

MEDIA RELEASE

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YANNICK DEMMERLE – ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE EXHIBITION, MONA LIBRARY GALLERY – September 19 – December 3, 2012

Yannick Demmerle is MONA's first resident artist and since January he has been doing something he has never done before – large-scale pencil drawings. In Europe he is known for his even larger photography of impenetrable European and Tasmanian landscapes.

Over the past eight months Yannick has been working on a series of fine pencil drawings for this his first exhibition in his new art form. His first 10 works go on display in the MONA Library Gallery starting September 19 through December 3.

The works, measuring 1.53 x 1.03cm, take time to define: Yannick has worked with a light touch in fine pencil, shaping perfectly formed human foetuses, horses – but not quite, shamanistic shapes, multi-breasted torsos, cloven hooves, thousands of leaf-like shapes densely packed, spiralling patterns, barbs, viscera, dozens of disembodied ejaculating penises, skulls, headless beasts, German, French and English expletives, distorted and distended umbilical cords connecting shapes.

The works are raw emotion and for Yannick this is all the viewer needs to know. “I love being obsessed,” he says. “There's no choice for me. My work is not a hobby. It's a necessity.” This sort of fervour is not uncommon with artists, but few today would also say, “It takes blowing off everything for your artwork...the family money, security, happiness, friends.” That's what we like about him: no self-effacing irony, no false artistic modesty.

His drawings are inspired by Art Brut, raw art - outsider art, the paintings of Marcel Storr (1911 to 1976) and Augustin Lesage (1876 to 1954), untrained and obsessive artists whose art calmed their madness, loneliness and emotional disconnect.

Yannick was born in 1969 in the northeastern French city of Sarreguemines. He studied art at the Ecole supérieure des arts décoratif, Strasbourg, graduating in 1996. In 1999 he started photographing the forests of Schorfheide nature reserve outside Berlin near the Polish border. By 2003 he had moved on to empty animal cages in European zoos. The forests and the cages are austere, uncompromising, bereft and darkly beautiful. In 2001 Yannick made his first visit to Tasmania in search of the ancient pristine forests no longer found in Europe, returning annually to spend six months hiking alone with his large format cameras. In 2008 he decided to stay as long as he could.

Exhibition location: MONA Library Gallery

Curated by Olivier Varenne, a MONA senior curator, and the MONA team

Exhibition catalogue: A 36-page catalogue is on sale in the MONA shop, with an essay by research curator, Delia Nicholls, and an interview with researcher and writer, Elizabeth Mead.

Ends

For images and further information, contact Delia Nicholls, research curator; m:0438 308 161; e: delia@mona.net.au