

kunsthall

extra
city

DEADLY

AFFAIRS

Dear visitor,

Welcome to Kunsthal Extra City.

We are highly committed to ensuring our communication with respect to exhibitions is clear, by means of free guided tours and documentation such as this brochure.

Please don't hesitate to approach our receptionist should you have any questions regarding the exhibition. Alternatively you can contact us by email (info@extracity.org) or phone (+32 3 677 16 55).

Enjoy your visit,
The team of Kunsthal Extra City

Kunsthal Extra City works with art that encourages us to reflect on contemporary urban topics. Art stimulates us to understand our changing society better - or differently. We encourage new links between art, artists, researchers, and city dwellers and contribute to a broader public platform for artistic reflection and imagination.

'Deadly Affairs'

23.03 – 30.06.2019

Works by Boris Anje, Valentino Bellini & Eileen Quinn, Don't Follow the Wind, Jessika Khazrik, Daniel Lambo, Hira Nabi, Franziska Pierwoss, Natascha Sadr Haghigian & Ashkan Sepahvand, Neda Saeedi, Susan Schuppli, Adrien Tirtiaux and Various Artists

Curator Antonia Alampi

Research curator Caroline Ektander

Assistant curator Zeynep Kubat

We are living in a time in which the human impact on our planet is so terrifyingly profound that it shall leave its traces for millennia to come. At the heart of this accelerating planetary change lies the excessive and expanding modes of extraction, production, and disposal necessary to support the perpetual economic growth inherent to the modern, and particularly Western, project.

'Deadly Affairs' addresses environmental injustice by bringing into view the externalities (contamination of humans and non-humans) inherent to the logic of capital accumulation. It traces the exploitation of labour, land and resources from within Europe to a space outside of its borders, focusing on how the privileges Europeans presently enjoy, and the rights granted by certain forms of citizenship, are only possible because of abuses that take place outside the confines of its jurisdiction. It does so by using the trope of toxic trades and toxic destruction, and the slow, unspectacular violence that characterises it – a violence that is often difficult to

grasp, visualise and represent, since the relationship between cause and effect can be easily eluded.

The exhibition presents the work of both local and international artists engaging with a broad understanding of the toxic, bringing together the wider political, economic and social entanglements that facilitate its production and unjust distribution and the bodily, psychological and concealed traces that it leaves behind and define its endemic presence.

The artworks exist among a net of textual materials gathered and produced by the research team – from historical facts to proverbs, poetry, varied literary stories and scholarly texts – all of which shed light on the diversified and shifting sources and understandings of the toxic and how it is experienced, personally and in communities. These appear on layers of orange paint, referencing the highly toxic, sulphurous volcanic minerals that were a significant source for the harvesting of orange pigment used by alchemists and artists.

The architecture of the exhibition, devised by artist Adrien Tirtiaux and centring on a cement wall that cuts through the space, serves as both a sculptural intervention and a support structure for the artworks and research materials. It highlights the problem of visibility at the core of the toxic while also addressing the Western “out of sight, out of mind” mentality. It acts as a framework for navigating the exhibition as well as for physically and affectively engaging with it.

By encouraging a more profound understanding of the economic disparities and cultural habits that co-determine the status quo, the exhibition ultimately hopes to engage the audience in a more relational understanding of the environment and its ownership and to underscore how the unequal distribution of environmental catastrophes is a political problem – one inherently intertwined with issues of capitalism, class and race.

CAHIER #5: DEADLY AFFAIRS

The exhibition is accompanied by a cahier edited by Antonia Alampi and copy-edited by Pia Chakraverti-Wuerthwein, with new and existing texts by Antonia Alampi, Ayushi Dhawan, Caroline Ektander, Maximilian Feichtner, Zeynep Kubat, Simone Müller and Jonas Stuck. The Cahier can be downloaded for free from our website.

The exhibition is part of 'Toxic Commons' initiated by Caroline Ektander, Antonia Alampi and SAVVY Contemporary, Simone Müller with a research group from the Rachel Carson Center composed of Ayushi Dhawan, Maximilian Feichtner and Jonas Stuck.

↳ FOR YOUR CONVENIENCE, PLEASE FIND IN THE FOLLOWING PAGES THE ARTISTS PRESENTED IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER AND NUMBERED; THE NUMBERS CORRESPOND TO THOSE ON THE EXHIBITION LABELS, SO YOU CAN EASILY FIND INFORMATION ON EVERY ARTWORK.

1. Boris Anje

'Conscious us 1', (2017-2018)

'Conscious us 2', (2017-2018)

The excessive and blind consumerism of a small minority of the world's population, characterised by a "throw it away and buy a new one" attitude, has catastrophic consequences for the environment and the living conditions of the majority of our planet's inhabitants.



Boris Anje, 'Conscious us 1', (2017-2018), courtesy of the artist

In his artistic work, Boris Anje highlights the dependency of individuals on brands, which are ultimately understood as defining and representing their status and value, from the financial to the symbolic. He writes that “in this consumer world, the desire to feign imposes itself as a human need, as a catalyst of our life, making us believe that it makes us superior, that it allows us to elevate ourselves within society”.

In the paintings on view – part of a larger series – a layer of familiar multinational logos substitutes people's skin. A cynical comment on who they have essentially become that also vaguely defines their interchangeable identity as part of the (capitalist) “disease” they carry and spread. They pose for a glamorous “selfie” against a backdrop of artificial colours carrying the sign “Caution radiation zone”; a highly dangerous site serves as a space for decoration and fashionable posing. Status is defined by materialism, hence by possession and physical comfort, within the capitalist dogma, and the short-sightedness and superficiality that comes along with it has an unquantifiable impact on the life of the earth-system as a whole.

Boris Anje was born in 1993 in Bamenda (CMR) and lives and works in Douala (CMR).

2. Valentino Bellini & Eileen Quinn

‘This is how we walked on the moon’, (2018–2019)

Behind the acceptance, by local populations, of many hazardous industrial endeavours lies the promise of solving unemployment and poverty.

‘This is how we walked on the moon’ is a collaborative work by photographer Valentino Bellini and journalist Eileen Quinn, merging investigative journalism, archival materials, interviews and photographs all related to the history of the petrochemical area of Siracusa in Sicily, and what remains of it in the environment, in people's bodies and in their memories.

The process of industrialisation in this area went incredibly fast and was equally blind to environmental concerns. It transformed eastern Sicily from one of the poorest agricultural regions in Italy to being home to one of the largest petrochemical plants in Europe in the 1950s and 1960s. Something built with the hope and purpose of making Italy autonomous in the extraction, processing and exportation of oil.

‘This is how we walked on the moon’ highlights the entanglement of a local history with international relations and industrial dependencies, with the interests of criminal organisations such as the mafia, and the cartels of multinational corporations. The work shows the evolution of the petrochemical plant to a decadent complex forced to sell industries to foreign companies and marked by increasing unemployment,

and repercussions for the health and lives of nearby populations who, after years of industrial illicit activities and exposure to toxic substances, are now victims of cancer and birth defects.

Valentino Bellini was born in 1984 in Palermo (IT) where he still lives and works. Eileen Quinn was born in 1989 in Paris (FR) and lives and works in Palermo (IT).



Valentino Bellini and Eileen Quinn, 'This is how we walked on the moon', (2018-2019), courtesy of the artists.

3. Don't Follow the Wind Collective

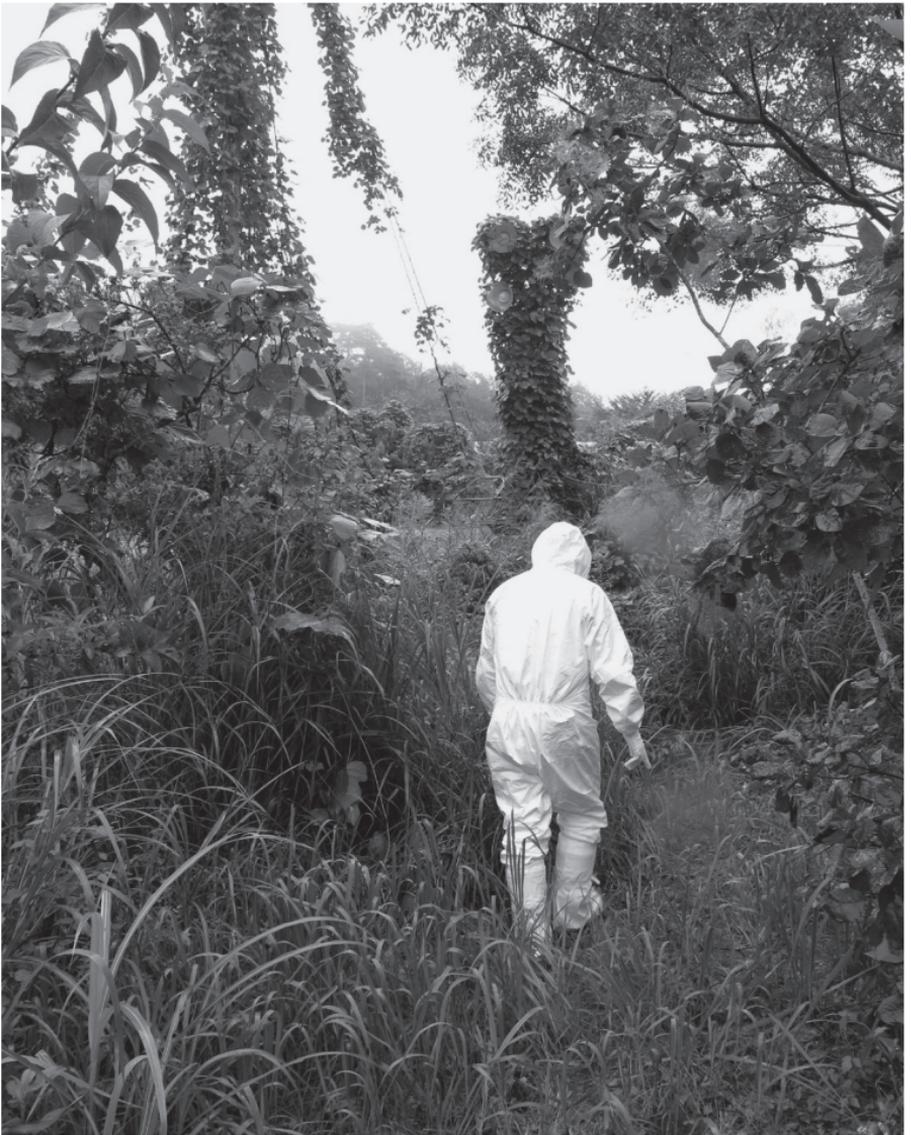
'A Walk in Fukushima', (2015–ongoing)

What can art do in an ongoing catastrophe, when destruction and contamination have made living impossible?

'Don't Follow the Wind' is an ongoing exhibition taking place inside the restricted Fukushima exclusion zone, the radioactive evacuated area surrounding the Dai-ichi Nuclear Power Plant established in the wake of the 2011 disaster. The radioactive contamination separates residents from their homes, land, and community and continues to spread out since.

New works developed by different artists are installed at three sites lent by former residents. As the zone is contaminated and remains inaccessible to the public, the exhibition will be ongoing but largely invisible – a condition akin to radiation itself – only to be viewed in the future, if and when it once again becomes safe for the residents to return.

The installation on view here consists of a 360-degree video playing inside a headset made by a family living in Fukushima just outside of the zone. The film is an intimate portrait of the sites of the inaccessible art exhibition inside the zone where over a 100,000 people have been evacuated since 2011 and many of them separated from their homes for an indefinite period of time, maybe years or decades. A map outlines the present state of the zone providing details on the



Don't Follow the Wind, installing the exhibition on site in the Fukushima exclusion zone, (2015-ongoing), courtesy of Don't Follow the Wind

specific sections. The installation gives a sense of the magnitude of the disaster, from the personal experience to the macro-political aspects of it, and the way in which artists (could) intervene in such contexts.

The curatorial collective Don't Follow the Wind is made up of Chim|Pom, Kenji Kubota, Eva and Franco Mattes and Jason Waite.

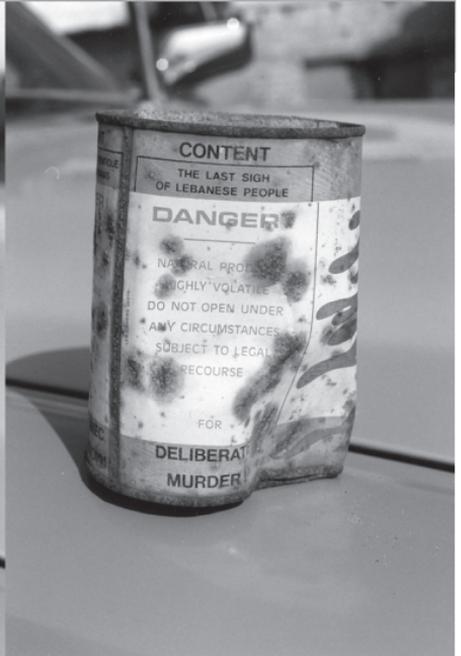
4. Jessika Khazrik or the Society of False Witnesses

‘All the Flowers That Were Thrown on My Head Come Back Panting’, (2016–ongoing)

‘Waste Eats Your Histories’, (2016–ongoing)

The two series of works on show by Jessika Khazrik are part of her ‘Blue Barrel Grove’ project (2013–ongoing), in which she focuses on one particular case in order to address the global (waste) economy. The project is centred around the toxic waste trade that took place in 1987 between the Italian Mafia and the Lebanese Forces, a former militia during Lebanon’s Civil War (1975–1990) and now one of the nation’s ruling political parties. The toxic waste was transported by sea in oil barrels and containers and half of was dumped in a quarry near to the house in which the artist grew up. Pierre Malychef, an eco-toxicologist and herbal pharmacologist, was assigned by the Lebanese authorities to investigate the case together with two more scientists. Ultimately however the case was forcibly closed when Malychef was detained and declared a “false witness”.

With every iteration of ‘Waste Eats Your Histories’, Khazrik re-arranges a selection from the thousands of photographs – of waste, informal dumping sites, flowers and plants – she found in Malychef’s laboratory. The same photographs – collected by the scientist to provide forensic evidence of the illegal trade – were used by “law enforcement” as counter-evidence to the case.



'All the Flowers that Were Thrown on my Head Come Back Panting' subverts the abject mechanisms by which waste is obscured as matter outside of space, history and classification. Through the simple gesture of computationally merging Malychef's photographs, Khazrik creates an accumulative ecology where trash and flowers collaborate.

Jessika Khazrik was born in 1991 in Beirut (LBN), where she lives and works.

Thanks to ARTX Designagentur Berlin and Al Design El Rayess.

← Pierre Malychef, Jessika Khazrik or The Society of False Witnesses, 'Content, Contact and Danger', (1995-2015-ongoing), courtesy Pierre Malychef and the artist

5. Daniel Lambo

'Breathless', (2018)

Many corporations have been consciously producing, distributing and selling toxic materials on a large scale, or have exposed their workers to highly toxic substances. Essentially, one can speak of corporate homicide. Only since 1989 and the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal, have trans-national regulations made it increasingly harder for industries to operate in this way, forcing closures, illegalising certain substances or processes, or calling for radical changes in their production. At the same time, however, very few corporations have been found guilty or held responsible for the violence and deaths they have caused and many continue to function by simply moving their activities and market outside of European jurisdictions, and more specifically to the Global South.

Filmmaker Daniel Lambo sets off on a passionate quest to find the truth about the deadly asbestos industry, following the deaths of his father and many others from his village Kapelle-op-den-Bos in Flanders, where the factory of Eternit was located, once one of the world's largest asbestos-producing multinationals. His search takes him to the Indian village of Kymore where he discovers an active asbestos factory that was once owned by the Belgian Eternit. He hits upon the largest asbestos waste dump in India and unveils a cold-blooded industry still endangering the lives of workers and consumers around the world. The film tells the gripping

story of the fight of individuals against the still-booming asbestos industry.

In the exhibition you can find documentation related to the extensive research for the film.

Daniel Lambo was born in 1968 in Willebroek (BEL), and lives and works in Brussels (BEL).

THE FILM WILL BE SCREENED ON 18.04.2019, IN THE PRESENCE OF DANIEL LAMBO.



Daniel Lambo, 'Breathless', (2018), film still, courtesy of the film-maker

6. Hira Nabi

'A Ship Story (as part of an Indian Ocean saga)', (2019)

The toxic byproducts of industrial production do not just disappear. Someone, somewhere, very probably with few alternatives, will dismantle and dump them, incurring contamination in the process.

Where do ships go to die? 'A Ship Story (as part of an Indian Ocean saga)' is set at the ship-breaking yard at Gadani, Pakistan, one of the largest ship-wrecking sites in the world, where vessels – for the most part not properly cleaned of the toxic and hazardous residues they contain – are dismantled by labourers working in extremely dangerous conditions.

Hira Nabi's docu-fictional film creates a dialogue between the 'Ocean Master' – a container vessel that is anthropomorphized and given a voice of its own – and the workers who take the ship apart bit by bit to reintroduce it to the local economy: quality steel and wood, and any other remainders are sold for very little money. As the artist writes: 'This industry is unpacked as the site of contextual inquiries: into the destruction of marine ecology, exploitative labor practices affecting a migrant labour force, a network of linked industries aggregating wealth, and an imbalance of power tilting in favour of the industrialized North versus the poorer Global South'.

Hira Nabi was born in Lahore (PAK), where she lives and works.



Hira Nabi, 'A Ship Story (as part of an Indian Ocean saga)', (2019), courtesy of the artist

7. Franziska Pierwoss

'Im Amerika', (2015/19), in collaboration with Siska

'Biasca, Balconia & Diabolo', (2019)

It has been widely known for decades that inhaling asbestos fibres can produce particular types of cancers. This information has however been concealed by the corporations producing and distributing it in order to avoid loss of capital, workers' strikes and victims' rightful claims for justice.



Franziska Pierwoss & Siska, 'Im Amerika', (2015/19), video still, courtesy the artists

Asbestos sheeting is a cheap, light, flexible, and durable construction material. It has been distributed since the beginning of the twentieth century throughout the world in all sorts of public and private buildings – from nurseries to residential homes. The asbestos used by the Swiss-Belgian corporation Eternit was extracted from mines in southern Africa. The extraction happened during the apartheid regime (1948-1990) through company-owned mines with the help of seasonal workers.

Franziska Pierwoss' video (made in collaboration with Lebanese artist Siska, with music by Christian Blumberg) shows images of the single-family homes for workers built by the Eternit company as sample houses/homes.

The pots – from small to gigantic and caricatural – reference Eternit objects still in circulation, and particularly a characteristic type of flowerpot that the company produced, namely the BIASCA or 'elephant ear' pot by Swiss designer Willi Guhl. This assemblage alludes to Eternit's extensive distribution – in time and geography – and how such innocent objects conceal the fatality of the material, how sexy aesthetics hide its toxic heart.

Franziska Pierwoss was born in 1981 in Tübingen (DEU) and lives and works in Beirut (LBN) and Berlin (DEU).

Funded by the Berlin Senate Department for Culture and Europe.

8. Neda Saeedi

'Seven Hills', (2019)

The American sociologist Donna Haraway defines the “Plantationocene” in which we live today as follows: “Plantationocene is an ordering of world economies predicated on monoculture, alienated labour forms, finance capital, long-distance supply chains, non-renewable resource inputs, and increasing mechanization and corporate control. It is also a violent re-ordering of multispecies landscapes.”

This is the context of Neda Saeedi's work 'Seven Hills'. With the White Revolution the Shah of Iran of the 1960s began a modernization reform that included the industrialisation of the country and the introduction of Western values. In the early 1970s, the Iranian government built the Dez Dam in the Khuzestan Province, subsequently planting a sugar cane field and a refinery, and employing workers from nearby rural settlements and Bakhtiari nomads. The employment of the Bakhtiari people was meant as an attempt at “civilizing” this nomadic tribe, who were otherwise in constant movement and independent of governmental institutions.

The installation by Saeedi here on view – part of the project 'Garden of Eden Moving; A Petrified Tribe' – is composed of sculptural and sonic elements that reference the experience of the Bakhtiari in this moment of transition to a forced sedentary labour: both through the trope of the sheep which is still a common domestic animal for nomadic tribes, and through reference to

sugar canes grown in a monocrop system for commercial production, and their toxic effects on humans and non-humans

Neda Saeedi was born in 1987 in Tehran (IRN) and lives and works in Berlin (DEU) and Tehran (IRN).



Neda Saeedi, 'Seven Hills', (2019), detail, courtesy the artist

9. Susan Schuppli

'Trace Evidence', (2016)

Contaminants can disperse widely, and the temporal latency of their material and biological effects may take years, even decades to emerge. Establishing the incontrovertible relationship between cause and effect has proven a difficult legal challenge. This has allowed global actors – from states to corporations – to contribute to climate change with virtual impunity from any dangers or damages incurred, hampering environmental justice.

But the nuclear contamination is unlike other complex, non-linear, toxic events. Despite its radical and covert nature, the unique signature and behaviour of radioactive isotopes allows its lethal traces to be tracked directly back to their source. The 'Trace Evidence' video trilogy by artist and researcher Susan Schuppli (with a soundscape by Philippe Ciampi) explores the geological, meteorological and hydrological appearance of nuclear evidence within matter, and documents the pathways of radioactive isotopes as they move and spread through winds and waters, crossing geographies.

'Trace Evidence' focuses upon three events: the implications of the discovery of ancient nuclear reactors at the uranium mine site in Oklo in Gabon in 1972; the detection of atmospheric contaminants at the Forsmark power plant in Sweden on 28 April 1986 (alerting the world to the Chernobyl disaster, which had taken place

two days earlier in the Ukraine); and the 7,600 kilometre journey of radioactive isotopes from the Fukushima-Daiichi power plant in Japan through the waters of the Pacific Ocean to the west coast of Vancouver Island five years later.

Susan Schuppli was born in 1967 in Ottawa (CAN) and lives and works in London (GBR).



Susan Schuppli, still from 'Hydrology' in 'Trace Evidence', (2016), courtesy of the artist

10. Adrien Tirtiaux

'Toxic Tales' (2019)

Adrien Tirtiaux's spatial contributions take our understanding of toxicity as a starting point; not merely visible in the materiality of things, toxicity demands a "double gaze" in order to be understood.

The wall that transects the space, realised by Olivier Goethals for the previous exhibition, is the site of Tirtiaux's main intervention. The artist has clad this volume with hand-cast cement panels, referencing the architecture of bunkers. This spatial architecture highlights the core human drive to contain, protect from, or hide toxicity – a need characteristic of how we manage that which is undesirable, as well as our Western "out of sight, out of mind" mentality.

Tirtiaux's other interventions act as sensual allusions to the research texts that link the notion of toxicity to case studies in Belgium. Real or suggested peep-holes make visible the works of detoxification that are about to happen in the building of Kunsthal Extra City (its soil being heavily polluted due to the premises' former use as an industrial dry-cleaning site) or toxic materials still present in its infrastructure (such as underground pipes made of asbestos). The trembling neon lights are evocative of unreliable and dangerous energy sources (as witnessed by the bad state of nuclear power plants in Belgium). The large photograph of 'Symphony in White, No.1' (1861-62) by American painter James McNeill Whistler addresses the long history of toxic pigments

artists have deployed, and particularly lead white used as both a pigment and a cosmetic product for women's skin.

Adrien Tirtiaux was born in 1980 in Brussels (BEL) and currently lives in Antwerp (BEL).



Adrien Tirtiaux, 'Toxic Tales', (2019), work in progress

11. Various Artists

'toxiThropea.sunset' (2019)

Will humankind only be watching the death of this world? 'toxiThropea' is a series of works that poetically and sensually speaks of the tense and toxic relationship between humans and nature. It imagines future scenes where our world's resources are depleted and humans are nearly extinct. Depicting our environment beyond the end of its self-healing capacity. The viewer's role is reduced to witnessing the aesthetic simulations of our dying, intoxicated habitat.

The work is made of bonsai trees – representing an extremely domesticated form of nature shaped by humans – immersed in undefined toxic substances for prolonged periods of time. It evokes a vision of a future where chemical processes have ultimately transformed the state of nature, and in which mankind is no longer involved. Its aesthetics conceal the fragility and the amount of energy these works require to be kept “alive”.

'toxiThropea' is part of the project 'Água com Gás', in which the Brussels-based collective Various Artists examines a number of water-related topics such as the privatization of the water supply, pollution, or the depletion and salination of water sources.

Various Artists is a Brussels (BEL) based art collective (established in 1993) with 24 fictional members. The collective is a “Gesamtkunstwerk” where all research topics and artistic practices of its 24 members come together in collaborative installations or projects.



Various Artists, 'toxiThrope', (2018), photo by Chantal van Rijt, courtesy of the artists

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THANKS TO

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Eikelstraat 29, 2600 Antwerpen
Thu-Sat, 13:00-18:00,
Sun, 11:00-18:00
TICKET € 5/3/1/0
www.extracity.org

ACTIVITIES 'DEADLY AFFAIRS'

FREE GUIDED TOURS ON SUNDAY

Join for a free tour every second Sunday:

31.03, 14.04, 28.04, 12.05, 26.05, 09.06 and 23.06, at 14:00

DANIEL LAMBO

Talk and screening 'Breathless' (2018)

18.04, at 19:30

FREE GUIDED TOUR DURING THE ANTWERP ART WEEKEND

19.05, at 14:00

FILM PROGRAMME 'DEADLY AFFAIRS'

curated by Anne Reijniers and Rob Jacobs

29.05, at 19:30

FREE GUIDED TOUR DURING THE FINISSAGE

30.06, at 14:00

NATASCHA SADR HAGHIGHIAN & ASHKAN SEPAHVAND

'Carbon Theatre - Act III', (2019)

Listening session during the finissage of the exhibition

A collaboration between the Contour Biennale 9 (commissioner), Extra City Kunsthal and SAVVY Contemporary.

30.06, at 15:30

