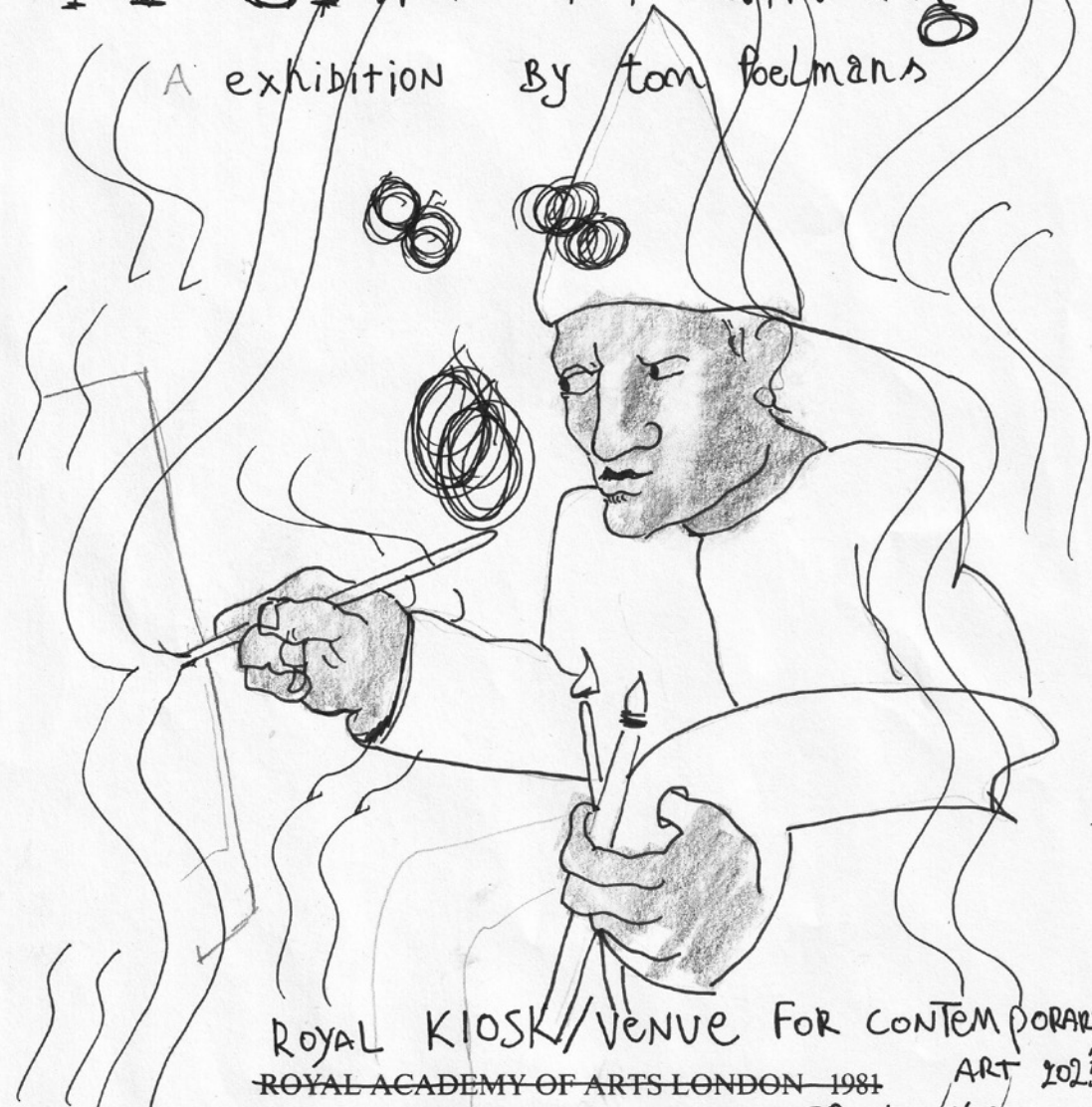


A New Spirit in Painting

A Spirit in Painting

A exhibition By tom feelmans



ROYAL KIOSK/VENUE FOR CONTEMPORARY

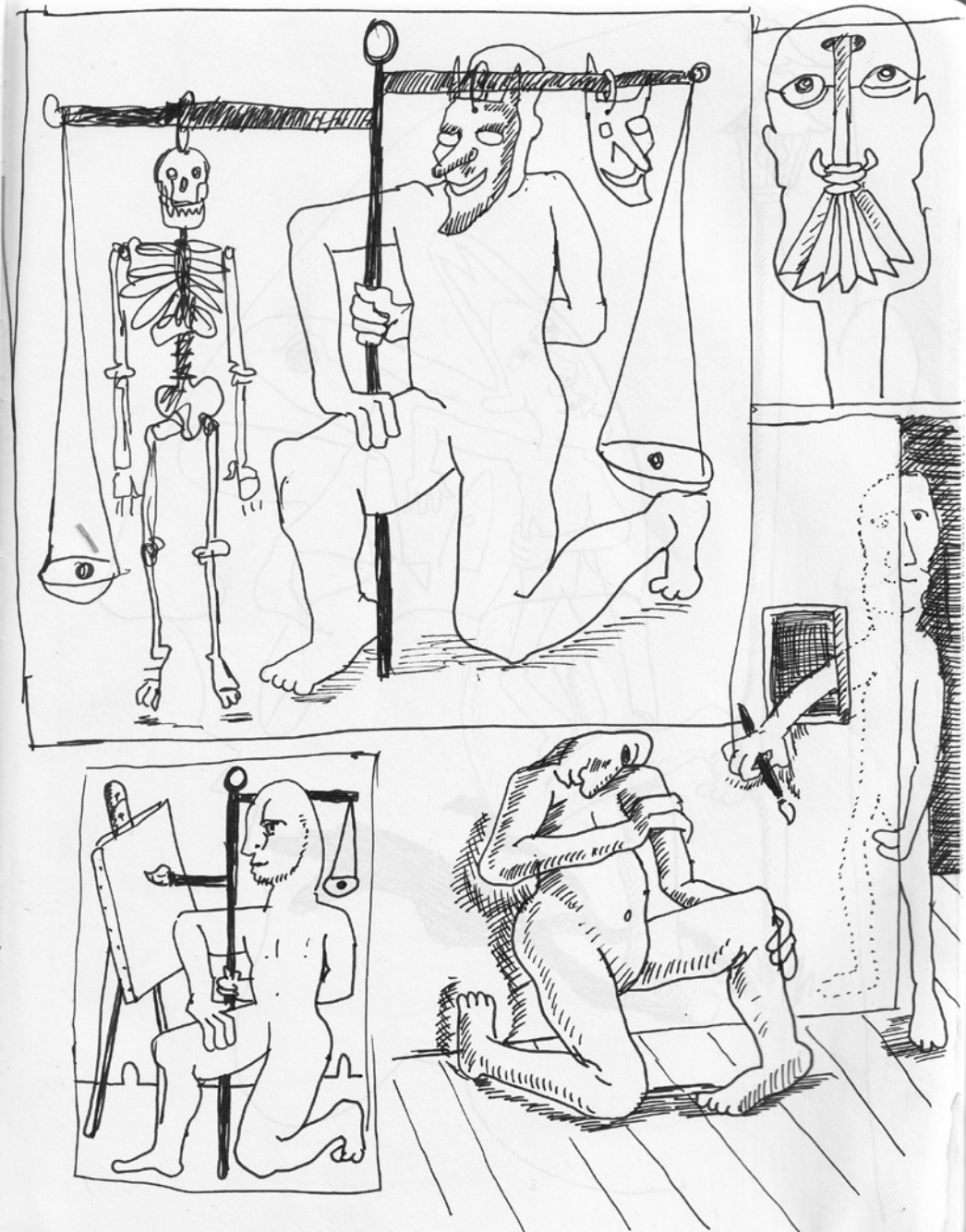
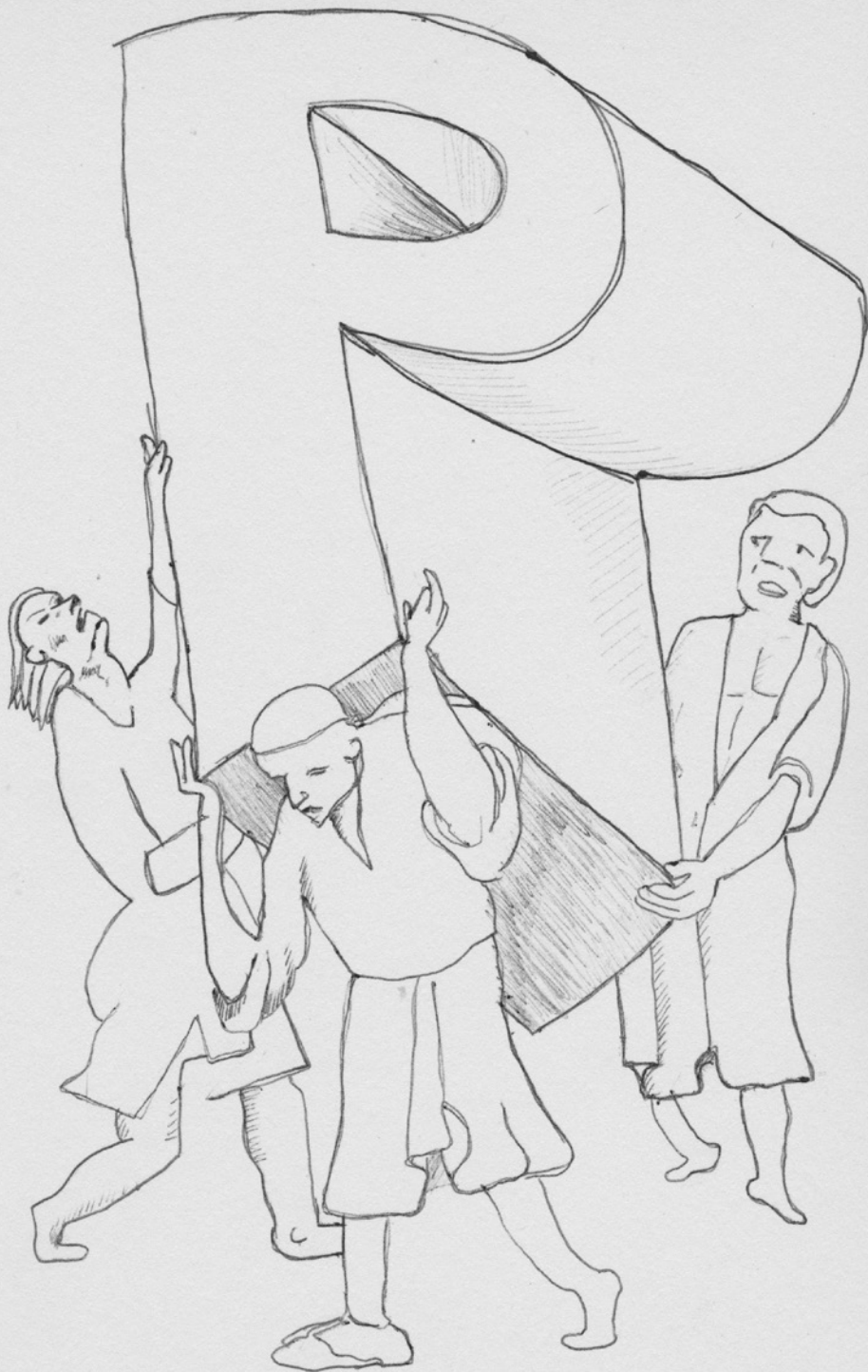
~~ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS LONDON 1981~~

ART 2025

Catalogue published in association with MER. BOOKS

~~WEIDENFELD & NICOLSON LONDON~~

GENT



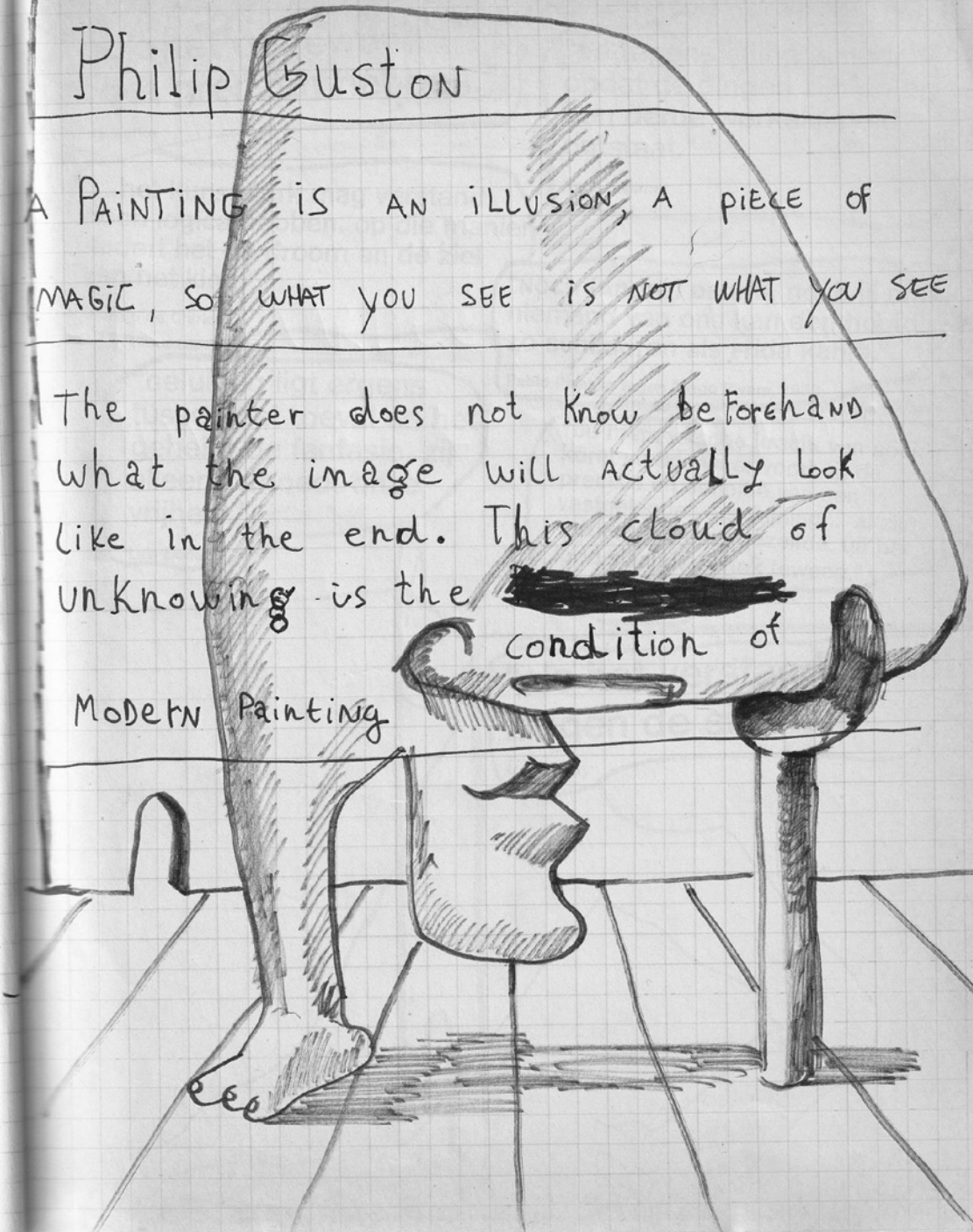
Terwijl de lucht en
enkele mekelestanders
in een tochtig
kasteel de toekomst
stichten, vluchten
Sommige leiders met
goede keuring van de
kindsleiding tot het
bittere eind.

Philip Guston

A PAINTING IS AN ILLUSION, A PIECE OF
MAGIC, SO WHAT YOU SEE IS NOT WHAT YOU SEE

The painter does not know beforehand
what the image will actually look
like in the end. This cloud of
unknowing is the ~~condition~~ condition of

Modern Painting

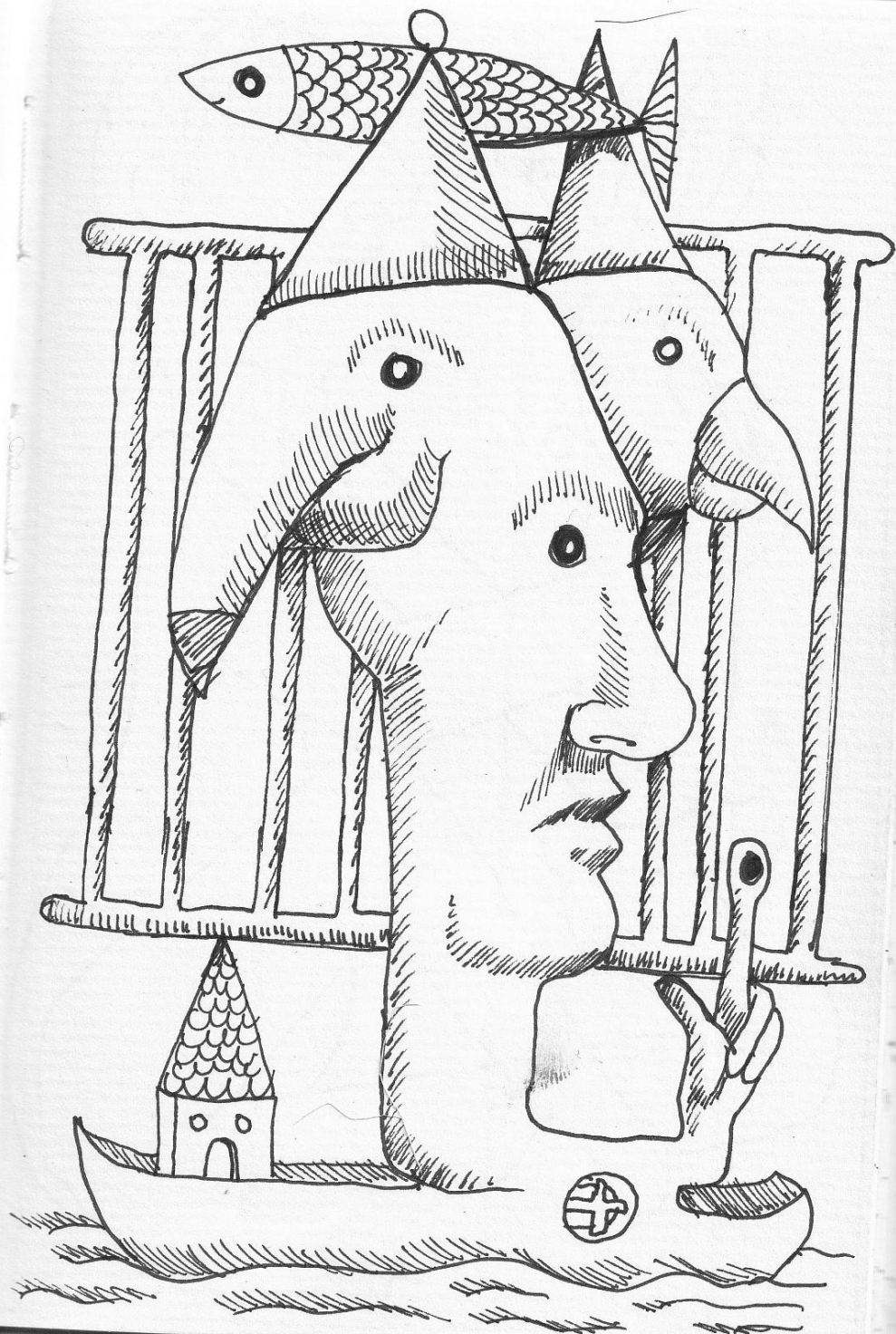


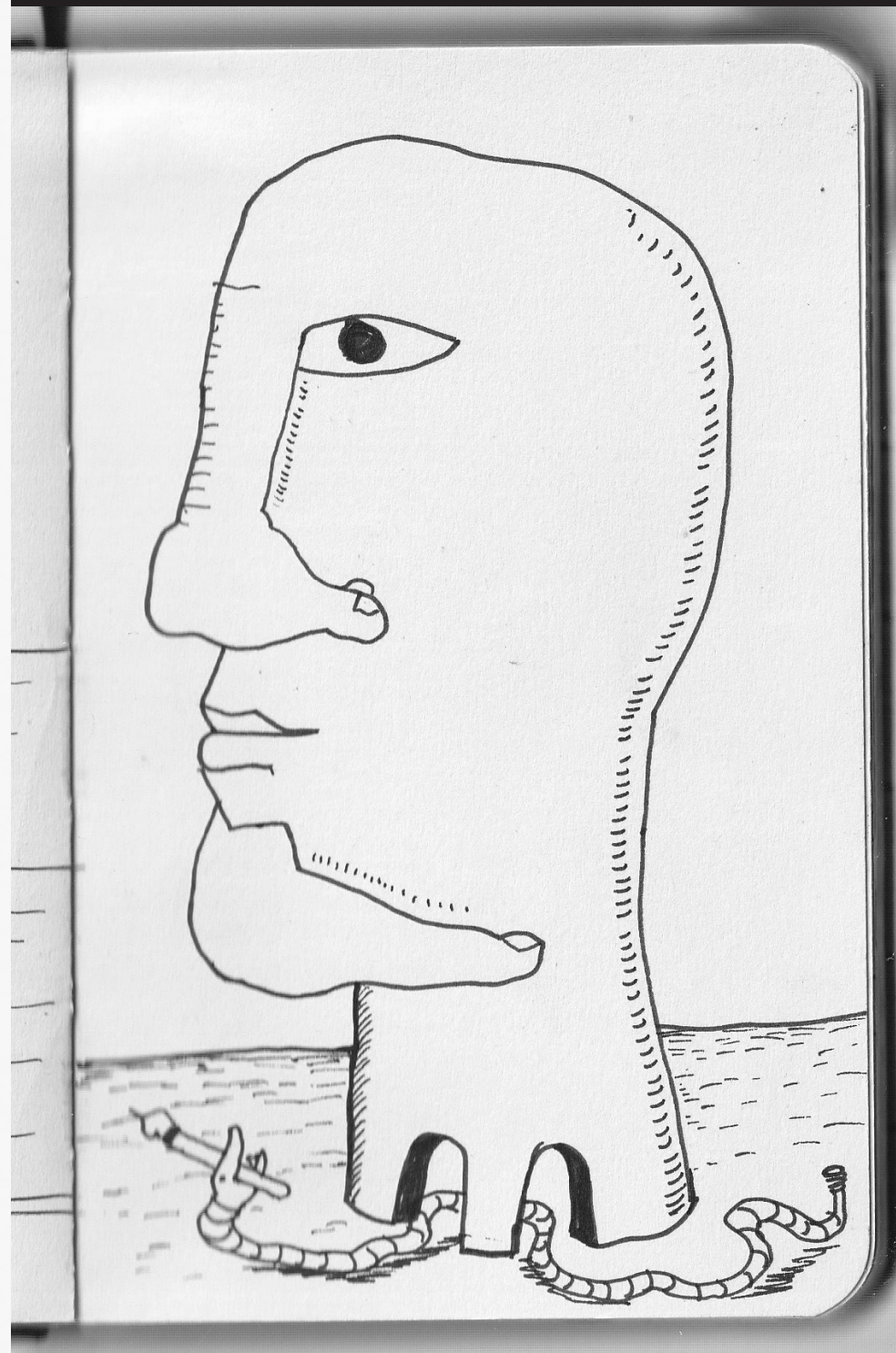
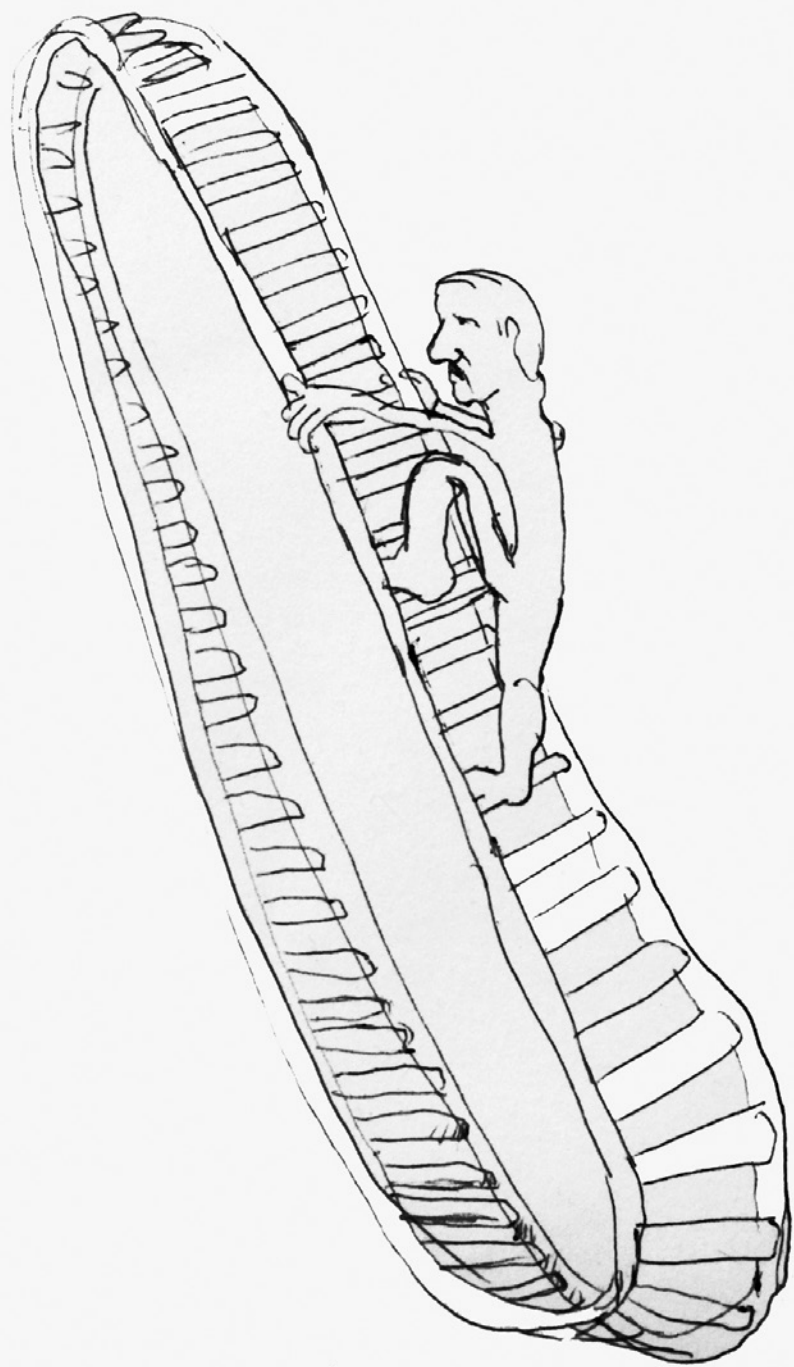
Donderdag 22 mei 2025

Het boeiende schilderijtje
"Sultanie Highness" van
Tom Poelpoelmans, 2017, is zo
demonisch, vooral voor kleine
kinderen, dat we het schilderijtje
noodgedwongen moeten omdraaien -
als een van onze kleinkinderen
op bezoek komt, om te voorkomen
dat ze nachtmerries krijgen.

The

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December 12, 2019, a minibus to Bonn, a retrospective exhibition of Kippenberger. What started as a drive became the beginning of a life together. From there, a rhythm unfolded that still carries us today: getting up, coffee, reading, coffee, drawing, studio. Everything in service of the work. The rest can wait. Fuck you! Setting priorities is an act of love, an act of survival.

Tom lives and works with a drive that is rare. Day after day, uncompromising, without looking back. He reminds me that the only thing that matters is the work itself. Not the criticism, not the noise, not the expectations that try to pull you down. Let go, move on. He urges me not to let my thoughts fester in my head, but to dispel them with the pen, the lines, the paint.

In Dutch, he says, “You don’t have to carry the weight of the world, only the weight of your own work. That’s where your responsibility lies. Not in how it is received, but in the fact that it exists. It doesn’t have to conform to anything. No form, no expectation, no taste. It can be anything.”

I see his drawings come into being every day, often next to me, sometimes opposite me. They are direct, relentless, and refuse to be pinned down. One line brings forth the next, a shape grows, rubs, disappears. There is urgency, but also clarity: nothing is contrived, everything happens in the moment. The paper transforms into a terrain where every line claims its place. No decoration, no embellishment, only what is necessary.

In those drawings, I recognize his mind in motion: bold, sometimes ruthless, sometimes almost careless. And yet always charged. They are not made to please, not to fit into a story. They refuse to be translated and exist only on their own terms. That makes them both incomprehensible and simultaneously unmistakable.

Living with Tom means living with that uninterrupted rhythm, that radical “doing.” But it also means seeing those drawings come into being, which in their harshness and relentlessness nevertheless carry enormous tenderness. They are proof of a constant necessity: don’t stop. Never stop.

I've got a small work of Tom hanging in my living room. It's a palimpsest of multiple thick and crusty layers of paint, one over the other, which make the final composition look like an accident—something that appeared rather than having been crafted. It's as if the horse heads, volcanoes and skulls find their final position on the canvas through the will of the paint rather than the will of the painter. The work occupies an interesting point in Tom's artistic path since graduating from the academy in Antwerp, as it contains aspects of both his older abstract work with an emphasis on the painterly matter itself, and the more recent figurative turn towards composition, humour and surrealism, where the image takes a more fresco-like appearance.

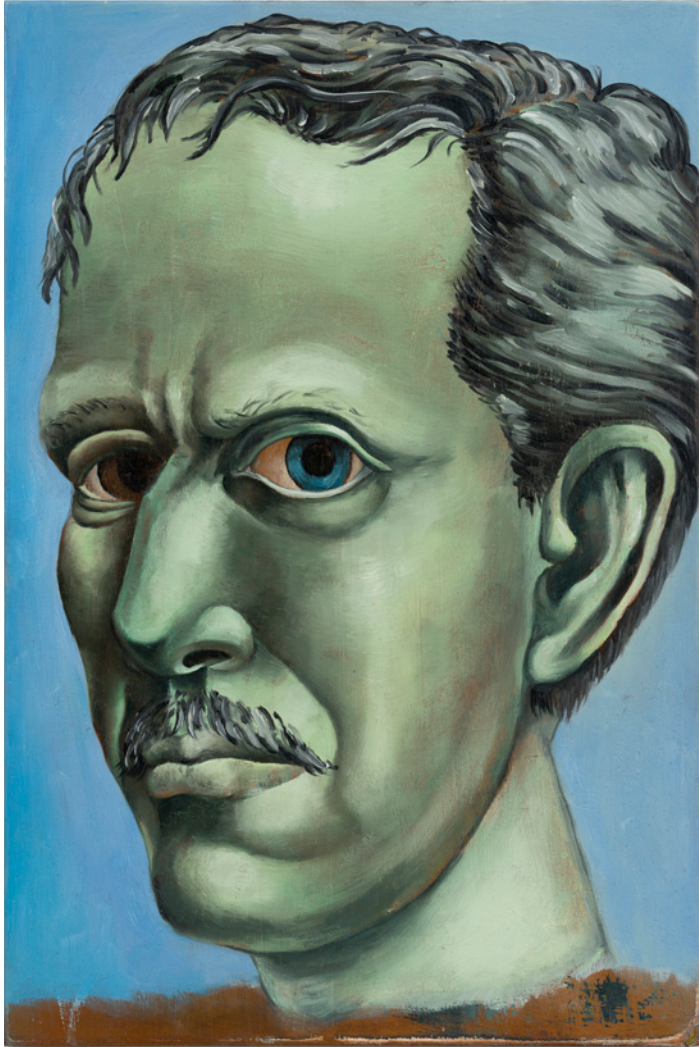
Whilst other artists might be secretive or sensitive about inspiration and artistic idols, Tom displays his brazenly by wearing caps with their names on them practically every day. It has become one of his defining features. In this way his work has gained a certain ego-lessness as he lifts a bit of the curtain and allows us a peek at the giants upon which shoulders he develops his oeuvre. By showing that paintings or images do not develop in a vacuum but are always indebted to others that came before, his work attains a certain approachability and generosity.

We can see this strategy to undermine the ego return in other ways in Tom's artistic practice. Many of the figures presented in his current paintings carry a caricatural likeness to himself. They take their place on the canvas next to, and in interaction with, a myriad of other figures, often in surreal or compromising constellations. Rather than tell a preordained story or depict an event, the painting seems more like the aftermath of an intense session of 'play' (or 'a' play). With the players or actors gone, only the vessels of their imagination remain strewn about. These leftover artefacts and stragglers invite the viewer in turn to imagine, to play in the metaphorical window Tom has painted.

In the end, of course, it is Tom himself who is playing and wants to keep playing. Keeping the casual and spontaneous attitude necessary for play, however, is an incredibly difficult aim in a world whose forces all push against this drive. Maybe his older abstract work with its attention for matter holds a key for Tom to open up new fields (or stages) of play again and again.



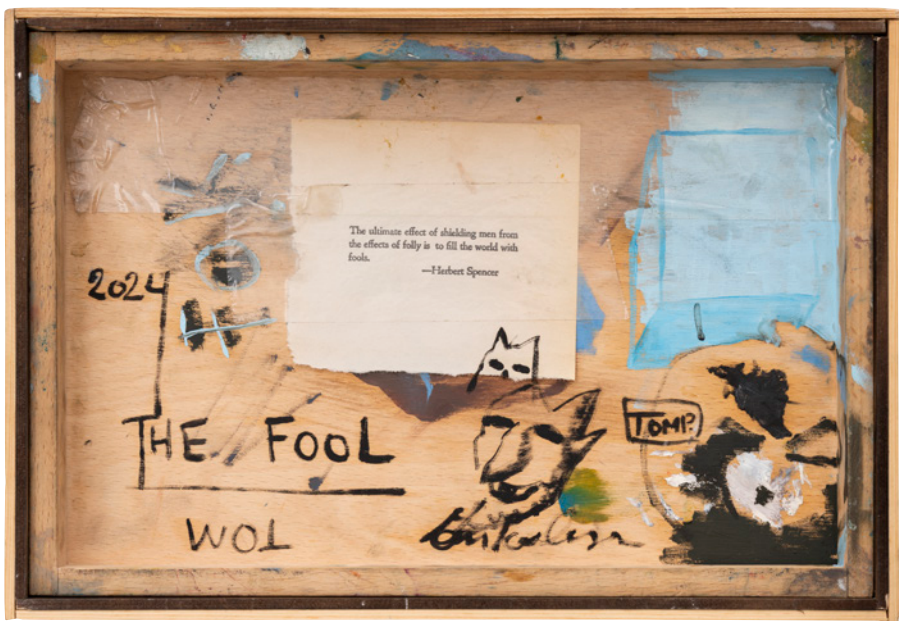
A Portrait of Guston in Green, 2022.
Oil on wood, 30 x 20 cm



A Portrait of Guston in Green, 2025.
Oil on wood, 30 × 20 cm



The Fool, 2024.
Oil on wood, 20 × 30 cm



Oil on wood, 20 x 30 cm
The Fool, 2024.



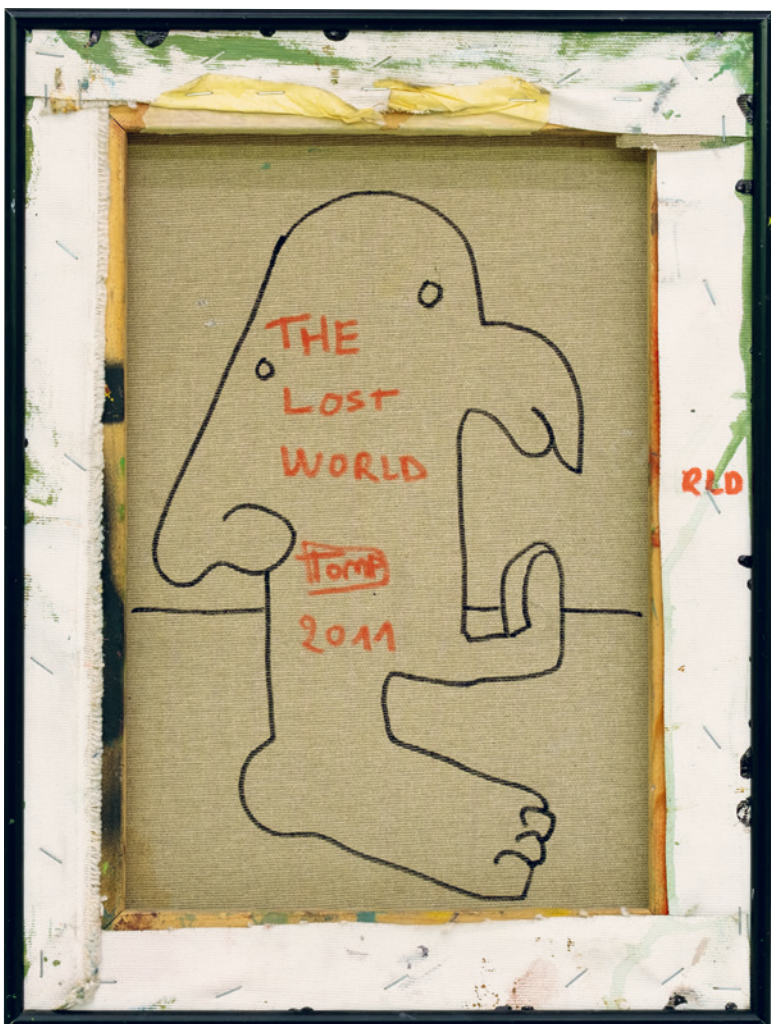
Oil on canvas, 40 x 30 cm
Het Jachtseizoen, 2012.



Het Jachtseizoen, 2012.
Oil on canvas, 40 × 30 cm



The Lost World, 2011.
Mixed media on canvas, 40 × 30 cm



Mixed media on canvas, 40 x 30 cm
The Lost World, 2011.



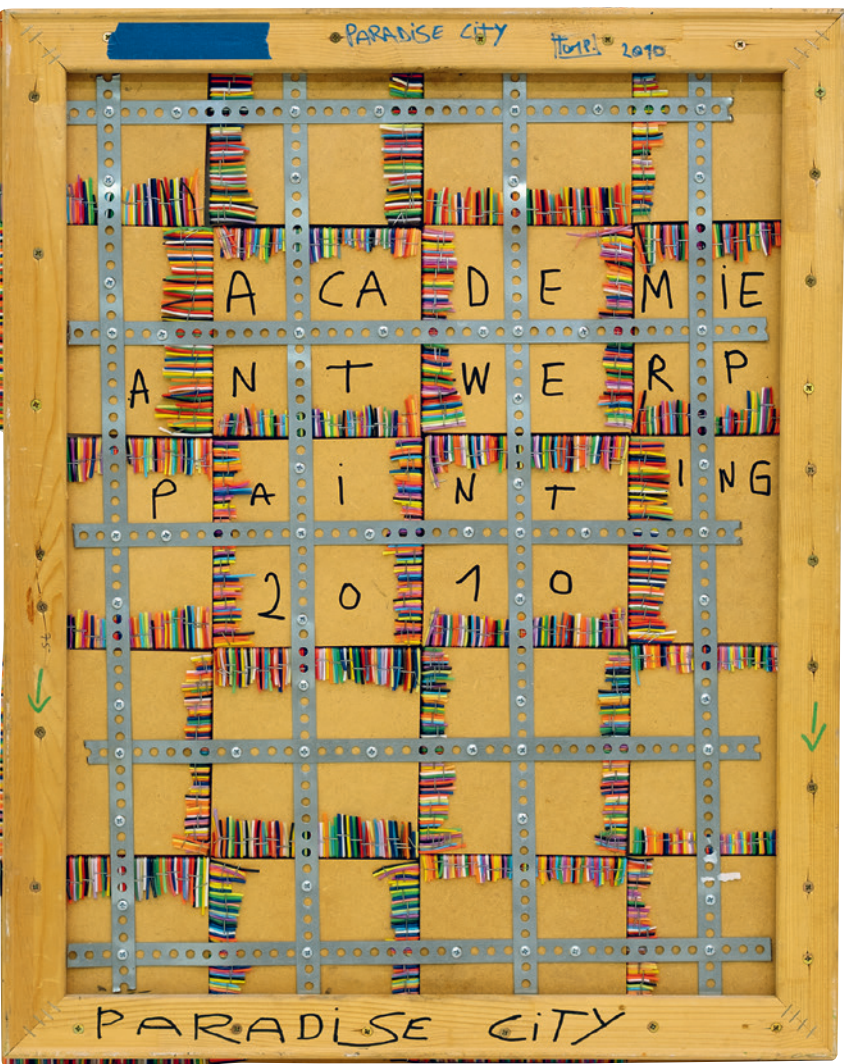
Oil and spray paint on wood, 30 x 40 cm
House of The Rising Fun, 2012.



House of The Rising Fun, 2012.
Oil and spray paint on wood, 30 × 40 cm



Paradise City, 2010.
Wood, plastic and metal, 75 × 60 cm



Wood, plastic and metal, 72 x 60 cm
Paradise City, 2010.



Mixed media on canvas, 72 x 30 cm
Demon Host (Voorspel), 2018.