

**“Nothing will come  
of nothing, speak again.”**

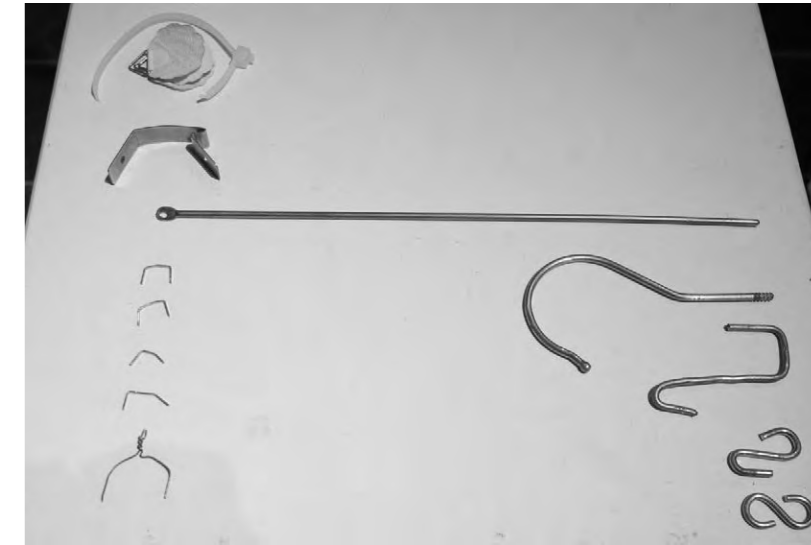
Sara Bomans & Remco Roes  
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## “Nothing will come of nothing, speak again.”

Sara Bomans & Remco Roes



Found objects in chapel storage room.



Found objects ordered in final installation.

This visual essay is a representation of a two month residency and the resulting exhibition in the Gasthuis chapel in Borgloon (Belgium). The project was a collaboration between Belgian artist Sara Bomans and Remco Roes within the context of Roes' practice-based PhD in architecture entitled: *The scenography of sublime space*. This research attempts to translate the philosophical notion of the sublime into a spatial form. The large and uncanny sublime is approached through the notion of immanence – ‘the sublime is now’. By focussing on the ungraspable ‘now’, the given (physical) context of any moment becomes the material fuel for exploring the possibilities of constructing a spatial sublime. This journey continually balances between acceptance of the status quo and acting upon it. Through this alternative reading of ‘the sublime’ the concept becomes useful within Roes' spatial practice that emphasises the fragmentary, incomplete and the everyday as opposed to the grandeur most typically associated with it.

The title of the exhibition – “*Nothing will come of nothing, speak again*” – reflects the attempt at a continual seeking of meaning from the ‘nothingness’ of the current moment and the given situation on site. In the case of Borgloon this local context consisted of the empty chapel and over a dozen churches in the direct vicinity, suffering from shrinking congregations and facing re-use scenarios over the coming years. We decided to visit these churches and cross-reference our experiences and impressions with the spatiality of the Gasthuis chapel.

The most fascinating spaces of the local churches turned out to be the store rooms and janitor cupboards where old statues collected dust along with disused organ parts and Christmas decorations. The installations in the Gasthuis chapel are constructed out of precisely this kind of material, found in its own store room. Since this desacralised chapel is solely used for exhibitions, the store room was filled with plinths and other banal objects:

these formed the building blocks for the compositions.

The two-month working process resulted in a spatial installation, a series of paintings, video projections, a soundscape and a book containing reflective texts and images of the church visits and working process in the chapel. All of these components were united in one final scenography that condensed all previous activities into one immanent constellation.

The images in this essay represent the way in which the Gasthuis chapel and the interiors of these twelve local churches mirrored each other. On the left pages an impression is given of the spaces we encountered on our local journeys. The right side shows the experimentation in the chapel during the residency period and the resulting installation. It is clear how morphological, visual and conceptual resonances connect the activity in the chapel to the found compositions in the local churches.

What unites the two sides is an approach of the (sacral) sublime through a much more subtle appreciation of (the imperfection of) what is given. Attention is shifted away from the apparent lack in the current situation and towards an appreciation of the peculiar, unstable state in which these spaces happen to find themselves. The installation might thus be read as an ode to this impermanence.

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Theo, the caretaker of the church in Jesseren, taking care of the plants.  
▽



Video stills of the constructing of spatial installations in the chapel.  
▷





Found configurations in the local churches.



Installations (in progress) in the chapel.



Unintentional bricolage.



Intentional bricolage.

