

PRESS RELEASE

*Nick van Woert. Nature Calls*  
curated by Gianfranco Maraniello

MAMbo – Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna  
30<sup>th</sup> May – 7<sup>th</sup> September 2014  
Opening: 29<sup>th</sup> May, 7 – 9 p.m.

From 30<sup>th</sup> May to 7<sup>th</sup> September 2014, the **MAMbo – Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna** is hosting *Nature Calls*, the first personal show in Italy and within a museum for **Nick van Woert**, one of the most original voices in the contemporary American art scene.

The exhibition, curated by Gianfranco Maraniello, presents **33 works** that are representative of the recurrent themes in the artist's work, on display in the Sala delle Ciminiere and adjacent exhibition rooms.

As one walks through the exhibition, an aspect that immediately becomes clear is Van Woert's conviction, via his transverse research, that a semantics of materials exists and that every material generates intrinsic value. Leaving aside their functional aspects, the objects we come across in our daily lives are seen by the artist for what they are, for how they are made rather than for how they appear. His works of Plexiglas forming overlaid parallelepipeds are exemplary in this regard: *Home & Garden* (2011), *So Fresh So Clean* (2011), *Erratic* (2012), *Course of Empire* (2013). In reference to these, Van Woert defines himself a "landscape painter".

These serial display boxes contain tidy classifications of heterogeneous materials (powders, waste, detergents, industrial products, various articles) which although apparently innocuous when seen singly, can create disturbing or hazardous combinations when placed together. Two everyday products one finds in the home, hair gel and chlorine, can generate an incendiary substance if mixed, demolishing our tranquillising certainties. The artist dipped into a number of publications to inform himself of these possibilities, including *EcoDefense: a Field Guide to Monkeywrenching* by Dave Foreman and *Improvised Munitions Handbook*, an army handbook that gives advice on how to make mayhem using everyday products.

Basing himself on these sources and on his interest in such figures as Ted Kaczynski (Unabomber) and extremist "return to nature" movements sharing a man vs. machine dynamic or attempt to change or "implode" our way of life, Nick van Woert creates complex installations, hybrid classifications of work tools or hunting weapons, archaeological objects

seen through the lens of a transmission of knowledge and techniques for the potential sabotage of the world order: *Improvised Munition* (2012), *History* (2012), *Garden of Forking Paths* (2013).

The tidy cataloguing of these works and of the Plexiglas ones are countered by the magmatic, disorganised rock forms made of urethane and fibreglass, such as *Untitled (Coal slag rocks)* of 2014, while unusual gymnastic equipment, like *Universal Gym* (2013), alludes to a project for a metamorphosis of mankind similar to the modelling process of classical sculpture.

Another recurrent theme in Van Woert's work is the dialectic between the manufactured setting of the pervasive human presence and nature governed by chance, which lies at the origin of the artist's own origins: he was born and grew up in Reno (Nevada), a town whose extraordinary architecture of the casinos contracts with the rough reality of the surrounding desert. We can note these contrasts in numerous works by Van Woert, including the most recent ones, simulacra of the interaction between nature and mankind: *Heinous Cling* (2014), *Now Or Never; Are We To Live or Perish Forever?* (2014) and the totemic *Andrew* (2014), *Maja* (2014), *Peter* (2014) and *Run for the Hills* (2014).

From the need to know and verify what surrounds us, and a desire to highlight the manufacturing process and structure of things without dissimulating them, arises the artist's use of reproductions of classical statues, in which Greco-Roman styles find new forms and meanings in the encounter/clash with industrial materials, organic waste, sand and metals. Through violent manipulations that are apparent in such works as *Haruspex* (2010), *Nature Boy* (2010), *Lady Lady* (2011), *Return to Nature* (2011), *Nature Girl* (2012), *Untitled (yellow statue)*, 2014, and *Untitled (black statue)*, 2014, Nick van Woert draws these condensed elements of fiction, empty symbols of decadence into the artistic field, literally filling them with meaning.

The exhibition forms part of a line of investigation the museum has been following since its opening, making known some of the exponents of the most advanced work being done in America today: Guyton\Walker (2008), Trisha Donnelly (2009), Seth Price (2009), Matthew Day Jackson (2011). This reflection and recognition of the artistic practices and the function of the museum are not limited solely to the United States, but have seen the promotion of some revolutionary figures who are fundamental to any understanding of the art of the last few decades: in 2007, an exhibition of Christopher Williams was held in the spaces being closed in the former

Galleria d'Arte Moderna di Bologna, and this was followed in 2012 by Marcel Broodthaers (MAMbo) and in 2013 by Bas Jan Ader (Villa delle Rose).

A catalogue (Edizioni MAMbo) is to be published at the same time as the inauguration of *Nature Calls*, including an exclusive interview by Aniko Berman (art critic) with Nick van Woert, as well as texts by Gianfranco Maraniello and Lorenzo Sassoli de Bianchi.

Guided visits by the MAMbo Educational department will be available for the entire duration of the exhibition (info: [mamboedu@comune.bologna.it](mailto:mamboedu@comune.bologna.it) – tel 051 6496628 / 611).

Further information:

[www.mambo-bologna.org](http://www.mambo-bologna.org)

### MAMbo press

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### **Biographical notes**

Nick van Woert was born in 1979, in Reno, Nevada, USA.

He learned about architecture in his father's studio, and his interest would lead him to join the degree course at the University of Oregon. As soon as he graduated, however, he decided to abandon his studies and enroll for the Master's in Fine Arts at the Parsons New School for Design in New York, where in 2007 he graduated with an MFA.

The knowledge he acquired in both academic studies proved equally essential in defining his artistic practice, as well as supplying him with some persistent elements in his work.

Since 2005, Nick van Woert has been exhibiting his work, participating in numerous group shows, while in 2010 the Grimm Gallery in Amsterdam hosted his first personal show under the title of *She-Wolf*.

Nick van Woert currently lives and works in Brooklyn, New York.

### **Mostre personali**

2014 Grimm Gallery, Amsterdam, NL

2014 *Pulverizer*, Sheppard Gallery, University of Nevada, Reno

2013 *Labyrinth*, L&M , Los Angeles

2013 *Haruspex*, Yvon Lambert , Paris

2013 *No Man's Land*, OHWOW , Los Angeles

2012 *Improvised Munition*, Grimm , Amsterdam, NL

2011 *Anatomy*, Yvon Lambert , Paris

2011 *Terra Amata*, FIAF , New York

2011 *Breaking And Entering*, Yvon Lambert , New York

2010 *She-Wolf*, Grimm, Amsterdam, NL

**LIST OF WORKS**

*Haruspex*, 2010

broken fiberglass statue, urethane, materials and trash from an empty lot next to the studio

155 x 35 x 35 cm

Private Collection Amsterdam

*Horror Vacui*, 2010

polyurethane adhesive and fiberglass sculpture

200 x 76 x 61 cm

Collection Drosterij – Knispel

*Nature Boy*, 2010

fiberglass statue, polyurethane, plastic, sand, steel, HTH chlorine, Score hair gel, plexiglass, foil tape

203.2 x 76.2 x 50.8 cm

Zabludowicz Collection

*Home and Garden*, 2011

plexiglass filled with BioDrain Grease & Waste Digester, Zep Glass Cleaner, Mr.Clean, Bio-Rinse Floor Cleaner, Kool-Aid, Urethane Adhesive, Pine-Glo Kitchen & Bathroom Cleaner, Suavitel Laundry Detergent, Fiberglass Statue, Pink Lotion Hand Soap, Pine-Sol, Plastic Flowers, Salt, 1 Step Kitchen Degreaser, Orange Soda, Fabric Softener, Lysol, Chlorine, Dunkin Donuts Billboard, Burnt Wood, Hair Gel, Surveyors Vests, Glass Spheres, steel base

180 x 140 x 140 cm

Private Collection

*Lady Lady*, 2011

fiberglass statue, polyurethane, steel

182.88 x 111.76 x 60.96 cm

Zabludowicz Collection

*Return To Nature*, 2011

fiberglass statue, polyurethane, packing peanuts, steel, polyurethane adhesive

237.5 x 123.8 x 186.7 cm

Rosenblum Collection, Paris

*So Fresh So Clean*, 2011

brown clay, dial hand soap, hair gel, Key Food detergent, powder, laundry detergent, mouthwash, Pine-Sol, Pink Lotion Hand Soap, Pledge floorcare, plexiglas, Spic-n-Span Orange

139.7 x 125.73 x 17.14 cm

courtesy the artist and Yvon Lambert, Paris

*Untitled, 2011*

piece of fiberglass statue, urethane, coal slag, steel

88.9 x 88.9 x 76.2 cm

Collection Drosterij – Knispel

*Bench Press, 2012*

coal slag

190.5 x 304.8 x 266.7 cm

courtesy the artist and Yvon Lambert, Paris

*Erratic, 2012*

acrylic boxes, linoleum, lotion, vaseline, Kool-Aid, ceiling tiles, Hair gel, lipstick, fluorescent tubes, concrete, urethane, coal slag, plastic rain gutter, mesh, billboard vinyl, plaster powder, plastic mirrors, burnt model of 6221 Osage avenue, kitty litter, wooden statues, glass, steel C channel, Colon Cleanse, plexiglass template, yoga mat, skateboards, screen door, spray paint and house paint, asphalt felt, aluminum foil, coal slag, aluminum cast of Ted Kaczynski's flute welded to cast of a digging bar, asphalt, chlorine, truck tire, SlimStyles, charcoal, subfloor foam, vinyl, silicone and beer cans, carpet, fiberglass statue holes, Super Clean, Muscle Milk, asphalt shingles, street paint glass spheres, Grand Theft Auto billboard, fluorescent office light diffuser, resin bones submerged in urethane, sheetrock, roofing rubber, copper pipes in insulation, welcome mat, Max Protein, expanded steel, shredded paper, stained hardwood floor

192.5 x 515 x 140 cm

Collection De Heus-Zomer

*History, 2012*

white bronze and steel

304 cm diam x 7,6 cm

ProWinko Collection

image courtesy the artist and Hauser & Wirth

photo Genevieve Hanson

*Improvised Munition, 2012*

bronze

165 x 230 x 50 cm

Private Collection. UK

*Nature Girl, 2012*

fiberglass statue, coal slag, polyurethane, steel, aluminium

266.7 x 132 x 91.4 cm

Private Collection, UK

*Course of Empire, 2013*

plexiglass, aquarium rocks, sixpack holder, front door, rubber, Halloween hand, aluminum, rain gutter, paint, tire tube, Tide bottle, liquor bottles, light covers, fake grass, baking soda, fake wood veneer, plastic plants, styrofoam, plastic bags,

kitty litter, zombie target, air filter, plaster mold, billboard, magazines, marzipan hotdog, etc.

192 x 597 x 569 cm

Grimm Gallery, Amsterdam

image courtesy the artist and Grimm Gallery, Amsterdam

photo Joshua White

*Garden of Forking Paths*, 2013

steel, white bronze, copper, blackened white bronze

304.8 x 609.6 x 10 cm

Grimm Gallery, Amsterdam

image courtesy the artist and Grimm Gallery, Amsterdam

photo Joshua White

*Microscope*, 2013

c-print, plywood, steel

144.7 x 106.6 x 15.2 cm

courtesy the artist and OHWOW, Los Angeles

*Universal Gym*, 2013

chromed steel, leather, cat litter

190 x 305 x 267 cm

Grimm Gallery, Amsterdam

image courtesy the artist and Grimm Gallery, Amsterdam

*Untitled*, 2013

copper, steel

195 x 71 x 75 cm

Private Collection, Dubai

*A Fate Worse Than Death*, 2014

milled cat litter, urethane, cat litter, plywood, steel

129.5 x 363.2 x 15.2 cm

courtesy the artist and Grimm Gallery, Amsterdam

*Andrew*, 2014

steel, spray paint, Andrew Sutherland's t-shirt, wax

76.2 x 76.2 x 360.6 cm

courtesy the artist and Grimm Gallery, Amsterdam

*Camp4*, 2014

cork, paper, push pins, plywood, steel

229.8 x 314.9 x 15.2 cm

courtesy the artist and Grimm Gallery, Amsterdam

*Commerce Of Convenience*, 2014

milled plaster, urethane, plaster, joint compound, base coat, plywood, steel

129.5 x 363.2 x 15.2 cm  
courtesy the artist and Grimm Gallery, Amsterdam

*Cross Section*, 2014  
mixed media, plywood, steel  
229.8 x 314.9 x 15.2 cm  
courtesy the artist and Grimm Gallery, Amsterdam

*Heinous Cling*, 2014  
urethane rock, climbing chalk, plywood, paint, steel  
276.8 x 215.9 x 15.2 cm  
courtesy the artist and Grimm Gallery, Amsterdam

*Here Today Gone Tomorrow*, 2014  
urethane, paint, milled plaster  
106 x 131.4 x 16.5 cm  
Private Collection

*Maia*, 2014  
steel, spray paint, Maia Ruth Lee's t-shirt, wax  
76.2 x 76.2 x 274.3 cm  
courtesy the artist and Grimm Gallery, Amsterdam

*Now Or Never; Are We To Live or Perish Forever?*, 2014  
carved urethane bark, plywood, paint, steel  
276.8 x 218.4 x 15.2 cm  
ProWinko Collection

*Peter*, 2014  
steel, charred paint, Peter Sutherland's t-shirt, wax  
76.2 x 76.2 x 317.5 cm  
courtesy the artist and Grimm Gallery, Amsterdam

*Run For The Hills*, 2014  
artist's shirt, steel, blackened steel, spray paint, paint stripper, wax  
76.2 x 76.2 x 274.3 cm  
courtesy the artist and Grimm Gallery, Amsterdam

*Untitled (black statue)*, 2014  
resin, urethane, steel base  
218.4 x 152.4 x 60.96 cm  
courtesy the artist and Grimm Gallery, Amsterdam

*Untitled (Coal slag rocks)*, 2014  
6 pieces  
coal slag, urethane, steel, foam  
different measures

courtesy the artist and Grimm Gallery, Amsterdam

*Untitled (hula hoop piece), 2014*

4 pieces

powder coated steel racks, sewn pigmented silicone

125.7 x 60.9 x 73.6 cm

courtesy the artist and Grimm Gallery, Amsterdam

*Untitled (yellow statue), 2014*

resin, urethane, steel base

208.2 x 152.4 x 45.7 cm

courtesy the artist and Grimm Gallery, Amsterdam

## SCHEDA TECNICA

Title:	<i>Nick van Woert. Nature Calls</i>
Exhibition venue:	MAMbo – Museo d'Arte Moderna di Bologna via Don Minzoni 14 – Bologna
Exhibition dates:	30 <sup>th</sup> May – 7 <sup>th</sup> September 2014
Opening hours:	Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday h 12.00 pm – 6.00 pm Thursday, Saturday, Sunday h 12.00 pm – 8.00 pm Closed on Monday
Museum tickets:	Full 6 €; Reduced 4 €
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