



presse@mudam.lu  
www.mudam.lu

Tel + 352 45 37 85 1  
Fax + 352 45 37 85 400

3, Park Dräi Eechelen  
L-1499 Luxembourg

Mudam Luxembourg  
Musée d'Art Moderne  
Grand-Duc Jean

# FOLKERT DE JONG

## ACTUS TRAGICUS

**PRESS KIT**  
**23/03/2013 - 08/09/2013**

## FOLKERT DE JONG

### ACTUS TRAGICUS

**Exhibition from March 23 to September 8, 2013**

**Opening** Friday March 22, 2013, from 6pm to 8.30pm

**Curator** Marie-Noëlle Farcy

At first glance, the three-dimensional pictures by the Dutch artist Folkert de Jong appear seductive and disturbing in equal measure. De Jong generally turns the exhibition space into a theatre stage, for which he designs sceneries made, with great virtuosity, from polyurethane foam, an unusual material in sculpture. Often inspired by historic facts, real persons or memorable episodes from art history, his works unfold in complex compositions that confront the viewer with extremely tangible directness.

In response to an invitation from Mudam, de Jong presents *Actus Tragicus*, an ensemble of new works that he has created especially for the Grand Hall. For the artist, this central space in the museum possesses the intimidating dominance of a cathedral or mausoleum, while also being perfect for theatrical presentations, with a balcony to observe from a distance. Ten larger than life figures, whose physiognomies, like a déjà-vu experience, remind the viewer of something familiar, dangle from the heights of the glass dome like marionettes (or hanged people). De Jong's source of inspiration for this bizarre dance of the figures, between which viewers have to make their way as if they were part of the performance, is the painting *The Fight Between Carnival and Lent* by Pieter Bruegel the Elder, painted in 1559. A crude mixture of allegory and realism, this crowd scene in the typical Bruegel manner contrasts vice and excess with virtue and abstinence in innumerable individual scenes.

The conflict between the extremes of human existence, between ascetic discipline and intemperate pleasure, which comprehends some of the existential questions of humankind that is torn between heaven and earth, is also the focus of de Jong's installation. From time immemorial, people have sought answers to questions regarding power and religion, eternity and finiteness, life and death. These questions are also evoked by *Actus Tragicus*, as in the early funeral cantata by Johann Sebastian Bach, also known under the title *Gottes Zeit ist die allerbeste Zeit* (God's time is the very best time), that gives the work its name. Brought into a contemporary form using modern means and materials, the round dance of the figures involves the viewers in a drama to which each contributes with his or her own role. In this way, de Jong creates a tableau vivant in which the grotesque and the macabre alternate with the light and the airy.

Folkert de Jong was born in 1972 in Egmond aan Zee, Netherlands. He lives and works in Amsterdam.

#### ***Actus Tragicus*, 2013**

Set of 10 sculptures

Variable dimensions, colored polyurethane foam, metal, wood, spray paint

Commission and production Mudam Luxembourg

## EVENT AROUND THE EXHIBITION

**THE WAY THINGS ARE, AND HOW THEY BECAME THINGS**  
**PERFORMANCE AROUND THE WORK OF FOLKERT DE JONG : ACTUS TRAGICUS**  
**04/04/2013, 7pm – 8pm**

Within the framework of Many Spoken Words, Mudam Luxembourg invites the actress Claire Thill, to forge a genuine dialogue with the characters created by Folkert de Jong in "The Way Things Are, and how they became things" staged by Jérôme Konen.

With: Claire Thill. Direction: Jérôme Konen. In French, German and English.  
[www.mudam.lu/msw](http://www.mudam.lu/msw)

## ADDRESS AND INFORMATION

### Mudam Luxembourg

Musée d'Art Moderne Grand-Duc Jean  
3, Park Dräi Eechelen, L-1499 Luxembourg-Kirchberg  
t +352 45 37 85 1, [info@mudam.lu](mailto:info@mudam.lu), [www.mudam.lu](http://www.mudam.lu)

### Opening hours

Wednesday-Friday: 11am - 8pm. Saturday-Monday: 11am - 6pm. Closed on Tuesdays.

### Entrance fee

Adult	5 €
60+, youth < 26, groups	3 €
Youth < 21	free
Student card < 26	free
Mudami card (valid for 1 year for 2 persons)	50 €
Wednesdays, 6pm - 8pm	free

### Press

Valerio D'Alimonte, [v.dalimonte@mudam.lu](mailto:v.dalimonte@mudam.lu), t +352 45 37 85 633

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### Mudam thanks

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Mudam is financed by the Ministry for Culture.



*Infinite Silence; the way things are, and how they became things*, 2009

Dimensions: 800 x 400 x 270 cm, polyurethane foam and Styrofoam

Collection Groninger Museum, Courtesy Studio Folkert de Jong, © Studio Folkert de Jong, photo: Aatjan Renders





***La Belle Hollandaise***, 2011

Dimensions: 80 x 80 x 160 cm, polyurethane foam and Styrofoam

Private collection, Courtesy Studio Folkert de Jong / Dukan Hourdequin Gallery, © Studio Folkert de Jong, photo: Aatjan Renders



***The Thinker***, 2010 (detail)

Styrofoam, pigmented polyurethane foam, adjusted Euro pallet, dimensions: 120 x 76 x 129 cm  
Privat collection, © Studio Folkert de Jong, © photo: Aatjan Renders



Left and right: ***The Immortals***, 2012  
Styrofoam, pigmented polyurethane foam, plywood, spray paint, variable dimensions  
Courtesy Studio Folkert de Jong / Galerie Dukan Hourdequin, Paris  
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