

**Thomas Kuijpers**

*When the Twins Were Still Beautiful*

as part of the *A New Display: Visual Storytelling at a Crossroads* exhibition

Curator: Iris Sikking

It all started with the purchase of a painting depicting the iconic Twin Towers. When visual artist Thomas Kuijpers looked at it for the first time, the contemporary image of the collapsing towers was put on hold for a few moments. While reading its description—“painted before 2001”—Kuijpers got a glimpse of the way the World Trade Center must have been experienced before the towers were destroyed.

The painting became the starting point for an extensive collection of images, objects, and film excerpts involving the Towers, recreating the iconic image of New York before 9/11. By turning the space into a modern diorama, Kuijpers creates an immersive installation, and reconstructs the romantic and innocent image of New York’s skyline before a dramatic new one became imbedded in our collective memory.

Researching events by collecting material around a topic of interest is usually the starting point for Kuijpers’s artistic practice. Browsing the media landscape, he investigates how image and text are used to create a narrative about true events. With a major interest in the way the representation of an event is constructed, his works mostly originate from recent happenings, questioning the value of the image and its contemporary uses. By pointing out inconsistencies in the story and errors in the imagery telling it, or making harsh visual commentary on the way the story is brought to us, Kuijpers aims to share an alternative view of the stories and images we’ve all already seen countless times.

**Thomas Kuijpers** (1985) studied photography at AKV|St.Joost, Breda, and is represented by LhGWR (NL). Last year he had his first solo show, *Paradigm #01*, at B.A.D., Brussels (BE). Recently some of his projects were acquired for the collection of the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam (NL).