

Critic's Guide: Brussels

From the linguistic nature of God to Belgium's colonial past: the best of the capital's current shows

BY ELLEN MARA DE WACHTER



Leigh Ledare, *The Walk*, 2016, glass, caulk, found postcards, page from R.D. Laing's *Knots* (1971), paint, food 2 collages, each 35 × 23 cm. Courtesy: the artist and Office Baroque, Brussels © Leigh Ledare; photograph: Kristien Daem

Leigh Ledare

Office Baroque

10 November – 23 December

Three projects exploring human behaviour and pathologies intertwine in this exhibition of works by the American artist Leigh Ledare. A riveting video, *The Large Group (Zurich)* (2016), documents a session during a three-day immersive psychology experiment, organized as part of this year's Manifesta 11. The group dynamics reach a dramatic crescendo when verbal abuse is meted out by one participant and then contested by others. For *Vokzal* (2016), Ledare filmed people around Moscow's main train stations using a small 16mm camera, and edited the resulting footage into three 20-minute films in which everyday life, minor dramas and illicit transactions including drug deals and prostitution are played out. The films are projected through openings in a plasterboard corridor built to bisect the gallery, so that they are projected onto visitors' bodies as they walk down the narrow passageway, emphasizing the voyeuristic nature of the work. For *The Walk* (2016), Ledare combined postcards of Soviet character actors and purebred dogs, alluding to the adage that dogs resemble their owners, and pages torn from R.D. Laing's 1970 book of poems, *Knots*. Each composition has been stained with soap, food, paint or excrement, to symbolize a different psychic process, and then sealed between two plates of glass.