

Mathias Prenen

*Upside Down,
in light of shadows*

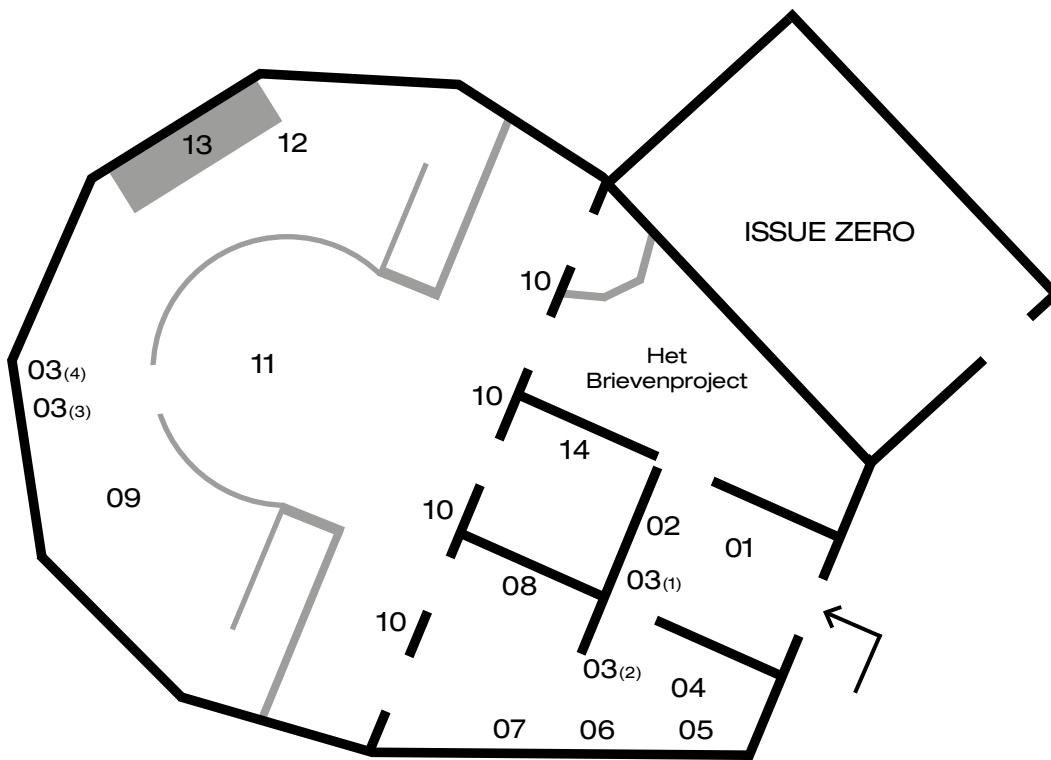
02.12.2023 – 14.01.2024

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Mathias Prenen's exhibition initiates a dialogue between art, architecture, and the perception of authenticity. At KIOSK, Prenen has created a site-specific installation inspired by scenographic elements and the architectural history of Ghent's old Clinical and Outpatient Institute designed by Louis Cloquet. Using these as sculpted memory, Prenen presents creations from three different work periods between 2013 and 2023 in Ghent's sister city of Kanazawa, Japan, alongside a selection of works created in Belgium. They reflect Prenen's study of age-old techniques, such as the application of urushi, a traditional Japanese lacquer, and its reinterpretation in a contemporary context.

Mathias Prenen (b. 1990) obtained his master's degree in fine art and sculpture from KASK in Ghent and studied lacquering and textiles at Kanazawa College of Arts in Japan. His mostly sculptural works range from large-scale installations to small objects. Prenen is interested in different ways of sculpting and is skilled in traditional techniques, such as chiselling and modelling, as well as more modern approaches, for example chainsaw carving. His multimedia practice gives rise to imaginative and visually arresting works with a pronounced focus on materiality and anthropological significance.

*Dear visitors,**I invited myself to guide you through this exhibition. Let me introduce myself.**Some say I am shapeless. Others who believe they saw me confirm I have a human appearance. I do not mind which version of me you prefer. But one thing is certain: you may have the feeling you can grasp me, but you cannot.**I am everywhere and nowhere. I appear and disappear again. When you recognize a landscape in an abstract image, please wonder if this nebulous impulse could be me? Do you notice my presence when you take the time to smell the wood of walking sticks?**I love architecture. No door can keep me from going from one room to another. I go through the walls. I escape the power of gravity. Like a bird, I can rest everywhere, from the floor to the ceiling.**I am the memory of the buildings I inhabit. You may change the function of a building, even forget about this, I am keeping trace of it. There is no mystery I could not help you reinforce.**I used to prefer living in obscure buildings. Candlelight is my delight. As much as the sunset. The invention of gas lighting made me suffer. Some have thought the introduction of electrical light would help to get rid of me. They were wrong. In the presence of neon light – or should I say in the absence of shadows? - I start glowing. Did you see me in the reflection of the black varnished volumes?**Like an autodidact, I recompose myself and adapt to the surroundings, keeping on elaborating my own solutions. I am what you think I am not. I am not what you think I am.**Each new generation has her own idea of my personality. I have been living in memories forever. Some try to transmit the essence of my being. They are not afraid of living in a world of illusions.**Some try to capture me through photography. I love fools. They always come the closest to knowing me.**It may be that none of all this makes sense to you. But what if the time we spent together is what really matters?**I wish you the very best...**and thank you for being me.**Yours faithfully*



01. *T#幽YU#urushiprojection*, 2013
Carousel slide projector, various types of 漆 (Jap; urushi – lacquer)
on Simili Japon paper
02. *#壺中KOCHU# for Upside Down, in light of shadows*, 2018-ongoing
In-situ arrangement, MDF, alkyd resin
03. *#間MA#Akroterion*, 2014-ongoing
Position 1/ salvaged wood, white primer, alkyd resin
Position 2/ salvaged wood, Tung oil
Position 3/ salvaged wood, no finish
Position 4/ salvaged wood, black shellac
04. *Bourdon (Able2)*, 2023
Ceder, indigo dye, 透漆 (jap; suki urushi, transparent lacquer)
05. *Bourdon (Moretti Multimove)*, 2023
Ceder, indigo dye, 透漆 (jap; suki urushi, transparent lacquer)
06. *#幽YU#urushi print*, 2015
Silkscreen print, 黒呂色 (jap; kuroro-iro, black lacquer) on Simili Japon paper
07. *#幽YU#urushi print*, 2015
Silkscreen print, 下地漆 (jap; ki-urushi, raw lacquer)
08. *Double edged sword*, 2023
Photogram on Ilford MG Pearl
09. *#BALUSTER#TheAutodidact*, 2021
Various wood types, metal, textile, foam, alkyd resin, filler
10. *#幽YU#urushi print# Vernis de Spa*, 2016
Silkscreen print, vernis de spa on washi paper
Vista 1 /2 /3 /4
11. *Soft border building– the tongue of wall and staircase tests of time*, 2023
In-situ installation, modeling clay
12. *An outhouse inside lets the outside in*, 2023
In-situ installation, wood, metal, paint, filler
13. *A seasonal arrangement – koikoi!*, 2023
In-situ, glass, lead, various 漆 (jap; urushi)
14. *Tanizaki's lantern*, 2023
Glass, 漆 (jap; urushi), lead, lacquered copper, LED-lamp, transformer, electricity cable

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