

Press release

Exhibition

August 29, 2005

Koen Broucke

Liszt-Broucke, Our Travelling Circus Life, Ode to Megalomania

Project Room, September 16 – November 20, 2005

Information day on Thursday, Sept. 15, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Information event open to the public on Friday, Sept. 16, at 12 noon.

The artist is present at both events.

Exhibition opening Friday, September 16, at 6 pm. Welcome!

For some years now, the Belgian artist and historian Koen Broucke has been studying the lives of certain famous and forgotten artists, including composers and writers. *Liszt-Broucke, Our Travelling Circus Life, Ode to Megalomania* is a painting and video art installation based on a series of documented performances given by Broucke on valuable grand pianos in different parts of Central Europe. Broucke painted a series of pictures based on the documentary footage and used these paintings in the creation of his installation. In his piano performances, Broucke imitates the manners of Franz Liszt. The exhibition makes a humorous comment on the myth of the Romantic Artist.

The exhibition is structured round Broucke's story of a megalomaniac man, who sees significant parallels between his own life and that of the nineteenth-century Hungarian piano virtuoso and composer Franz Liszt. The megalomaniac becomes entirely focussed on Liszt, reads everything he can find written about the composer, and begins to collect and listen exclusively to his music. Organising his own life to accentuate the similarities between himself and Liszt, he finally comes to believe that he is indeed the accomplished musician – reborn. Thereafter, he travels the world in search of grand pianos on which to play what are clumsy renditions of Liszt's compositions. Ironically, the life of the megalomaniac proceeds in a way that is quite the opposite to that of Liszt and his music.

Franz Liszt (1811–86) was a child prodigy and considered the greatest virtuoso pianist of his time in all of Europe. Liszt was the Court conductor in Weimar, and composed works that were technically extremely demanding. He stopped performing at age 37, the age at which the megalomaniac of the exhibition begins his lonely career, believing himself to be an ageing prodigy.

Born in 1965, Koen Broucke now lives in Boechout, near Antwerp. He publishes the journal *Images/Images* and is a director of the board of CeLT Culture and Literary Magazines. In 2002, Broucke curated the *Play&Control* exhibition at the Pori Art Museum. During the summer of 2005, Broucke's participation in the Raumar's visiting artist programme will culminate in him exhibiting at the Vuojoen kartano manor in Eurajoki later this autumn.

For more information about the exhibition, contact:

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