 p.m.

Public price: € 9.5 – Discount: € 7.5 - Schools: € 5; free for children under 12

Restaurant opening times: open from Wednesday to Sunday from 10 a.m. to 8.30 p.m.

Late night opening: the first Thursday of the month until 9 p.m.

Closed on Mondays and Tuesdays.

Guided tour: Saturday morning at 11 a.m. (in Dutch or French, alternately every other week)

The ticket is valid for the temporary exhibition AND the permanent collection

Guided tour: [info@arkadia.be](mailto:info@arkadia.be)

www.mimamuseum.eu

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