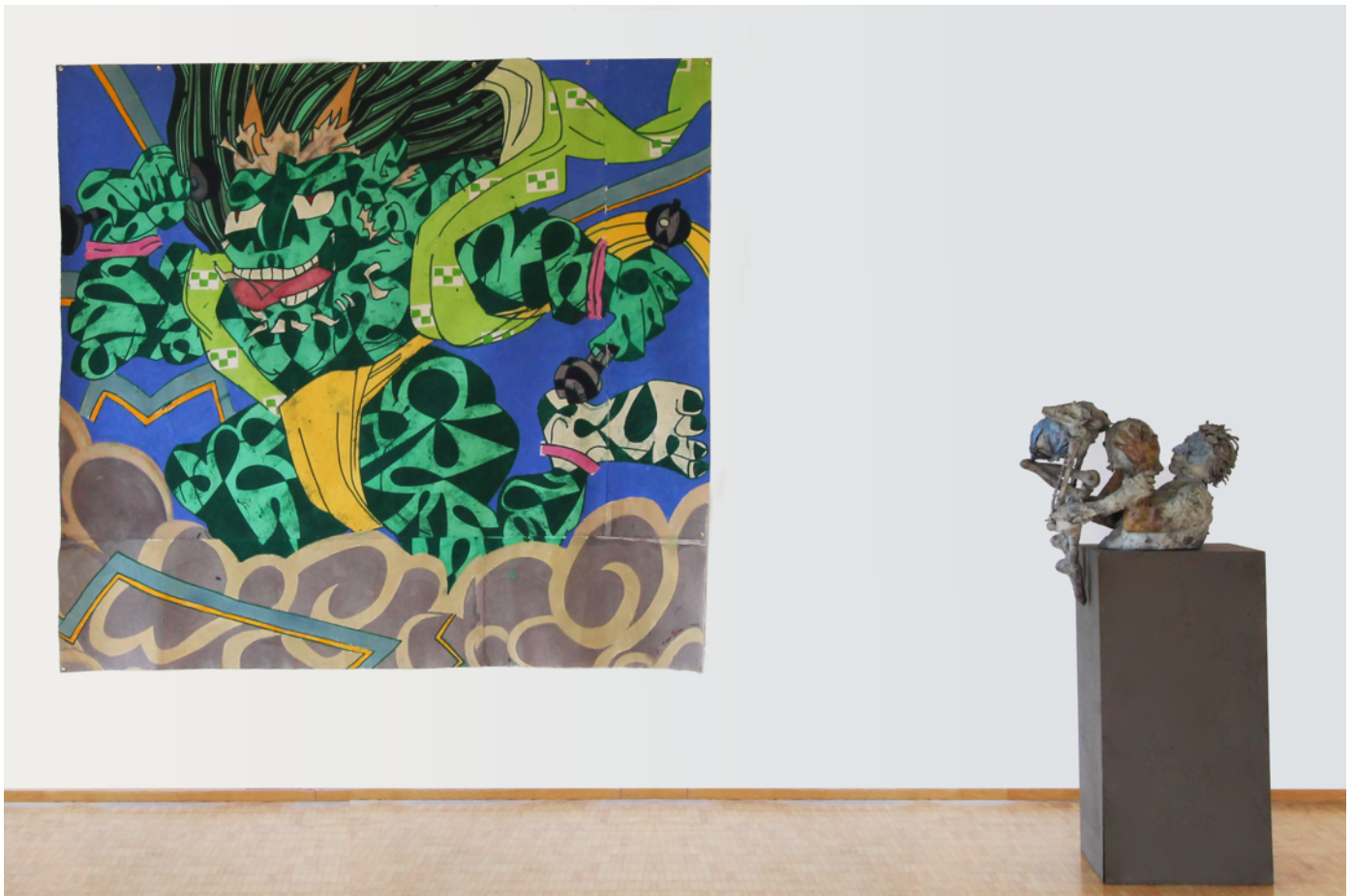


## THE NOMADIC ART GALLERY OPENS IN BELGIUM WITH THE FIRST OF A SERIES OF EXHIBITIONS DEDICATED TO THE CONTEMPORARY NEW ZEALAND ART SCENE

Inaugurating its very first gallery space in Leuven, Belgium, **The Nomadic Art Gallery** challenges traditional gallery models by setting forth a new format, alternating an *in-situ* immersion within an underrepresented art scene with a transitional gallery space in Europe shedding light onto that scene.

Opening on October 22, 2021, *HOP HIP* and *Something Possible* usher in a series of off- and online exhibitions dedicated to the gallery's first focus on the New Zealand art scene set in dialogue with European artists, showcasing emerging and established NZ artists Philip Trusttum, Ahsin Ahsin, Marcus Hipa, and Kim Pieters.

*HOP HIP* | October 22 – November 19, 2021  
*Something Possible* | October 22 – December 5, 2021



October 7, 2021 (Leuven, Belgium) – Marking its move from a mobile public art and research project, **The Nomadic Art Gallery**, founded in 2020 by Arthur Buerms and long-time partner Gie, unveils its very first transitional gallery space in Leuven, Belgium.

Building on a cyclical model rooted in the notion of nomadism, the initiative sets forth a new gallery model, which unfolds through two alternating phases. The first is an *in-situ* immersion within an underrepresented art scene, during which Arthur and Gie invest a mobile vehicle to conduct research in the given location, the latter ultimately becoming a public art project. The second phase is set in a transitional gallery space – a temporary

location in Europe which changes with each showcased art scene and where the duo initiates a dialogue between their research and the European contemporary art scene, through a program of both physical and online exhibitions.

Opening on October 22, 2021, the gallery presents its inaugural focus on the established and emerging New Zealand art scene, following Arthur and Gie's investigation into New Zealand's artistic production throughout 2020. The first of a series of thematic exhibitions, off- and online, to take place over the coming months, *HOP HIP* showcases New Zealand artists Philip Trusttum (b. 1940, New Zealand), Ahsin Ahsin (b. 1983, Cook Island), and Marcus Hipa (b. 1980, Niue Island) in dialogue with Dany Tulkens (b. 1953, Belgium), while the online exhibition simultaneously on view *Something Possible* offers a comprehensive digital survey of longstanding New Zealand artist Kim Pieters (b. 1959, New Zealand)'s oeuvre over the last decade.



The inauguration of **The Nomadic Art Gallery's** new space is rooted in its story, one which cannot be separated from that of its founders. With a shared passion for exploring, and pushing, the boundaries of art, Arthur and Gie initiated The Nomadic Art Gallery on the notion that art evolves with its context – as do how, and by whom, it is perceived.

In early 2020, turning their attention towards a seldom presented New Zealand art scene and to how their project could contribute in shedding light onto it, in particular to Western audiences, they set off for New Zealand. Following a fortuitous encounter with Auckland-based art collector, trustee of New Zealand's reputed Arts Foundation Te Tumu Toi, and ongoing supporter of their project Kent Gardner, what started as a converted truck quickly turned into a mobile art gallery, in which the duo lived and exhibited for a year. The *pro bono*, crowdfunded curatorial project itself, based on its temporary *life cycle*, unfolded as 16 exhibitions across 7 locations, as Arthur and Gie travelled 36,000 kilometers across the country, involving over 200 local artists, in constant interaction with their expanding public.



In 2021, with a year of discoveries behind them, Arthur and Gie returned to Europe, where they proceeded to the second part of The Nomadic Art Gallery's New Zealand chapter – the first of, what they had now understood, many cyclical focuses onto rarely discussed art scenes across the world.

*HOP HIP* brings together New Zealand artists Philip Trusttut, Ahsin Ahsin, and Marcus Hipa in tandem with Belgian sculptor Dany Tulkens, as they explore the wavering tension between music and visual art. As visitors circulate the four different gallery spaces in the show, they visually listen in turn to Baroque, Russian classical folk, experimental *noise*, vaporwave – and hip-hop. As the artists jointly dissect the rhythmic cadence inherent to artworks in light of musical genres, the gallery grows into a hybrid entity, announcing the deterritorialization of cultural and physical space.

A prominent drive in its conception, critically acclaimed New Zealand figurative expressionist artist Philip Trusttut lies at the heart of the exhibition. Music plays a fundamental inspirational part in his work, in turn emanating from it in a sound-to-sight back-and-forth present throughout his *Pictures at the Exhibition* series (2001–2004) as in his ongoing *Selfies* and *Masks* series. Referencing a remarkable diversity of influences, from Medieval illuminated manuscripts and Japanese woodwork prints to comic book motifs and indigenous African huts, his brushstrokes, fired by music, result in a kaleidoscopic *choreography* of line, pattern, and luminous colors.

While Ahsin Ahsin and Marcus Hipa build on inspiration from jazz, hip-hop and vaporwave in their ability to elicit a sense of community, calling to cultural authenticity and the more political dimension of their work, Trusttut's work most *resonates* in opposite, yet complementary, *tempo* to that of Dany Tulkens. The palpable sarcasm in Trusttut's work is channeled to Tulkens's seemingly dark sculptures, shedding to light a concealed lightheartedness which only the differing musicality in the works could extract. Addressing this exchange between the two artists, Arthur and Gie explain:

*"By offering a temporary snapshot onto a specific art scene at a given moment in time, The Nomadic Art Gallery acts a bridge between continents, a platform for New Zealand artists, in this first iteration, to share broadly the poorly known discourses that feed their creation – fragmented as they may be, all reclaiming their voice and identity on an international scale – all-the-while bringing to light new dimensions to seemingly understood European artists' work."*





In parallel to *HOP HIP*, the gallery extends an extensive online survey of self-defined “adaptive” and “nonrepresentational” New Zealand artist Kim Pieters. Her paintings, drawings, photographs, and moving-image soundscapes reflect her continuing experimentation within the broad artistic field, seeking to reveal the *extravisual*, the minute in the sound, sight, and touch. The works call to an in-between zone, where *something is possible*, yet all is suspended, in time and in space – a conceptual thread throughout the work of this celebrated artist, discovered only later in her career.

Closing the very first *nomadic* chapter of the past year, Arthur and Gie look ahead to the months and years to come:

*“A transitional non-space, undefined in time, The Nomadic Art Gallery is at the border between the public and the private, at once art project and gallery space, with the aim of setting forth the potential for new gallery models to emerge – each unique, reflecting art’s inherently flexible, dynamic and diverse nature – and its ability to endlessly manifest itself in various formats, in various spaces, to various audiences.”*

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#### NOTES TO EDITORS:

**About The Nomadic Art Gallery, Leuven, Belgium:**

Founded in 2020 by Arthur Buerms and long-time partner Gie, The Nomadic Art Gallery is a contemporary art gallery and public art and research project currently based in Leuven, Belgium.

Building on a cyclical model rooted in the notion of nomadism, the initiative unfolds through two alternating phases. The first is an *in-situ* immersion within an underrepresented art scene, during which Arthur and Gie invest a mobile vehicle to conduct research in the given location, the latter ultimately becoming a public art project.

The second phase is set in a transitional gallery space – a temporary location in Europe which changes with each showcased art scene and where the duo initiates a dialogue between their research and the European contemporary art scene, through a program of both physical and online exhibitions.

*HOP HIP*, group exhibition of Philip Trusttüm, Ahsin Ahsin, Marcus Hipa, and Dany Tulkens | October 22–November 19, 2021

The Nomadic Art Gallery

Brusselsesteenweg 168

3020 Herent [near Leuven], Belgium

*Something Possible*, solo exhibition of Kim Pieters | October 22–December 5, 2021 [Digital Exhibition]

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#### About Philip Trusttüm:

Philip Trusttüm (b. 1940, Raetihi, New Zealand) is a leading New Zealand figurative, expressionist artist. His works are usually large-scale and energetic, set on unstretched canvas. Trusttüm’s work has largely been inspired by everyday life experiences often worked into a semi-abstract form, with his subject matter in turn ranging from landscapes to tennis, gardening to horses, and Japanese masks to portraits.

His vibrant, ever changing style places him somewhat outside current fashions, and has at times consigned Trusttun to the byways of New Zealand art history, a discourse formerly driven by cultural nationalism and now in thrall to opaque versions of postmodern theory that has been underwhelmed by expressive accounts of the *personal*.

In 2000, he became the second only New Zealand artist to be awarded the prestigious Pollock-Krasner Foundation Grant, and in 2021, was appointed Officer of the New Zealand Order of Merit as part of the Queen's Birthday Honors for his longstanding services to art. His work has since been shown internationally – including Edinburgh, Hobart, New York, and Sydney – and can be found in all public galleries across New Zealand.

#### **About Ahsin Ahsin:**

Ahsin Ahsin (b. 1983) is a Cook Island-born artist currently living in Hamilton. A graduate from the Waikato Institute of Technology, he later refined his style, gradually crafting his aesthetic trademark(s), mostly immortalized as murals throughout New Zealand. His works reveal a nostalgic and at times dreamlike engagement with popular entertainment and technology of previous decades.

Visually, Ahsin incorporates early internet imagery, late 1990s web graphics, street art, reptiles, glitch, 3D-rendered objects, unnatural hues, science fiction, and cartoons. Rooted in his love of 1980-90's fictional movies and anime, Ahsin takes his viewers to the deep unfolding grounds of our collective imagination, where extra-terrestrial creatures exist by means of graffiti gestures.

Ahsin has made a name for himself through numerous exhibitions across New Zealand and Australia, including the Tauranga Art Gallery and Tautai Centre for Pacific Art, Auckland, among others.

#### **About Marcus Hipa:**

Marcus Hipa (b. 1980) is a Niuean artist born and raised in Alofi, Niue Island, and currently living and working in New Zealand. Drawing, painting, and carving are only some of the mediums he utilizes to explore and share insights onto his people's history and culture.

His distinct convoluted and interlocked lines merge into one another, creating an image that seemingly continuously expands, yet whose boundless energy is kept in check by the "pure" white frame of his chosen medium. Contrast is constantly at play, layered up in black and outlined in vivid colors. The lines, produced in graffiti style, resemble science fiction-like figures, all-the-while sharing the subtle markers of his people's history, culture, and traditions.

Addressing the need, and challenges, to assimilate when relocating to a foreign place, Hipa outlines the often-abrasive reality of taking on a new environment's (visual) language. His art becomes a mirror of the interplay between old and new, assimilated and learnt, as references to his cultural background punctuate the works. Hipa celebrates shared values, traditions, and the sense of community, while shedding light on the social and political issues affecting the Niuean people in the Pacific region, and in particular in Aotearoa. Ultimately, his lines can be read as universal letters telling complex stories of identity and loss, reclamation of culture and power dynamics, and representation.

Hipa's work has been shown across the Auckland region in numerous group shows, with his first solo show at The Upstairs Gallery, Auckland, in 2021.

#### **About Kim Pieters:**

Kim Pieters (b. 1959, Rotorua, New Zealand) lives and works in Dunedin, New Zealand. Her artistic practice could be described as emergent, adaptive, and nonlinear. A predominantly nonrepresentational painter, she also produces photographs, experimental film, writing, and music.

Pieters tends to build her work, regardless of its genre, around two or more distinct nuclei – for example, image and text – using the juxtaposition of these autonomous yet resonant realms to create a *clearing*, void of

expectations and norms. Inherent to this, she sheds light onto an ethical dimension involved in shared societal responsibilities, and which often prevent the nurturing of individual thought.

Her notable oeuvre, crafted over the past four decades, is represented in numerous private and public collections, including the Chartwell Collection, Auckland Art Gallery, Toi O Tamaki, Christchurch Art Gallery, Te Puna O Waiwhetu, Victoria University Collection and the Dunedin Public Art Gallery.

#### About Dany Tulkens:

Dany Tulkens (b. 1953, Leuven, Belgium), sculptor from the school of Koenraad Tinel and peer of Roland Rens, is most noted for his singular, demanding technique, through which he knocks and welds together bronze and razor-sharp quips with informed and skilled craftsmanship.

Tulkens scrutinizes and magnifies the peculiarities of man, allowing his sculptures to seemingly bathe in an atmosphere of surrealism. Pointing to the sometimes-unimaginable smallness of the human being, he probes the mysteries that surround him, as sarcasm, irony, and cynicism subtly circulate through the works, all-the-while carried by a soft light-heartedness. The world evoked by the artist is a universal world, one determined neither by time nor by space – and one somewhat akin to the shared sense of alienation experienced when confronted with the microscopic image of a known object. Ultimately, all presence in his work, while fully sarcastic, exudes its own stoical descent towards nothingness, written into its shape, into its stance.

Tulkens's work has been widely exhibited in public places, including for a large-scale sculpture commission on the Plein van de vriendschap-Setagaya in Leuven. He now mostly exhibits at regional level, with a recent exhibition at Verduyn Gallery, Wortegem-Petegem.

#### Image credits:

1. Installation view of HOP HIP, The Nomadic Art Gallery. With works: Philip Trusttum, Gnomus, 2003. Acrylic on unstretched canvas, 251 x 233 cm. Photography by Elena Pavlyukova. Courtesy of The Nomadic Art Gallery. Dany Tulkens, Een vriend maken, 2020. Bronze, 76 x 47 x 56 cm. Photography by Elena Pavlyukova. Courtesy of The Nomadic Art Gallery.
2. Philip Trusttum, Baba Yaga's Hut, 2003. Acrylic on unstretched canvas, 182 x 220 cm. Photography by Elena Pavlyukova. Courtesy of The Nomadic Art Gallery.
3. Marcus Hipa, Tanu, 2021. Marker and acrylic on cardboard (framed), 99.2 x 70.3 cm. Photography by Elena Pavlyukova. Courtesy of The Nomadic Art Gallery.
4. Ahsin Ahsin, Light Lilac Series #1, 2021. Acrylic and spray paint on canvas, 60.5 x 50.8 cm. Photography by Elena Pavlyukova. Courtesy of The Nomadic Art Gallery.
5. Kim Pieters, Write, 2021. Mixed media on board, 60 x 60 cm. Courtesy of The Nomadic Art Gallery.