

MARK MANDERS



**Zeno X Gallery
28 Years of Collaboration**

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In 1993, Jan Debbaut, director of the Van Abbemuseum, was nominated as curator for the Belgian and Dutch pavilion in Venice. To complement his presentation he asked Tom Van Gestel, head of the Mondriaan Foundation, and myself to curate a show with emerging Belgian and Dutch artists. Instead of working from a preconceived concept, we were looking for artists who were capable of making a strong personal statement. We did many studio visits, but I will never forget my visit to your very cold studio in Arnhem. We were immediately convinced of the quality of your work and the very authentic and quirky world you were creating as a young artist. At the time you had only just graduated from the ArtEZ Academy in Arnhem.

Our pleasant and intense collaboration in Venice led me to invite you to join the gallery. Your first solo exhibition at Zeno X took place one year later, in 1994. It's an honour that an edition of the work *Fox / Mouse / Belt* which was both in Venice and in your first solo show at the gallery, is now in the collections of the MoMA in New York and S.M.A.K. in Ghent.

What I have always admired in you is your calm and modest personality, your focus and your great sense of space. During the past three decades, you've had many international exhibitions and received remarkable institutional recognition. For every new show, big or small, you were always very well prepared and extremely focused – even during the COVID-19 pandemic, when you needed to install three museum exhibitions in Japan via Skype.

I think it is also important to thank my colleagues at Tanya Bonakdar Gallery and Koyanagi Gallery, with whom we have been working in a great way over all these years.

Dear Mark, normally we should have celebrated our 25th anniversary in 2019, but we decided to postpone this in favour of your solo exhibitions in Japan. Then the pandemic happened. Now, three years later, we can finally celebrate our collaboration of 28 years, and hopefully many more to come. It has been a fantastic journey so far, to work with you, such a great artist but also as a wonderful friend and person. Thank you.

Frank Demaegd









