

Stefan Rinck, Kasper De Vos and Georg Wilson

TOTEM

May 16 — June 13, 2024

Nature is revered as the source of life and inspiration. From solstice to equinox, artists immerse themselves in its cyclical rhythms to unearth new worlds, ideas, and creatures. In *TOTEM*, nature serves as the cornerstone for practices that hover at the intersection of history, mysticism, and humour. Artists **Stefan Rinck**, **Kasper De Vos**, and **Georg Wilson** embark on a journey to rediscover often-overlooked aspects of nature from diverse standpoints.

A totem, traditionally an object representing a supernatural quality or concept, acts as an emblem bridging immaterial ideas and reality. Within *TOTEM*, Georg Wilson delves into ecology and history in her expressive paintings, depicting envisioned landscapes inhabited by enigmatic creatures. Stefan Rinck meticulously sculpts stone characters drawn from a fantastical realm, melding contemporary culture with historical references. His whimsical sculptures, reminiscent of Boschian visions, blend satirical wit with dark humour. Meanwhile, Kasper De Vos engages with societal issues by playfully manipulating natural materials; his farcical installations combine unconventional objects that challenge cultural perceptions and consumerism.

In *TOTEM*, the convergence of insight and folklore intertwine like vines on the same tree. London-based artist Wilson integrates her naturalist knowledge and literary motifs into her visual lexicon. Through painting and drawing, her evocative colour palette, evolves with the changing seasons, while conjuring ethereal territories teeming with enigmatic inhabitants that defy traditional categorization. In *Host*, botanical motifs intricately weave through a composition devoid of human traces, extending across the pictorial plane to envelop everything in an immersive tapestry of verdant imagery. Drawing inspiration from the Celtic rainforests prevalent in Cornwall, where the artist recently concluded a residency, Wilson employs vibrant green hues to evoke the mist-laden ambience and scented airs of these lush habitats. Amidst this overgrown expanse, bristling with biodiversity manifested in the myriad forms of mosses and liverworts, her paintings resonate with the enchantment and enigma inherent to the woodlands.

Coiling pastoral ideals, the works of De Vos echo the enduring allure of countryside imagery. During a temporary residency in Andalusia, De Vos documented its essence through sketches and the gathering of natural materials. Drawing from the abundant bark of cork and oak trees in the surroundings, he transformed this raw resource into the installation *A Shepherd's Poem*, featured in the exhibition. The three-piece installation reverently honours the classical heritage of bucolic literature. De Vos' poetic sensibility extends beyond mere observation, as he weaves together every-day elements, fusing them with contemporary discards to create unconventional amalgamations that celebrate the beauty of banality. Incorporating a diverse array of materials ranging from rope and beeswax to found objects, plaster, and wood, De Vos' work serves as playful commentary on society's intense consumption tendencies, underscoring deeper implications of materiality, motivation, and social dynamics, all while maintaining an uplifting and light-hearted approach.

In the exhibition, the stone sculptures of Stefan Rinck stand stoically like totems, commanding attention throughout the gallery space. Meticulously chiselled, these sculptures range from hominid bears to well-dressed dogs, skilfully blending references from contemporary culture and historical canons. Among them, in his work *The Descendant*, Rinck's sculpture emerges from the courtyard like a visitor from a parallel dimension. Carved by hand, the sandstone figure depicts a two-eyed being clad in nothing more than a skirt, holding a mini-replica of itself. The textured surface of the piece adds a tactile and soft quality to the ponderous material. This "descendant," reminiscent of some ancestral group of beings, evokes a profound sense of self-awareness, hinting at its own enigma and carving a new universe from an amalgamation of references, times, and places.

In *TOTEM*, artists Stefan Rinck, Kasper De Vos, and Georg Wilson intricately weave narratives that celebrate the profound relationship between humanity and nature. Through their distinctive practices, they invite viewers to delve into the mysteries of the natural world, confront pressing societal issues, and redefine reality through the lens of creativity and imagination. As visitors journey through the immersive exhibition, they are encouraged to reflect upon the inherent harmony and vitality present in nature, inspiring a renewed appreciation for the interconnectedness of all living beings. *TOTEM* echoes a testament to the enduring significance of nature as a wellspring of impetus, wisdom, and wonder.

§

Stefan Rinck (b. 1973 in Homburg/Saar, Germany) studied Art History and Philosophy at the Universität des Saarlandes in Saarbrücken and Sculpture at the Academy of Arts in Karlsruhe. His work has been showcased in many exhibitions across major cities like Berlin, Brussels, Los Angeles, Madrid, and Paris. It is also featured in collections, both public and private, including the Museum of Modern Art, New York; the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris; the Frac Corse, Corte; and the CBK Rotterdam, among others. Stefan Rinck is featured in *100 Sculptors of Tomorrow* published by Thames & Hudson. The artist lives and works in Berlin.

Kasper De Vos (b. 1988 in Antwerp, Belgium) holds a post-graduate in Visual Arts from HISK, Ghent (2017). He completed his MA in Sculpture and Installation at KASK, Ghent (2012) and a BA in Sculpture and Installation at Sint-Lucas School of Arts, Antwerp (2010). De Vos has completed residencies at the CONA Foundation, Mumbai; KKV, Boguslän; and Arte Ventura, Andalucia, among others. His work is part of the collection of the Flemish Government, Belgium and Middelheim Museum, Antwerp. The artist lives and works in Ghent.

Georg Wilson (b. 1998 in London, UK) received her MA in Painting at the Royal College of Art (2022) and a BA in Art History at the University of Oxford (2020). Her work has been exhibited across Europe, the US and the UK. She is a twice-recipient of the Elizabeth Greenshields award (2021-2022), and Ingram Prize Finalist (2022). Recent residencies include Anchor Studio in Newlyn (2024) and Palazzo Monti in Brescia (2023). The artist lives and works in London.

TOTEM is on view from May 16 to June 13, 2024. Opening hours are Wednesday through Saturday from 13:00 to 18:00 hrs.