

PRESS RELEASE

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## **EXHIBITION A.J. LODE JANSSENS - A Balloon Home**

Dates: December 10, 2021 – March 27, 2022

Press preview: December 9, 2021 | 10:00am

A. J. Lode Janssens (b. 1941) is one of Belgium's most radical architects and educators. However, for the past two decades he has been living in voluntary exile, resisting any form of public life. Throughout his career he had an ambiguous relationship with architecture, fascinated by its experimental possibilities but equally appalled by its often presumptuous nature. The CIVA exhibition, curated by Peter Swinnen and Nikolaus Hirsch, on Janssens' prolific yet understudied architectural attitude centers on his Balloon (Humbeek, 1969–86)—a temporary pneumatic home experiment, an uncompromising ephemeral attempt at de-architecturalization and harmonizing with nature. An experiment with and through life itself. The exhibition showcases a ¼ scale model of the structure (produced by CRIT.architects) as its centerpiece, allowing the public to fully grasp the architect's experiment. Together with original and hitherto unexhibited archival material, the exhibition highlights Janssens' trial-and-error spatial research practice.

Janssens studied architecture and urbanism at the Sint-Lucas School of Architecture. While he was a student, Willy van der Meeren enlisted him and together they founded Atelier Alpha in Sterrebeek, active from 1964 to

1968. Thereafter Janssens started his own practice, developing in parallel an educational curriculum focused on social and spatial symbiosis. In 1979, Janssens founded the Sint-Lucas Werkgemeenschap (SLuW)—developed in sync with his involvement with Giancarlo de Carlo’s International Laboratory of Architecture and Urban Design (ILAUD)—linking architectural education, practice, and research-by-design. In 1991, Janssens became head of department at the Sint-Lucas School of Architecture, allowing his unique architectural engagement to come full circle.

The exhibition is accompanied by the publication *A. J. Lode Janssens / 1,47 mbar* as well as the documentary *A Gentle Pressure*.

## **DOCUMENTARY A Gentle Pressure**

Release: February 10, 2022

It’s extremely difficult to get a hold of A. J. Lode Janssens, both literally and figuratively. There are many reasons why to not publish on Janssens and his spatial work, the foremost reason being that he himself has always actively resisted any form of “publicity”—a trait that can be traced back to his heartfelt love-hate relationship with the architecture discipline. It’s as if he’s constantly on the lookout to settle an account in and with architecture. So why not grant Janssens the anonymity and serenity he so aspires to have? Sometimes architecture is so authentic and brutally honest that it simply cannot remain concealed.

Producer Peter Swinnen and director Bertrand Lafontaine have brought together a unique selection of witnesses, including Janssens himself, to reassess the Balloon, as well as original, unreleased footage.

## **PUBLICATION A.J. Lode Janssens - 1,47 mbar**

Release: January 27, 2022

The title of the publication refers to the subtle overpressure in Janssens’ experimental dwelling project. The book assembles previously unpublished material, through which editors Peter Swinnen and Nikolaus Hirsch unveil the essence of Janssens’ motives for his headstrong yet generous dwelling experiment.

The publication is the third volume in an architecture series dedicated to autonomous Belgian architects, which also features books on René Heyvaert and Luc Deleu & T.O.P. office.

## **COLOPHON**

### **EXHIBITION**

Curators: Peter Swinnen & Nikolaus Hirsch

### **PUBLICATION**

Editors: Peter Swinnen & Nikolaus Hirsch

Graphic Design: Kim Beirnaert

### **DOCUMENTARY**

Director: Bertrand Lafontaine

Producer: Peter Swinnen

## **PRACTICAL INFORMATION**

Exhibition dates: December 10, 2021 – March 27, 2022

Opening hours: Tuesday – Sunday | 10:30am – 6:00pm

[www.civa.brussels](http://www.civa.brussels)

## **PRESS OFFICER**

Dieter Vanthournout

[d.vanthournout@civa.brussels](mailto:d.vanthournout@civa.brussels)

M.: +32 (0) 497 90 12 51

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