



**Koen Theys (1963)**

**Het Vanitasrecord 1 , 2005**

Conservatie inkt op archief papier  
940 x 1620 cm  
Gesigneerd

**Exhibitions**

Gent, SMAK, Koen Theys – Home-made Victories, 2013

**Literature:**

SMAK, Koen Theys – Home-made Victories, Gent, 2013, p. 121-135 ill

**Artist description:**

Koen Theys belongs to the first generation of visual artists in Belgium to exploit and appropriate video as an artistic medium in the early 1980s. In more recent work he deconstructs the great traditions of art history and links them to contemporary issues. This deconstruction of icons of our Western culture and cultural history is a characteristic that runs through his photographic, video and sculptural work. His artistic method is the manipulation of these icons via displacement, doubling, morphing, and so on, until they become inversions of themselves. Heroes and stars from art history or show business are transformed into 'mass ornaments' or fantastic architectonical settings. One such example is Napoleon Bonaparte, who is, after Jesus Christ, the most depicted figure in western culture. He is the icon of the strong, unique individual and is represented as such on cake boxes, ashtrays, beer bottles. In *Tout le monde Napoléon!* (Everybody Napoleon!) six Napoleon puppets are watching each other as well as their image on the screen. They look as if attending the opening of an exhibition, being the public as well as the exposed image.