

# NERO

**Atopolis: a group exhibition with works by Francis Alÿs, Jack Whitten, Thomas Hirschorn, El Anatsui, Jef Geys and more – Presented by WIELS in Mons**



Vincen Beeckman, Intime, 2014-2015.

This contemporary art exhibition, organized by Wiels in collaboration with Mons 2015 – European Capital of Culture – will present a group of artists interested in the phenomena of circulation, diaspora and cultural dislocation. The title alludes to the ideas of Edouard Glissant, the influential thinker of hybridisation and globalisation who argues in favor of fluid identities, unhindered exchanges and an ideal cosmopolitan openness, which he calls the “Relation,” interconnected and radically egalitarian.

Mons and the Borinage, once a historic epicentre of the early industrialisation on the continent – a cultural and social carrier synonym of modernity – was the hub of important work-related migrations toward a “better” life, as well as the symbol of cultural and social intermix. Plural identities and similar subjects related to globalisation had a pioneering destiny in the region, which subsequently saw the emergence of multiple models of social utopia.

Touching upon notions of otherness and difference in the eye of globalisation, the exhibition also explores the specificity of a place and its history: the Manège de Sury – an ancient Civil Guard barrack – and an old convent-school. Both formerly housed a kind of “micro-city” or ideal community. The refurbished architectural complex will, in 2016, become a start-up incubator, an urban archipelago destined to serve a creative and technological future, fueled by the free exchange of information and data.

Twenty-three artists will temporarily install a proposal for an atopolis, or for an ideal city, connected to everywhere or anyplace.

WITH: Saâdane Afif, Nevin Aladağ, Francis Alÿs, El Anatsui, Danai Anesiadou, Yto Barrada, Walead Beshty, Huma Bhabha, Vincen Beeckman, Vlassis Caniaris, Abraham Cruzvillegas, Meschac Gaba, Jef Geys, Thomas Hirschhorn, Kapwani Kiwanga, David Medalla, Vincent Meessen, Adrian Melis, Benoit Platéus, Walter Swennen, Diego Tonus, Lawrence Weiner and Jack Whitten.

A book edited and published by (SIC), graphic design by Joël Vermot-Harrisson, will accompany the exhibition.

**Curator: Dirk Snauwaert**  
**Co-curator: Charlotte Friling**



El Anatsui