



POZU SANTA BÁRBARA

## Pozu Santa Bárbara in Mieres launches the installation *SPECULUM SMACK* art collective

Centro de Experiencias Artísticas Pozu Santa Bárbara (PZSB) in Mieres (Asturias), located in La Rebaldana, Turón, is the first mining pit in Spain recognized as a Cultural Heritage Site (BIC) with the highest level of heritage protection since 2008. Since 2021, it has evolved into a benchmark for contemporary artistic interventions.

**This space launches next Thursday, April 10th *Speculum*, an installation created by the SMACK art collective, formed by Ton Meijdan, Thom Snels, and Béla Zsigmond.**

The project reinterprets the iconic painting *The Garden of Earthly Delights* (1490-1500) by Jheronimus van Aken, known as Hieronymus Bosch, which is currently in the Prado Museum. This new work adds figures from contemporary society, maintaining the critical essence about dystopian scenarios. This installation is a shocking video art triptych that brings the iconic Flemish painting to the 21st century, turning it into a mirror of today's society. **The exhibition has been organized by the Town Council of Mieres and curated by L.E.V. (Laboratorio de Electrónica Visual), with the collaboration of Onkaos, digital art area of SOLO Contemporary.**

Divided into **three panels**, the installation takes the viewer on a visual journey that reflects different scenarios of our immediate present. In ***Eden***, a pastel-coloured landscape evokes a digital Silicon Valley, where technology and hyperconnectivity promise an immaterial utopia. However, the apparent calm conceals a reality controlled and constantly monitored by the power of large corporations. The screen on the left side of the triptych is dedicated to ***Paradise***. Here we find characters wandering in a world dominated by an obsession with image, consumerism and superficiality. This was the first work of the triptych created by SMACK in 2016, as a commission from the Stedelijk Museum in Breda as part of the 500th anniversary of Hieronymus Bosch, later completed with the other two panels commissioned by SOLO. Finally, in the ***Hell*** panel, on the right, the viewer encounters a chaotic and violent

vision, where punishments are directly linked to the excesses of the digital age: overexposure on social media, addiction to algorithms, and massive control of information.

The installation closes with two large screens flanking the shocking digital triptych, where six archetypal characters parade: **BIG DADA, CYBERBULLY, DYNAMO TWINS, CRAPIVORE, EGONAUT, and MOTHER**. Each of them is meticulously characterized, reflecting different aspects of our hyperconnected society.

In this contemporary version of **Dante's Inferno**, where punishment reflects sin, *Cyberbully* shows an Internet troll trapped and tormented within a giant hashtag, while in *Big Dada*, surveillance cameras rebel against their own creator.

The obsession with online identity and digital narcissism are captured in *Egonaut* and in many other figures that inhabit the side screens. *Dynamo Twins* represents the relentless wheel of tireless work, while *Crapivore* personifies a creature composed entirely of ultra-processed products. Meanwhile, *Mother* is shown as a feminized body that expels and welcomes characters, all controlled by a central entity.

This haunting collection of images distills contemporary unease through unsettling portraits. **The work delves into issues such as isolation, mass behavior and interdependence in a world dominated by technology and consumption.**

The characters shown come from the *Paradise* and *Hell* installations, and portray a dystopian world marked by technological invasion and rampant consumerism. The artists extract individual figures from their complex visual universe, giving them greater prominence.

Following the composition and perspective of classical Renaissance painting, SMACK's portraits place the characters in monumental and evocative landscapes: rocky mountains, fiery skies and geometric gardens that reinforce the depth and drama of each image. It is relevant that none of these figures returns the viewer's gaze, which generates an unsettling sense of voyeurism about them. They are undoubtedly fragments of a mirror in which the unease of our time is reflected.

**SMACK's work confronts us with a fascinating, disturbing universe in which technology and society intertwine in an implacable portrait of our time.**

### About SMACK\_

**SMACK** is a collaboration among artists Ton Meijdam (Geldermalsen, Netherlands, 1973), Thom Snels (Tilburg, Netherlands, 1978), and Béla Zsigmond (Budapest, Hungary, 1975).

This artistic collective, based in Breda, uses 3D animation to create figurative videos that explore collective behavior, digital identity, surveillance culture, and the omnipresence of brands.

They began working together in 2005 after completing their studies at the St. Joost School of Art & Design (AKV). Their insightful animations have been awarded numerous prizes, including the *Amsterdam Film Experience*, the European Design Awards, and the *UK Music Video Awards*. In 2017, they produced a solo show of their work titled *Dreaming of Mass Behaviour*, which took place in Breda. Their projects have been exhibited in the UK, Netherlands, Korea, Brazil, Germany, China, Vietnam, France, and USA, among others.

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They began working together in 2005 after completing their studies at the St. Joost School of Art & Design (AKV). The first work they produced was *KAPITAAL* (2006), and won first prize at several renowned festivals. They produced *SPECULUM* (2016) commissioned by the Stedelijk Museum Breda which would later be completed with the side panels commissioned by SOLO. In 2017, they produced a solo show of their work titled *Dreaming of Mass Behaviour*, which took place in Breda. Their insightful animations have been awarded numerous prizes, including the *Amsterdam Film Experience*, the European Design Awards, and the *UK Music Video Awards*. Their work has been exhibited in institutions such as the Colnaghi Gallery in London, KIAF Seoul, and the Digital Art Center in Rotterdam, among others. They have also participated in numerous festivals, such as the Holland Animation Festival, the Bogotá Short Film Festival, and MMMad Madrid. Their projects have been presented in countries such as the UK, Netherlands, Korea, Brazil, Germany, China, Vietnam, France, and the USA, among others.

**Arranged by:** Mieres Town Council

**Curated by:** L.E.V. Laboratorio de Electrónica Visual

**With the support of:** Onkaos

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**Exhibition sound space:** Robert Lippok. *Licht | 640 nm. Close* (2024 Remaster). [MORR MUSIC]

## > FREE GUIDED TOURS:

Within the framework of the exhibition, the center offers several free guided tours for the months of April and May that will allow the public to immerse themselves in the piece and discover its creation process, as well as learn about the history of the space that houses it and its surroundings, heritage, and history.

### **Dates:**

Saturday, April 19th, 7:00 PM

Sunday, April 27th, 5:30 PM

Friday, May 2nd, 4:30 PM

Sunday, May 18th, 5:30 PM

**Prior registration is essential at:** [www.mieres.es](http://www.mieres.es)

**Location:** Pozu Santa Bárbara. La Rebaldana, Turón (Mieres, Asturias)

**Duration of visit:** 1 hour 30 minutes

**Limited places**

## > USEFUL INFORMATION

**Location:** Pozu Santa Bárbara, La Rebaldana, Turón (Mieres, Asturias)

**Dates:** From April 10 to July 13

**Schedule:** Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays: 4:30 PM to 9:00 PM

Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays: 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM and 4:30 PM to 9:00 PM (June 24th closed)

**Free entrance**

**Recommended transport:**

**Public bus Emutsa.** Stop PZSB: La Rebaldana (down) [+INFO](#)

**By car** (free parking)

**Access by foot or bicycle** Senda Verde de Turón P.R. AS-100.1 [+INFO](#)

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