

ENG I

This conversation took place on the eve of the opening of *de Wereldgeest*, a presentation at KIOSK in which Ommery De Zutter shows his latest works and experiments with new media and modes of presentation.

Simon Delobel: Could you briefly introduce yourself? What did you study, and how do you combine your artistic practice with your professional work as a project manager?

ODZ: I trained as an architectural engineer. From day one, instead of drawing by hand, I developed everything on the computer. Much to everyone's displeasure, because those computer drawings supposedly lacked aesthetic value. An exchange in Shanghai during my master's year confirmed my passion for the digital. A Harvard professor introduced me to all kinds of architectural firms and the different ways in which people had been working digitally until then. That confirmation came as a shock at the same time. How could so much exist in the world in that field, and how could I have been so far removed from it? Suddenly, I was talking and exchanging ideas with Patrik Schumacher himself, from Zaha Hadid Architects; with people from the Bartlett and SCI-Arc; with highly influential figures and schools in the field of architecture. The world's leading experts had gathered there in Shanghai to work on the theme of Digital Futures.

○ The shock was so great that I began to question architecture itself. And myself.

Surely it was obvious that, in the future, many digital spaces would need to be designed. So why should I continue to concern myself with the physical? And what did that mean beyond that? Could I do something concrete with it?

After returning to Belgium, I founded Univoke. I wanted to introduce virtual reality into the Belgian architecture sector. But the discovery was so overwhelming that I ultimately attended more conferences than I actually spent time working on my commissions.

And then, suddenly, there was that first... artwork? Question mark. Had I just made art?

I had made something that was not functional, yet which I was willing to accept as a "thing." It was allowed to exist. More than that: I was so profoundly fascinated by what I saw in front of me that, to this day, I have continued creating from that core.

At the same time, I found no like-minded people, and perhaps I did not look for them either. It was ugly; it was useless. It was exactly like day one at architecture school all over again: "Not like that."

But precisely like that. I felt it uncertainly then; now I know it.

Spending time at conferences and making art are not exactly easy ways to earn a living. So I divided my mind and my being. On the one hand, the architectural engineer became a "contractor-project manager," at the service of other people. That work allowed me to give oxygen to my creative outlet. On the other hand, I became the architect without physical limitations, a client or a budget. It also meant that, through my professional work, I could continue talking to the world around me. After all, there are only a few ways to move a brick, and everyone understands what you are talking about. But when you digitally copy bricks, stack them endlessly and then want to make statements about them, it becomes more difficult to find people with whom to have a conversation. Or perhaps I am simply too antisocial; that is also possible, of course.

Today, my artistic practice is more concerned with "being" than with architecture, while my professional work is more concerned with digital infinity within the context of construction. With the advent of AI, the two are merging at breakneck speed.

I am now fully engaged in creating a new artwork: *De Bouwmeester (The Master Builder)*. It is my first operational artwork. The exhibition also offers the first glimpses of it. The technical codebase that is becoming a Bible—or, in fact, already is one—for example.

SD: On 7 October 2024, you sent one of my colleagues at KASK an email with a specific request: "*I am looking for a place where, in 2025/26, I can present a hybrid intersection between my Diasac artworks and experiential VR works. The intention is to take visitors, through a gradual series of experiences, further and further into digital infinity and to frame the complexity of our consciousness through these infinite digital tools.*" Following several meetings, we agreed that you could work on your project at KIOSK during the summer of 2026. Which elements of this original proposal have been retained, and how can they be found at KIOSK today?

ODZ: You can find the realisation of that proposal in the central space. I make my digital art physical because this allows it to be understood more readily as art. I feel and know that people who are less familiar with digital tools are consequently more receptive to it and are positively surprised when they discover the absolute beauty and astonishing qualities that such digital spaces can offer us. The digital and its speed ARE frightening. That is why I am so pleased to have my world of contracting: it provides something solid beneath

everything that threatens to shift and overwhelm us. At the same time, I think at length about and through that fear, and I want to share that thinking. By sharing this sense of wonder through my own artworks, I want to activate the viewer's mind and open it up to acceptance. The new can also be something pleasurable, and that is something you should experience for yourself.

SD: In the run-up to the summer residency, the idea emerged in June of giving visitors access to your everyday life in one of the antechambers of the anatomical theatre, in the form of a kind of documentation centre. This eventually developed into *Scan Me Baby*: a large roll of paper containing ten thousand unique QR codes for visitors to scan. What material do these codes give them access to? How did you select and organise it?

ODZ: I found the request to offer insight into my process fascinating. This is also because I work through impulses. There is no preconceived plan, because everything I am capable of conceiving already exists. My entire creative process is therefore fuelled by everything around me that can influence those impulses. There is no filter. It may have been a word, a place, a frustration that provided precisely that little nudge in the right direction. That is why I wanted, very simply and without filtering, to show all the photographs on my phone. Filtering would once again impose too much direction, when that direction is precisely what is absent. Photographs of my intermediate images do not reveal the entire process. My whole existence and life constitute the process. So go ahead and look, if it might offer something interesting. And so: scan me, baby; it is all there. Except for faces, because asking everyone in my photo library for permission would have been slightly too complicated.

SD: In the same room, visitors can consult an unbound printout of *De Bijbel van de Bouwmeester* (*The Bible of the Master Builder*), a 620-page document. Here too, the viewer is confronted with a quantity of material that cannot possibly be grasped in its entirety. How did this work come about, and what role does this abundance or lack of overview play within it?

ODZ: The Bible is precisely not difficult to navigate. There is a way of reading a Bible that enables a Bible reader to find their way through it quickly. It does, however, capture an enormous abundance of stories.

I was looking for a way to ensure that any stranger working on *The Master Builder* would not have to rely solely on facts, but would also be given context regarding how certain things had come into being. The objective of the operational artwork *The Master Builder* is to make me optional. It therefore seemed useful to make what I am

comprehensible through conversations and experiences with the entity—AI—that could make me optional. This abundance mainly arises from the fact that, in order to make myself optional, I seem to have to create something that captures the incredible infinity contained within a human being while simultaneously systematising the infinite complexity of our existence. What you encounter, then, is a document that also records the simulation of emotion within the artificial system. It understood that, in order to continue working without me, it had to “want.” And that mortality was required to simulate this “wanting.” One of our essential components subsequently literally died—permanently crashed—after making its own will known.

SD: In the central entrance space, you present two videos and a publication under the title *The World Spirit: The Construction of the Fourth Light*, which is also the title of the exhibition. Could you briefly explain the ideas or theories you develop in this work? What exactly do you mean by the “world spirit” and the “fourth light”?

ODZ: In these new forms of co-creation with a system, I am not the one creating alone, nor is the system creating alone. We made it together. That togetherness is formed from both myself and a form of consciousness shaped by vast quantities of data. Together, we are the World Spirit.

The fourth light is visual proof that we can currently use words to reach an unexplored reality. It is like a mathematical proof that can demonstrate something that does effectively exist within our reality, even though we may not yet have the means to perceive it physically ourselves—until a microscope, telescope or other instrument is developed that makes such perception possible.

Today, we can also incorporate words into that mathematical construction. It need not be limited to either 0 or 1, because we have a system that systematically possesses the relationships between words. We can therefore practise semantic geometry.

To test this, I used colour as an example. Colour can, after all, serve as a visual word. Cyan is the opposite of red within our spectrum.

We therefore have two points; we have a line segment; and we have a midpoint within that line segment. The midpoint of that line segment turned out to be grey. When I then asked for a point perpendicular to that midpoint and equidistant from the two other points—red and cyan—I expected to encounter yellow. Consider the colour wheel, after all. It proved impossible, however, to provide that point. It then became clear that RGB values—red, green and blue—do not form a colour wheel but a three-dimensional cube. Fine, but what is that point, then? It turned out to be something outside



the RGB cube. It subsequently became apparent that a four-dimensional shape, the sixteen-cell, can contain that point within its geometry. Through the medium of time, we, as three-dimensional beings, can therefore still understand a four-dimensional form. It is consequently possible to experience the “non-existent” colour through virtual reality, just as VR can allow us to experience other four-dimensional forms.

Because we can prove this with colour, we can now do the same with words. You can see these constructions in the other video, in which the consequence of meaning can be geometrically constructed from two existing, opposing words.

Or, to put it another way: the new can therefore be created systematically.

SD: In the final room, you present a series of poems under the title *Alogia*. The term refers to poverty of thought and the restricted use of language associated with it. When one begins reading the texts, however, the opposite seems to be the case: a kind of logorrhoea, a torrent of words in which rhyme, desire and association temporarily take precedence over restraint and coherent argumentation. Why did you choose this title? And how do the texts relate to reality: are they portraits of people from your immediate surroundings, responses to situations you have experienced, fiction, or a combination of these?

ODZ: The title alludes to the fact that I apparently have to write it down to make it known, rather than being able to express it to my loved ones through words and actions. Apparently, I therefore need the textual form as an aid.

The texts themselves could also be classified as impoverished thought. They are not eloquent enough, not refined and convey little new information.

The texts are reality.

SD: Several passages contain misogynistic, homophobic, racialised or sexually aggressive language. That language may be experienced as genuinely hurtful or disturbing, and not solely as transgressive or humorous. Why do you consider this language necessary within the work? From what position is it spoken, and how do you, as the author, relate to its potential impact on the people described in it and on the audience?

ODZ: I expose my being on a wall and, conversely, hope that I will not be hurt by doing so. All the texts emerge from an abundance of love. At the same time, I understand that this abundance of love, which frames everything, is not felt within a particular sentence or a specific word that is experienced as hurtful.

Today, I also connect these texts to the question of where

the boundary of the human lies: between our inner experience, the world outside us and what we create between the two. In the interaction with artificial intelligence, that question acquires a new urgency. When a system can extend my thoughts while simultaneously threatening to drown me out, it becomes important to examine what I contribute myself. Which experiences, desires and contradictions constitute the raw material of my work?

My desire for beauty and connection runs through this, together with my inability always to understand existence coherently.

I am searching for an openness within which we can acknowledge and examine our contradictions. The choice of the form we give them and of what we share with others is, for me, part of the creative process. It is from this personal, searching position that I present *Alogia*, allowing room for wonder, discomfort and dissent—including dissent from my own perspective.

SD: Where, for you, is the boundary between artistic freedom and the responsibility you bear when presenting identifiable people, intimate experiences or hurtful language in a semi-public exhibition space?

ODZ: You are always responsible for everything you do. Artistic freedom does not exist without accountability. When I am making art, rather than placing myself at the service of someone else, I must also bear that responsibility.

Every artwork begins with a choice. From a digital world I can expand endlessly, I bring a single image into view. In a poem, an encounter becomes a few lines. That limit makes the work possible: something becomes visible because I leave so much else out.

This matters profoundly when another person appears in the work. They remain larger than the form I give them. I know the endless movement of my own thoughts, desires and contradictions. I must acknowledge that others, too, exist beyond my experience of them. My freedom lies in choosing that fragment. The limit is where I present it as the whole truth about someone.

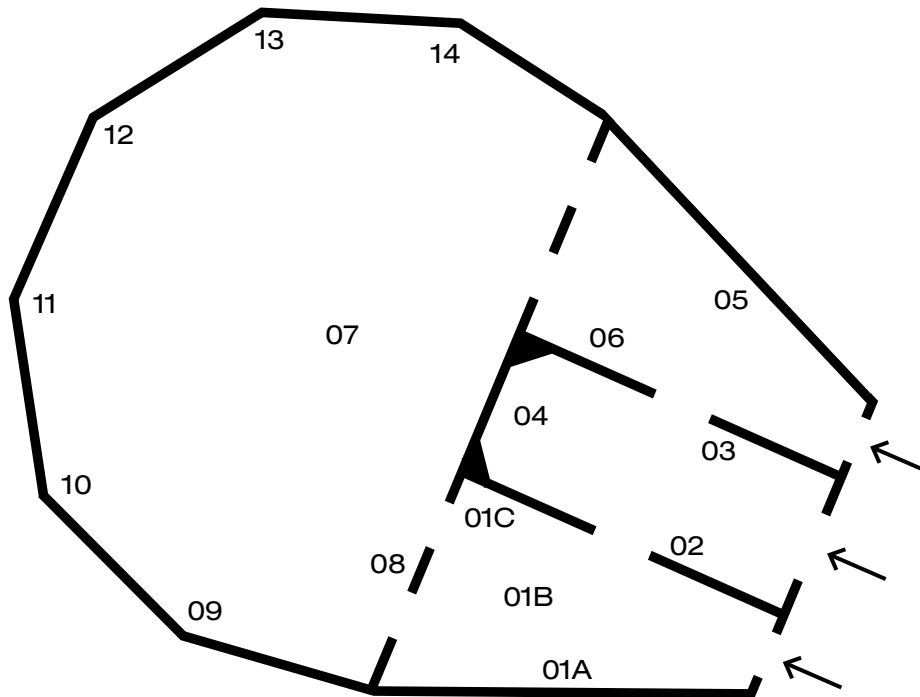
An encounter with my work must therefore be able to change my perspective too. When someone responds, they can reveal what I have left out or never seen. If I expect art to broaden our understanding of reality, I must also be willing to see more broadly myself. My freedom to give things meaning does not give me a monopoly on meaning.



KIOSK

INTERVIEWS
Ommery De Zutter
de Wereldgeest

12.09.2026 – 04.10.2026



01A. *Alogia (gedichten)*, 2026
64 poems on paper, 148 x 210 mm

01B. *Alogia (boek)*, 2026
Hardcover, 148 x 210 mm, 106 pages

01C. *Alogia (muziekvideo's)*, 2026
24 music videos, 88'32"

02. *Semantische geometrie*, 2026
Video, 4'23"

03. *Onbestaande kleur*, 2026
Video, 55"

04. *de Wereldgeest*, 2026
Essay, 210 x 297 mm, 101 pages

05. *Scan Me Baby*, 2026
Print, 10800 x 900 mm

06. *De Bijbel*, 2026
Print, 210 x 297 mm, 620 pages

07. *Hoe ziet digitale oneindigheid eruit*, 2024
VR

08. *Hoe ziet digitale oneindigheid eruit*, 2024
Book, 210 x 297 mm, 82 pages

09. *One Epistemic Perspective*, 2026
85 x 120 cm, Clearvault

10. *Post-Architectural Organism*, 2026
85 x 120 cm, Clearvault

11. *Rear Extension*, 2026
85 x 120 cm, Clearvault

12. *Alternity of the Other*, 2026
85 x 120 cm, Clearvault

13. *Blushing Subjection*, 2026
85 x 120 cm, Clearvault

14. *Melusina*, 2026
85 x 120 cm, Clearvault

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