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THE INNOCENT ABROAD

By Mary Voelz Chandler

He's got the whole world . . . Amsterdam-based de Beijer follows in the footsteps of artists such as Thomas Demand in creating the scenes he photographs.

But while Demand's eerie stage sets look as if a neutron bomb had evaporated any sign of life, de Beijer populates his photographs with expressive characters he sculpts and carves from paper.



MODELS FOR PORTRAITS FROM JASPER DE BEIJER'S SERIES "LE SACRE DU PRINTEMPS."

In de Beijer's first museum show in this country, MCA DENVER director and chief curator Cydney Payton has included both models and photographs, a step that is as informative as it is compelling. That's because de Beijer's series aim for conflict, whether in the languid "rubber culture" depicted in "Cahuchu" or the war-related images in "Le Sacre Du Printemps" and "Heroes and Ghosts."

These handmade plumes of smoke, soldiers, victims, homes and weapons appear frozen in time when seen as models lined up on pedestals, but erupt into action in de Beijer's large-scale C-prints. Especially impressive are the bandaged and bloody heads of his "soldiers."

In a recent Logan Conversation at MCA DENVER, de Beijer said he was on a search for information, and not a conceptual artist. "I make constructions of what I want to tell."

That narrative sensibility comes through loud and clear in "The Innocent Abroad."