

BORZO GALLERY

presenting at ART BASEL feature 2015

NEW BABYLON by CONSTANT

Constant Nieuwenhuys (1920-2005) started his artistic career as a painter and was co-founder of the CoBrA movement in 1948. His stay in post-war London in the early fifties and friendship with Ben Nicholson and Barbara Hepworth caused his dramatic change towards – what he would call – 'New Babylon', a utopian world vision for post-war generations. From 1956 onwards he created not only paintings but started making sculptures and structures in which his ideology and plans for 'New Babylon' were visualized.

After World War II there was a clear shift towards more spare-time. Society became more modern and processes were often automated. Due to this new balance between free-time and work, Constant noted that 'New Babylon' could be the place for the 'Homo Ludens' (the playing man). 'New Babylon' is a network of changeable structures situated above Europe. According to the artist 'New Babylon' is not a model that should be imitated, but rather an illustration of a way of life in a hypothesized society. This way of life is Nomadic in principle. People travel the world leaving tracks that can form a network, sectors of 'New Babylon'. A city as a network of sectors. Man the player ('Homo Ludens') and man the creator are at the centre.

Even nowadays, not the least of architects such as Rem Koolhaas and Norman Foster, still refer to the groundbreaking theories of Constant. His visions have been exhibited and brought to life in many writings, books and exhibitions such as the 1966 Venice Biennale and the 2002 Documenta. In cooperation with his wife and the Fondation Constant, we have been working on an exhibition especially curated for Art Basel 2015. The Reina Sofia in Madrid will honor Constant with a retrospective this same year.

Our Basel exhibition will consist of structures, oil paintings, drawings and watercolors, as well as photo collages: an extremely rare group of 'New Babylon' works. With works never shown or offered on the market, from one of the most prestigious art projects in European art after World War II.

At Art Basel 2013 Borzo presented the well-received Feature with ZERO artist Jan Schoonhoven.

BORZO

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