

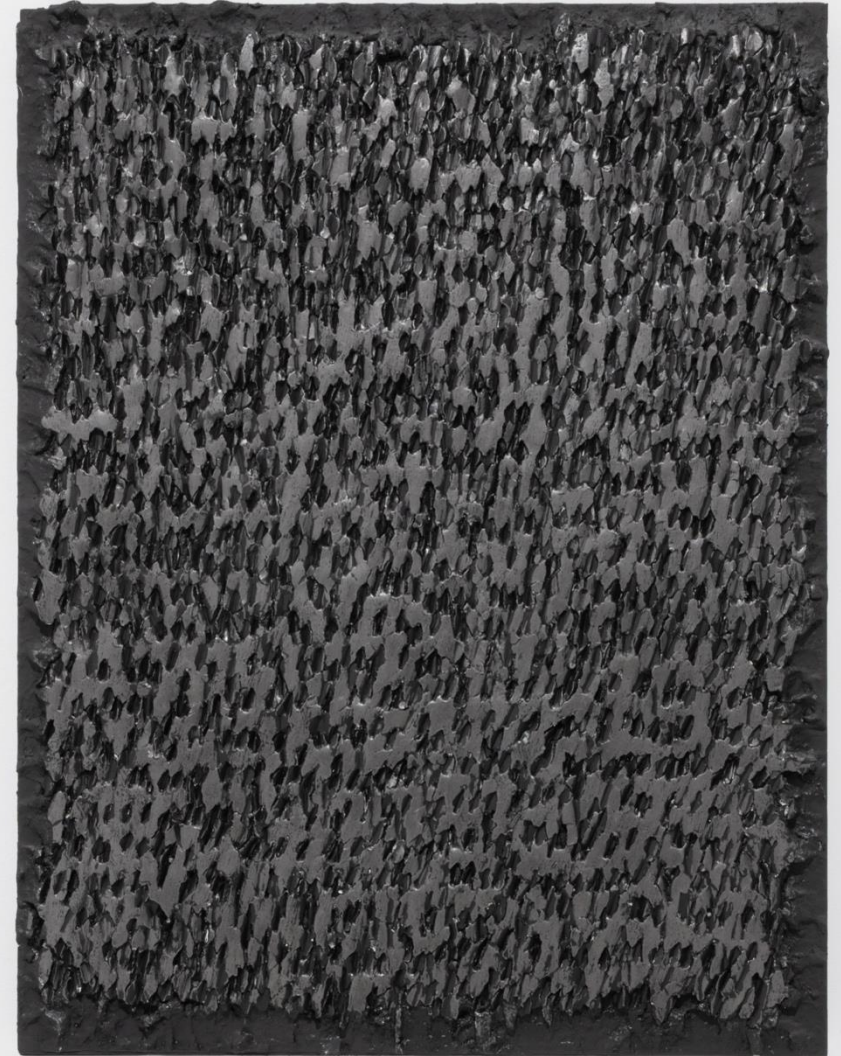


ADO HAMELRYCK
Nothing Really Ends
MAD Art Gallery, Poznań [PL]
Aug, 29 – Oct, 11, 2025

Ado Hamelryck: Nothing Really Ends

Everything stays, everything passes, everything keeps passing.
— Jules Deelder

“I am a colorist,” Ado Hamelryck liked to say about his work, a remarkable statement for an artist who knew how to delve so deeply into blackness. Was it irony, a conceptual statement, an artistic provocation? His comment is certainly layered, and is worthy of nuance. If colorism refers to the painterly use of colors, the question arises: is black really a color? In physics, black is defined as the absence of light. When something appears black, it means that it absorbs all wavelengths of visible light and reflects none. Color is created by the reflection of light, so black—from a physical perspective—is not a color. In art, however, the situation is different. There, black is indeed considered a color because it comes from pigments or dyes, such as paint or ink. Psychologically, the same is true: our eyes and brains can distinguish black as a color, just like, say, red or blue. With this, we encounter an apparent contradiction: black is both color and non-color. Both views are correct—it is simply a matter of perspective. In Hamelryck's work, this tension plays a crucial role. When he called himself a colorist, he was referring not only to the black that pours from an ink or paint pot, but also to the effect of light, to the subtle, discreet play of color that his works engage with the surrounding space. It is precisely the power and splendor of paradox that this artist has managed to capture in his work like no other.



For nearly five decades, Ado Hamelryck has built up an impressive body of work that is as extensive as it is consistent. The term life's work is more appropriate than ever. However, I will not attempt an exhaustive, systematic study here—that would, after all, require much more time and dedication. Rather, I want to take a look at his work, illuminate it, and I don't mean that only in a figurative sense. As an art critic, I often ask myself the question: what is the appropriate distance is to fully understand an image? If we stand too close, it seems to withdraw; if we stand at a distance, it seeks to approach us. In this constant interplay between distance and proximity lies the phenomenological experience of art—a subtle game of appearance and disappearance. Hamelryck shows us how an image is created not only in space but equally in time.

His work has a decidedly graphic character, derived from the ancient Greek verb *graphein*, which means not only “to write,” but also “to draw, sketch, engrave, carve.” This is reflected in his tableaux, sculptures and drawings, which are at once physical objects, material supports made of wood, paper or Styrofoam. Although Hamelryck's oeuvre appears to be a relentless quest for visual purity, it transcends the medium-specific discourse of modernists such as Clement Greenberg. Where Greenberg argued that art should focus on the unique properties of its medium—for painting, for example, this meant flatness, color and paint as matter—Hamelryck takes a different approach.

His work then aligns even more with what Donald Judd called specific objects: art that transcends the traditional boundaries between painting and sculpture. In this sense, there is a kinship with Minimal Art, albeit with a distinct, expressive touch. Art historian Michael Fried saw this art form as a reaction to the exhaustion of painting and an exploration of the tableau as a three-dimensional object. According to Fried, Minimal Art revolved around an object within a situation—a “theatrical” context that includes the presence of the viewer. In this way, Hamelryck's sculptural bodies manage to trigger and intrigue the spectator. Not only for the artist himself, but also for us as viewers, his works are elaborate exercises in attention and concentration. His daily, dogged, repetitive devotion to the creative process is reflected in a constant invitation for us to look—and look again. “Paradoxical as it may sound, the extreme monotony is sometimes enchanting,” wrote the incomparable Francis Smets. The more minimalist the artistic gesture, the more intense the viewer's experience. Hamelryck's works carry us along in the visual rhythms he applies pastily onto his dark supports—a serial repetition that shifts and differs again and again. A visual poetry unfolds on the irregular skin of his works—their silver linings, if you will. Perhaps this is why he was so devoted to graphite? It is precisely here, in the frayed edges of the image, that a refined play between light and dark, white and black, between viewer and artwork, materiality and emptiness, time and space, emerges.

For *Nothing Really Ends*, we have made a careful selection from Ado Hamelryck's oeuvre—not with the ambition of being exhaustive, but to give a representative impression of his artistic signature. And it is one of patience, silence, stillness and deceleration—an extraordinary way of seeing and working that is often at odds with the frenetic pace of our time. Hamelryck had little use for speed. Rather, he compared his artistic persistence to the steady gait of a marathon runner. Or, even better, to that of the tortoise in the classic fable of Aesop, who defeats his opponent, the hare, with perseverance and determination. This exhibition also testifies to that, even now that the artist is no longer here. Everything is a matter of time. The art that Ado Hamelryck leaves us shows how an end is only a horizon—an imaginary line that does not draw a boundary, but marks a new beginning.

Text by: Pieter Vermeulen - art critic, lecturer, researcher, independent curator



No title, drawing
2008, 63x45,5cm, framed 60x77cm
Tissue paper, Acrylic, Indien ink, pen
Price: €6500







No title, painting
2000, 18 x 25 x 3cm
wood, foam board, acrylic,
axed, series of 4
Price: €3750/pc.



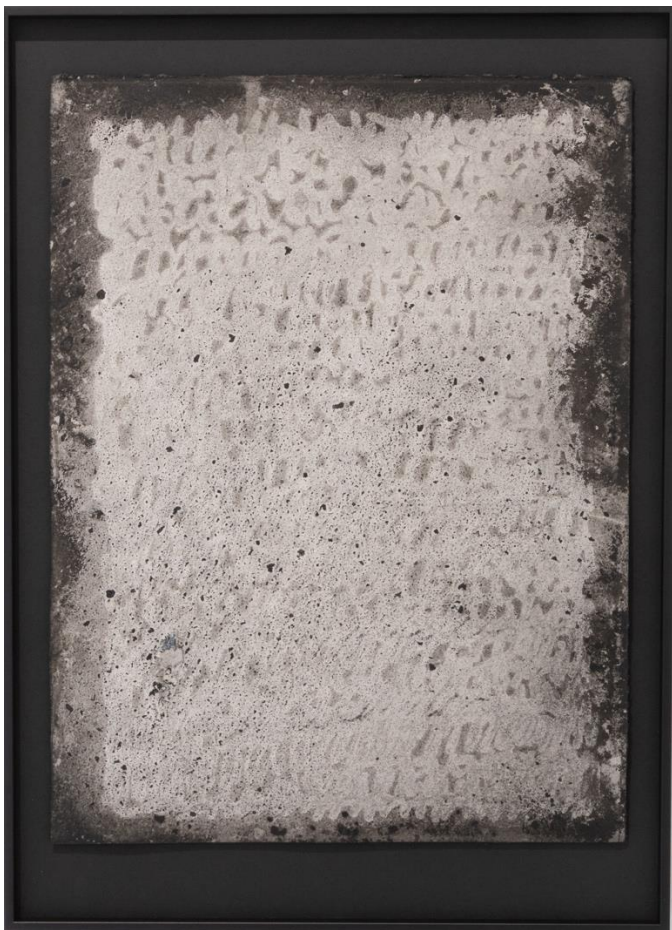
No title, painting
2000, 18 x 25 x 3cm
wood, foam board, acrylic, axed,
series of 4
Price: €3750/pc.



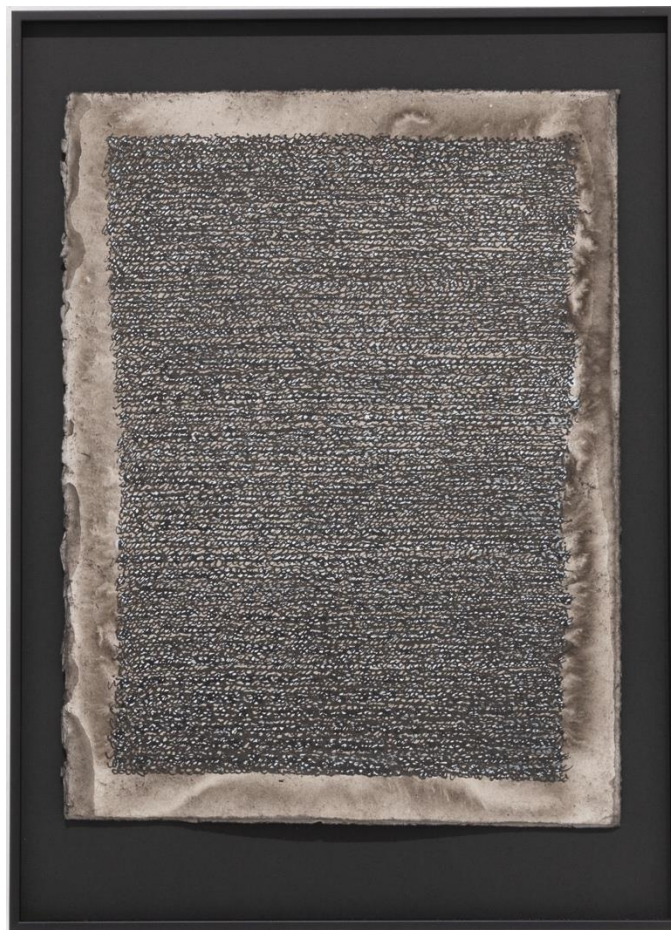
No title, painting
2000, 18 x 25 x 3cm
wood, foam board, acrylic, axed,
series of 4
Price: €3750/pc.



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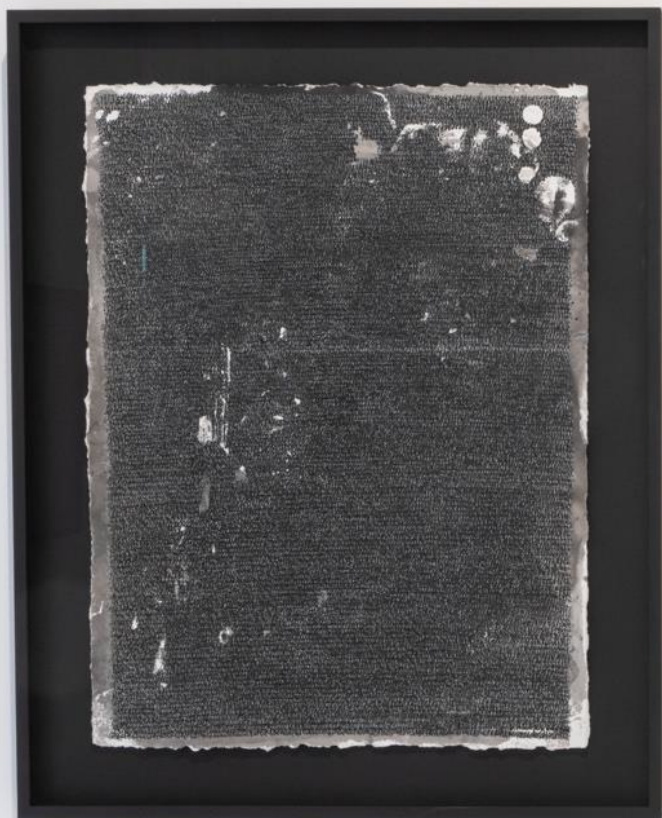
No title, drawing
2017, 28 x 38cm
Canson tissue paper, acrylic, pen
Price: €3950

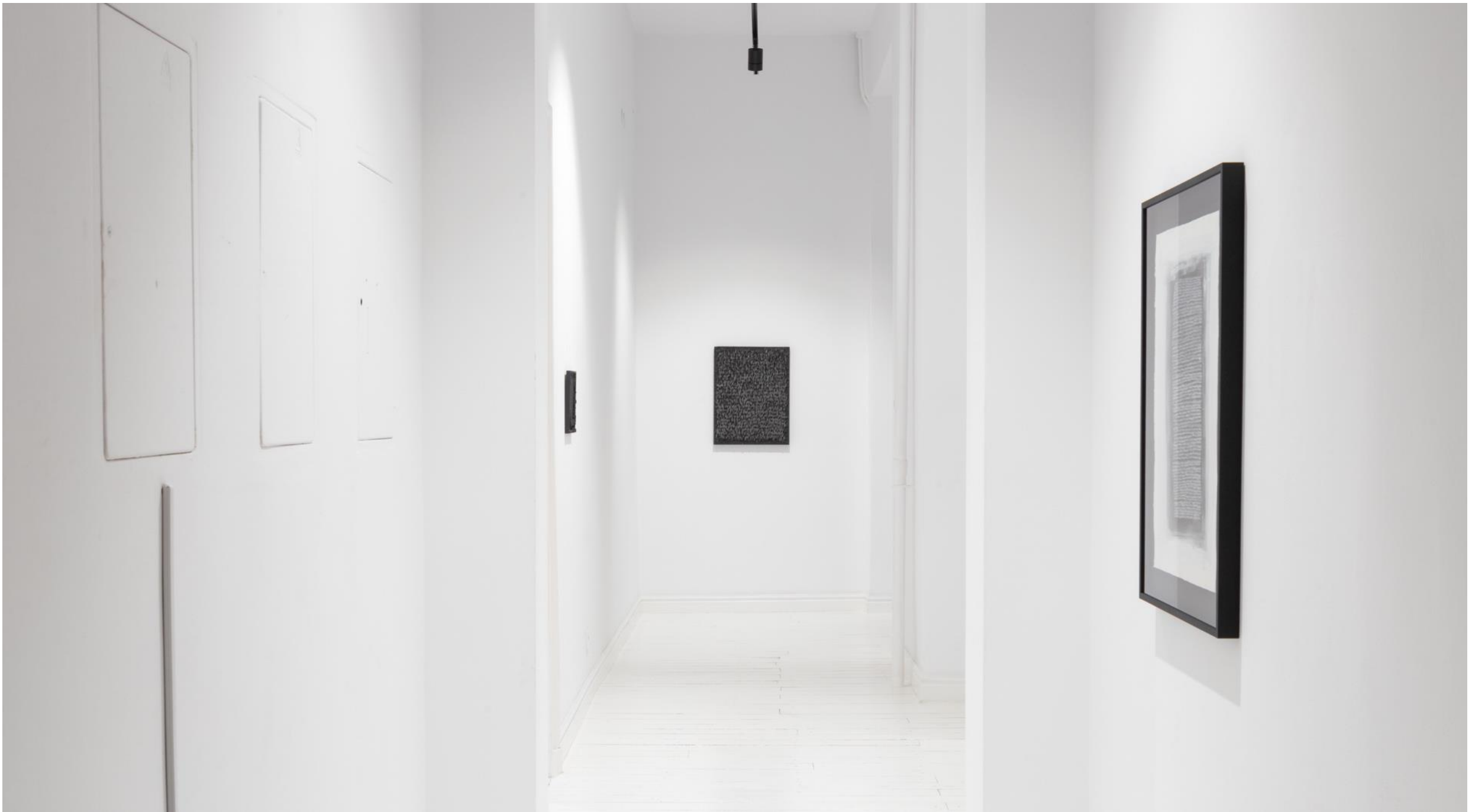


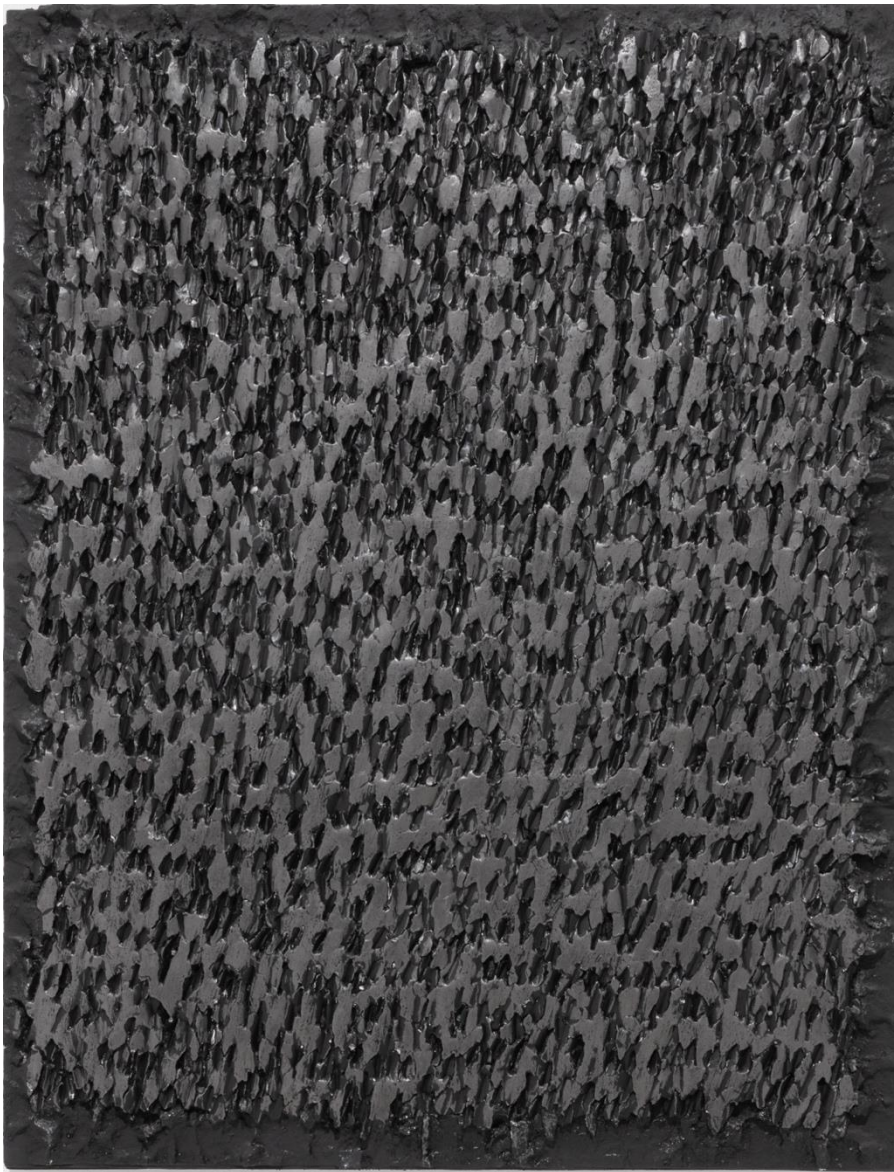
No title, drawing
2017, 28 x 38cm
Canson tissue paper, acrylic, pen
Price: €3950



No title
20 x 25cm,
Metal plate, hammered, graphite pen
Price: €4500



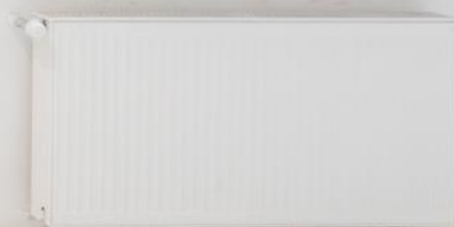




No title, painting
1999, 50 x 65 x 4,5cm
Foam board, blackboard paint, graphite pen
Price: €6500



No title, drawing
2008, 63 x 48cm
Tissue paper, acrylic, Indien ink, pen
Price: €6500



No title, drawing
1980, 80 x 80cm
Work on paper, pen
Price: €8500







No title, painting
2015, 45 x 55 x 18cm
Polistyrenem blackboard paint,
graphite pen, unique
Price: €9500



No title, painting
2015, 45 x 55 x 18cm
Polistyrenem blackboard paint,
graphite pen, unique
Price: €9500



No title, painting
2015, 45 x 55 x 18cm
Polistyrenem blackboard paint,
graphite pen, unique
Price: €9500





Nox / Nicht, moeder van alle licht – drawing
2020, 150 x 300cm
Nepalese paper, acrylic, pen, unique
Price: €25000







Ball, 3D
1998, dia 27 cm
polystyrene, elastofill joining paste,
gesso, blackboard paint, graphite pen
Price: €7500



No title, painting
2001, 27 x 27cm
Fiberboard, white sand, polyurethane bitumen
Price: €3750



No title, painting
2001, 27 x 27cm
Fiberboard, white sand, polyurethane bitumen
Price: €3750





No title, drawing/collage
2023, 103 x 65cm
Nepalese paper, mixed media
Price: €9500



No title, drawing/ collage
2023, 45 x 35cm
Nepalese paper, mixed media
Price: €4700







No title, drawing
50 x 78 cm
Handmade nepalese paper, Indien ink, pen
Price: €7500



Ado Hamelryck (Halle, November 2, 1941–Genk, October 5, 2024) was a visual artist exploring the spectrum of dark hues. This decision is crucial in his quest for unadulterated imagery and refinement. He cultivated an entirely own character in his methodology—both physically and symbolically. The application of the black paint, ink, or substance was executed by repeated, rhythmic, and contemplative activities. Meaningless letters or symbols occupy the space. Through an extensive sequence of actions, a pristine image materializes; the artwork, and the previously meaningless, becomes significance.

Ado Hamelryck pursued his education at the Academy of Fine Arts in Brussels and the Higher Institute of Fine Arts in Antwerp. In 1967, he relocated to Genk and assumed a teaching position at the newly founded SHIVKV (Municipal Higher Institute for Visual Communication and Design). Until his retirement, Ado Hamelryck instructed many generations of painters and graphic designers in figure drawing.

Ado Hamelryck's artistic curriculum vitae encompasses solo exhibitions in Brussels (BOZAR, Atelier 340), Antwerp (I.C.C., Galerij XXI), Ghent (Association for the Museum of Contemporary Art), Liège (Musée d'Art Moderne), Hasselt (Provincial Museum, CIAP, ccHA), Genk (FLACC, C-mine), Lanaken, Amsterdam (Brakke Grond), The Hague, and Maastricht, among others, in addition to a multitude of group exhibitions both nationally and internationally. Numerous books exist, including 'Art in Belgium after 1945' by Karel Geirlandt and the 2011 monograph 'Not one black, but twenty-seven blacks, I guarantee you.'

Ado Hamelryck received several accolades, including distinction at the Prix Jeune Peinture Belge in 1961 and 1962, encouragement from the Flemish Community in 1986, and the title of knight in the Order of Leopold II in 1988. He has the position of honorary lecturer at the LUCA School of Arts.

His oeuvre is part of the collections of MuZEE Ostend, M HKA, the University of Antwerp, the Province of Limburg, the Flemish Community, the French Community, the National Bank of Brussels, KBC, and several individual collectors.

HAMELRYCK ART vzw was established in 2023 by Arend Hamelryck and his spouse Diana Zaat. The non-profit organization is compiling a comprehensive inventory of all works of Ado Hamelryck and intends to delineate his career as a professional visual artist. Through this initiative, HAMELRYCK ART vzw seeks to preserve the comprehensive body of work of this artist for posterity.

Ado Hamelryck has been represented by Uitstalling Art Gallery in Genk, Belgium, since 2025.



MAD Art Gallery

Mielżyńskiego 27/29, 61-725, Poznań, Poland

Nowy Świat 35/7, 00-373, Warszawa, Poland

www.madartgallery.pl

monika@madartgallery.pl