

## **New attraction in Antwerp whispers universal messages**

**Antwerp - 8 June 2015** - On Monday 8 June, at the MAS, in the presence of the Minister of the Interior Jan Jambon, Antwerp Alderman for Culture Philip Heylen, artist Daisy Boman and driving force Rudy Stevens, joined by sponsors and supporters, the interactive art initiative 'The Antwerp Whisperer' was unveiled: a monumental combination of 5 larger than life sculptures that are mounted on the roof and against the facade of a renovated warehouse at Godefriduskaai and Willemdok next to the MAS. The Whisperer - the sculpture erected on the roof of the warehouse - whispers personal and general messages that are received by the sculpture positioned near the dock. The sculptures are the brainchildren of Belgian Campine artist Daisy Boman, who is well-known in the art world thanks to her universal Bo-men. This unique, interactive project connects the business community, technology and cultural world, and contributes to the local and international character of the "Eilandje" and Antwerp city in general.

The Antwerp Whisperer is more than just a few sculptures in the city. It offers a personal experience which is a world-first.

### **A personal message**

Get The Antwerp Whisperer to deliver a personal message to a loved one, (grand)child, (grand)parent, a friend visiting Antwerp... Record your own message using the free App 'De Fluisteraar'. (Recording and sending a message costs €1.99. Packages are available which reduce the cost per message). Upon entering a personal code, the person for whom the message is intended will be able to listen to The Antwerp Whisperer at the Willemdok. Every passer-by will be treated to a pre-recorded message from The Antwerp Whisperer that is available in Dutch, English and French, and which will be updated monthly. They are compiled by the Whisper Board, a small society that is tasked to deliver messages that invite you to reflect or bring a smile to your face. Listening to these general messages is free.

### **Daisy Boman and her Bo-men**

The creatures that form The Antwerp Whisperer are based on the small clay figures with a square head. They are the brainchildren of the internationally renowned Belgian artist Daisy Boman. In 1987, she created her first Bo-man figure. Ten years later, her ingenious installations, wherein she plays off the human individual against the masses, brought her worldwide fame. Since she was discovered by the London Halcyon gallery, her work is much sought after by art experts in Europe, the US, Canada, Hong Kong, Singapore, New Zealand,

Australia and South Africa. Sometimes on their own, but mostly in group, the Bo-men represent mankind in its most primitive form. As physical clones, irrespective of gender, age, political or religious preference and race, they express universal feelings in a non-verbal way. They climb and fall, triumph and lose, conquer and struggle with all obstacles in life. They are impossible to forget as everyone is able to identify with them to some extent. Through The Antwerp Whisperer, Daisy Boman's Bo-men are, for the first time ever, given a voice. On 11 June 2015, at the opening of the exhibition in the entrance hall of PSA, her new book 'Alongside' will also be presented. The book will be available from Monday 8 June to sponsors and supporters of The Antwerp Whisperer.

### **Driving force behind The Antwerp Whisperer**

The Antwerp Whisperer is a project that came about thanks to the Antwerp contractor Rudy Stevens. It was the presence of the MAS near his office on Godefriduskaai that inspired him to launch this project. "The MAS is one of the main attractions in Antwerp. From all over the world, people visit to admire the view over our city by the river. It inspired me to come up with a project that would enhance people's visit to and on top of the MAS. A focal point. An eye catcher. An intriguing sculpture that interacts. A work of art that produces a statement of this neighbourhood, the city and direction we are heading for. When I first laid eyes on Daisy Boman's work, I knew I'd found the perfect artist to make my dreams come true. Her figures are universal and authentic enough to not only grow into a cityscape but a symbol for Antwerp citizens and visitors to the city. The Antwerp Whisperer promises a feel-good experience. It offers people the opportunity to spread some joy," says Rudy Stevens. Jeroen Jaspers, specialist in entertainment concepts, joined Rudy Stevens and Daisy Boman's team. From the many meetings that followed, a connection between kindred souls, between art and technology, was created. With this work of art, they hope to bring about something in Antwerp. To blow a breeze of positivity, humanity and beauty over the "Eilandje". As even the harsh, impersonal daily reality should sometimes be treated to a soft whispering.

### **The "Eilandje" of The Antwerp Whisperer**

And that's how, from Monday 8 June 2015, The Antwerp Whisperer will be standing tall within a stone's throw of the MAS. The result of shared thinking and dreaming. An interactive installation that makes passers-by stand still. Quiet enough to hear your recorded wishes, dreams and thoughts announced by the Whisperer. "Take time out to listen in the heart of Antwerp," says Rudy Stevens enthusiastically. "On the "Eilandje". The "Eilandje" of The Antwerp Whisperer."

Daisy Boman: "The Antwerp Whisperer represents our continuous aspiration to create a

better world. Something that is in our nature."

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For further information, interview requests and images free of copyright, please contact:

Ann Peeters

T: +32 (0)3 345 22 68

E: [ann@blyde.be](mailto:ann@blyde.be)

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