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Hunting & Collecting

Stief DeSmet; Selected Sculptures

Stief DeSmet

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- Explores the interplay between nature and culture through painting, sculpture, and installation
- Includes critical essays and extensive visual documentation of key works and exhibitions
- Appeals to readers interested in conceptual art, environmental themes, and cultural critique

Hunting & Collecting offers an in-depth look into the poetic and conceptual world of Belgian artist Stief DeSmet, whose work explores the complex relationship between nature, culture, and human intervention. In his practice, DeSmet moves as "a collector" seamlessly between painting, sculpture, performance, and installation, creating visual narratives that oscillate between irony, nostalgia, and critical reflection.

Through a series of striking works and thoughtful essays, ***Hunting & Collecting*** examines the artist's ongoing dialogue with the natural world — not as an untouched ideal, but as a space shaped and reshaped by human desire and imagination. DeSmet's art embodies the tension between the longing for a pure, utopian nature and the realities of contemporary, consumption-driven life.

Richly illustrated and conceptually layered, this monograph offers a comprehensive insight into DeSmet's oeuvre, tracing his evolution from the hunter and urban observer to rural storyteller. With contributions by curators and art critics, ***Hunting & Collecting*** captures an artist whose work stands as both a critique and a celebration of humankind's enduring fascination with nature. Thoreau's Walden is continuous inspiration for the artist. He even built a replica of Thoreau's cabin in his artistic garden.

Stief DeSmet (b. 1973, Belgium) is a multidisciplinary artist whose work explores the ambiguous relationship between nature and culture. Through painting, sculpture, installation, and performance, he examines humanity's attempts to control, idealise, and coexist with the natural world. His practice is marked by irony, introspection, and a deep awareness of ecological and cultural tension. He defines himself as a hunter and collector who composes new artefacts by working in relation to his micro-environment. After living in Ghent and Los Angeles, DeSmet now works from his studio in Bachte-Maria-Leerne, Belgium, and a second base in Burgundy, France. His works are held in public and private collections across Europe and the United States and have been exhibited at S.M.A.K., mudel, Be-Part, DE GARAGE, Espace Pierre Cardin Paris, and Tianjin Museum (China).

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