smac
cape town

BAREND DE WET

MAXIMALISM

30 August – 27 September 2012

smacartgallerycapetown
In-Fin-Art Building, Cnr of Buitengracht & Buitensingel Street, Cape Town | Tel: 021 422 5100 | info@smacgallery.com | www.smacgallery.com

SMAC Art Gallery is proud to present *Maximalism* by Barend de Wet. This is De Wet's second major solo exhibition with the Gallery after Green in 2010.

A homage to exuberance and excess, *Maximalism* showcases de Wet's recently completed body of work with his maxim "art is life and life is art (art=life=art) (Smith, 2010, p.13)" forming a metaphorical thread throughout.

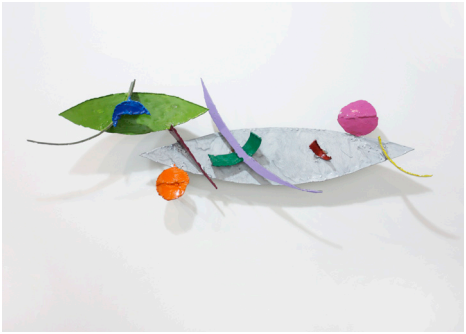
Taking root in fun, naïve mischief and sensuality, de Wet's working methodology is intuitive but with technical integrity. De Wet's is a maximalist art ethic of excess but not waste. Everything is used; every colour, every sense, every surface.

His trestle table top festooned with enamel paint spilt from a previous project becomes the starting point for a next work. Older finished artworks are reworked with new multi-coloured knittings stretched onto them. Integrating all he sees, feels and lives, de Wet has worked on a number of projects simultaneously. As he explains: "I am giving everything all the time". Barend de Wet is an artist impossible to pin down. Conceptual formalist joins a tangle of other titles including tattooed beekeeper, world record holder in yo-yo-ing model, knitter and innate exhibitionist. A proclaimed "polyglot" (Smith, 2010, p.18), Barend's visual language is equally diverse, comprising welded steel, wire, bright acrylic wool, enamel paint, raw cotton, magnets and light bulbs.

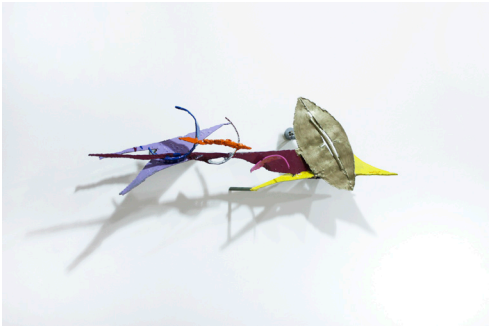
In knitted works on Board, Barend demonstrates a masculine command of this pasttime concomitant with women. Here, play triumphs in his preoccupation with reworking the surface (Smith, 2010). Objects made to look like art is in cahoots with the contemporary notion that art is nowhere and everywhere at once.

Barend installs these metal sculptures in the gallery space thereby undoing their proposed nonentity - the nothing becomes the thing. 2D line moves into 3D overlapping welded outlines in Abstract metal drawings, where images are inspired by his 1950's 'sailor' tattoos. This metal line extends into woollen scribbles in his beyond the colour line series where he proclaims the excessive and indulges in colour.

Maximalism celebrates extremes and in-betweens - the feminine and the masculine, the soft and hard, flaccid and taught, sanity and madness, intuition and intent. Always playful, always fun, de Wet successfully sutures the life-art divide in *Maximalism* - an ode to everything.



object made to look like art xiv
2012
Enamel Paint on Steel
92 x 29 x 20 cm



object made to look like art xiii
2012
Enamel Paint on Steel
97 x 31 x 16 cm

beyond the colour line III
2012
100% Acrylic Wool and
Paint on Board
122 x 124 cm

Barend de Wet
1956 Boksburg, Gauteng

1980 - 1983 Diploma in Fine Art, Michaelis School of Fine Art, University of Cape Town

1990 Advanced Diploma in Fine Art, University of Cape Town

A mythical figure in the South African art world with a career straddling nearly thirty years, De Wet is essentially a conceptual formalist. His oeuvre encompasses traditional media, craft skills and fanatical hobbyism that manifests in acts of playful and witty sculptures, 'knitted paintings', performances and productive collaborations. De Wet believes that any and all material matter, whether it be canonical art works or crocheted yarn, offer creative possibilities for transformation. De Wet officially resigned from the art world in 1996 with the announcement of the birth of his son. During 1998 he established the Museum of Temporary Art at his hotel, The Grand, in Observatory, Cape Town. Here he continued his obdurate battle against the intellectualisms of art, favouring honest gestures imbued with visual puns and Duchampian mischief.

In 2010 SMAC Art Gallery presented Barend de Wet's first major solo exhibition and official return to the gallery in more than a decade. The exhibition entitled *GREEN* was accompanied by an artist's monograph chronicling his often overlooked history in South African art, written by Kathryn Smith. Most recent exhibitions include *Dada South?* at the Iziko South African National Gallery in 2009 and *Twenty: South African Sculpture of the Last Two Decades* at the Nirox Sculpture Park in 2010. This year, Barend also participated in *The Rainbow Nation - Contemporary sculpture from South Africa* at the Museum Beelden aan Zee, The Hague, Netherlands.

Selected Collections
Iziko South African National Gallery; Johannesburg Art Gallery; Tatham Art Gallery, Pietermaritzburg; Spier; Sasol; UNISA Art Collection; Berardo Foundation, Portugal.

smac
art gallery

First Floor, De Wet Centre
Church Street
Stellenbosch
South Africa

Tel: +27 (0)21 887 3607 | Fax: +27 (0) 21 887 7624
Email: info@smacgallery.com
www.smacgallery.com

SMAC Cape Town

In-Fin-Art Building
Buitengracht Street
Cape Town
South Africa

Tel: +27 (0)21 422 5100
Email: info@smacgallery.com
www.smacgallery.com

azure blue
2012
Enamel Paint on
Welded Steel
257 x 106 x 61.5 cm

maximal large knitting
2012
100% Acrylic Wool and Acrylic Paint on Plywood
123 x 245 x 3.5 cm