

GIDEON INVITES

***HOME
BEFORE
DARK***

KUBE

Ruben Bellinkx
Elke-Andreas Boon
Christophe Coppens
Charles Degeyter
Edouard Devriendt
Peter De Meyer
Marco De Sanctis
Ritsart Gobyn
Gideon Kiefer
Nadia Naveau
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Bruno V. Roels
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Jan Vanriet
Bent Van Looy
John Van Oers
Simon Verheylesonne
Tinus Vermeersch

For *Home Before Dark*, Gideon Kiefer invited no less than 17 artists to join him in an exhibition about the passing of things and the traces artists leave in their struggle with mortality.

Why does an artist make art? As we all strive for a meaningful existence, while we're embroiled in a frantic attempt to embrace the absurdity of life, it seems like a comforting thought that your art will outlive you, that there are things that remain and keep the memory of you vivid. Because everything passes and the memory of what happened, settles, almost like a trauma in your head: it is gone, leaving only the somewhat melancholic ring of an echo.

In *Home Before Dark*, memories are scattered like confetti across the gallery space. "We've been there," they seem to whisper quietly. A shooting gallery, children's drawings, orphaned birthday flags, a portrait of a deceased childhood friend, a group of Virgin Mary statues. They all are universally recognisable images that appeal to everyone's history. A common sense of nostalgia is what brought these artists together. In the group exhibition, they display an amalgam of motifs from a bygone past, laid out in the gallery that temporarily became a home for the artists, just for now, before dark.



The Black Sun 2022. Courtesy the artist.

RUBEN BELLINKX

In his drawings, films and installations, Ruben Bellinkx (°1975 Wilrijk) sets the stage for curious encounters between radically different elements. Despite the serene atmosphere, an existential drama unfolds deep within a seemingly familiar scene, indifferent and deaf to the outside world. By capturing the slow interactive processes between objects and living beings at close range, the artist upends the banal and mundane reality and lends it another dimension. This is not so much a confounding look at real life, but more an attempt to expose the unequal relationships and mechanisms of conditioning and domestication.

In the diptych *The Black Sun* (2022) we see two kinds of strange intruders visiting the same room. The first projection captures a flock of birds that enter a bedroom in daytime. The random violence of nature enters a domestic setting. A strange dialogue – both dramatic and dreamlike – develops between the birds and the double bed. In the second projection, we see a swarm of drones occupy the same room. But just like the birds, these unmanned aerial devices also explore the bedroom. When they randomly circle above the double bed, just like their winged counterparts, we see machines imitating nature. But the flight patterns of the drones changes and they adopt tight, geometric formations. Now resembling an invasion of single-minded robots, the scene has become threatening if not frightening. The two projections mirror and question each other on different levels.

The drawings *Situations* (2023) are sculptural compositions where heads interact via hands, feet, legs and arms. They are often distinct gestures that focus on the eyes, mouth, ears, nose, hair and neck and exude a certain hostility. The series of drawings is a continuation of an earlier series of drawings Ruben made during the corona crisis. In that series *Design for raw iron fence to maintain distance* (2020-2021), you saw heads previously trapped in a grid which formed a fence. In it, the heads are each at a safe distance from each other, but at the same time intimately connected. Ruben would like to execute both series in cast iron.



Iconoclasm 2021. Courtesy the artist.

ELKE-ANDREAS BOON

Belgian non-binary visual artist and musician Elke-Andreas Boon “has managed to develop a personal and idiosyncratic body of work with a powerful, immediate actuality,” describes S.M.A.K director Philippe Van Cauteren. “Boon’s work directly questions themes that are universal. Questions of gender, identity, loneliness, religion and the possible interweaving of all these are on the worktable.” Curator Tanguy Eeckhout wrote: “For Boon, artistry is a radical choice for freedom, an attempt to go beyond the entrenchment of social structures. Thanks to imagination and a rebellious attitude to life, the artist manages to break rusty patterns and generate new insights about what it is to be human. The foundation of Boon’s work is formed by an innate fascination with people, their emotions and insecurities. Its strength lies in locating hard-to-define human sensibilities, exposing them and elevating them to a level of aesthetic awareness.

Through a constant probing of the areas of conflict that lie between individual and community, the artist touches a sore, sensitive spot for many people. The insights Boon creates are not easy to interpret. It is not the illustration of an idea, but the result of multiple and diverse impulses that form an ambiguous whole”.

The oeuvre is not bound to one medium and is completely intertwined with the artist; there is no division between private and public; visual, performance and musical oeuvre are one course, one whole. Regardless of the medium used, Boon always looks for a fundamental ambiguity, an undercurrent. A kind of unruly fragility that invites reflection and communication and uses universal, existential themes: questioning the underlying power structures in religion, gender, age and other economic systems. Imaging grafts the work quite directly onto the art tradition only to then, through small interventions, redraw everything and create a new context.

The questions Boon asks are bold and sometimes uncomfortable. The uncompromising style does not shy away from sharp, surrealistically humorous, criticism. At the same time, an aesthetic opulence full of iconographic recognition unfolds. Underneath, injury and survival instinct dance with the power of radical vulnerability. Boon’s alter ego, Mati Le Dee, sings, “I’m the one-man rebellion, rioter, there’s uprising in me, a mutiny”¹.



SHITSTORM 2021. Courtesy the artist and Galerie Zwart Huis, Brussels.

CHRISTOPHE COPPENS

Christophe Coppens (1969) is a Belgian multidisciplinary artist, designer and opera director. His main focus is his art practice, yet his work always balances in the folds of different worlds: it lives in the cracks of the art, fashion and design world as well as opera. One medium informs, feeds and influences the other which gives his work a unique flavor and edge. Coppens initially studied drama at the Brussels Conservatorium, and whilst pursuing a path as actor and director - quite by chance and following an invitation to Paris from a renowned magazine - developed a global career on the edge of fashion, design and art. During the 21 years which followed, he made many collections of accessories, had collaborations in the music, fashion and design world, all whilst developing his work as an artist. In 2012, he stopped his fashion brand to focus exclusively on his art practice. He made his debut as an opera director in 2017, directing *The Cunning Little Vixen* at La Monnaie/De Munt. This was followed by a double bill of Bartók's *Bluebeard's Castle* / *The Miraculous Mandarin* in 2018 and Bellini's *Norma* in 2021. He designs sets (in collaboration with ISM Architects) and costumes for all his productions. Currently he is preparing *Turandot* at La Monnaie/De Munt, opening June 2024.

Christophe Coppens lives and works in Belgium. Recent exhibitions include *Eat Shit Watch Crap* (Huis De Uil, Temse 2019), *A Lovely Little Shit Show* and *PLAYDATE* (Galerie Zwart Huis, Brussels 2021 and 2023). He is preparing a new solo show for January 2025.



Fossil Plaque - Boy amid Flowers
Courtesy the artist and Tatjana Pieters, Ghent

CHARLES DEGEYTER

Charles Degeyter (°1994) started out his career in the field of modern rock / pop poster art by creating illustrations for influential music groups during his studies in product design engineering. After graduating he completely shifted his focus towards more personal work that delves into themes such as cultural anthropology and natural history. One of his signature series are the sarcophagi for pets, which, like many of his works, blur the boundaries between the natural world and our constructed reality.

This approach is also evident in the presented fossil plaques. In this ongoing series, Degeyter recreates specific episodic memories of his childhood in stone, using his childhood drawings as references. These drawings function as powerful vessels for memory and shape the visual language of the stone works. Similar to fossil plaques found in natural history museums, the drawings are remnants of an incomplete past.

In his artistic process, Degeyter employs a wide array of materials and production techniques, drawing upon his background as an industrial designer. He actively seeks out relevant production methods such as resin printing, laser cutting and 3D scanning to bring his ideas to life. By using these constantly advancing techniques, he aims to create contemporary works within a broader historical context.



Markt 2023. Courtesy the artist.

EDOUARD DEVRIENDT

Edouard Devriendt is a multidisciplinary Belgian artist who is active in the fields of furniture design and painting.

As a furniture maker, Edouard seeks peculiarities in the world around, extracting the essence of spaces and objects, which he uses as his trope. This same focus permeates his paintings —pieces characterized by their simplicity, devoid of extraneous details, by placing the subject at the forefront or employing color and texture to create depth.

Edouard's motive for image depiction is primarily based on personal feelings and desires. A search for solace and a way for the artist to bid farewell to poignant fragments in his life.

His smartphone being his primary tool, he zooms in, extracts fragments from videos, captures online content and generates images. These images are then translated onto canvas with oil paint.

His current fascination revolves around low-resolution images, allowing the underlying code that builds the image to emerge. He mirrors the poor image quality on his canvas by adding pale pink-ish, light green, and light blue tones, blurry contours and jerky rhythms. He signatures his low-res methodology by wiping away and smudging the oil paint.

Edouard frequently explores themes such as sharpness versus vagueness, distance juxtaposed with closeness, silence contrasted with loudness, and static versus movement, all of which serve as catalysts to inspire a purposeful approach to his work.



hang on 2017. Courtesy by the artist and Geukens & De Vil Gallery

PETER DE MEYER

Peter De Meyer's (°1981) field of action is situated between common life and art. In his artistic practice, he regularly starts from everyday objects, ideas and situations that he subtly transforms, places in a different context, corrects, condenses, rearranges, appropriates, destroys and rebuilds. Through these shifts in context and meaning, he explores the complex process of observation and perception, playing games with collective memory and cutting across expectations and predispositions. Although his interventions are often invested with irony and a touch of humour, they always contain a strong (self-)reflective component. Hence, they regularly result in reflections on himself, as an individual and as an artist, and/or on his relationship to the (art) world.

His work has been exhibited at various venues, including Flanders House New York (USA), Palais d'Iéna Paris (France), Maskara Gallery Mumbai (India), MU Eindhoven (Netherlands), Kunsthal KAdE Amersfoort (Netherlands), Arts Festival Watou (Belgium), Musée Félicien Rops Namur (Belgium), Galerie Raum mit Licht Vienna (Austria). It is included in the collection of the S.M.A.K. Ghent (Belgium) and Museum Voorlinden in Wassenaar (Netherlands).

Text by Lien Craps



The Weepers 2023. Courtesy the artist.

MARCO DE SANCTIS

The plastic approach of Marco De Sanctis (°1983, Milan) simultaneously addresses the status of the image, the notion of time and the act of creation. Time is a crucial notion to understand the artist's work and latest production. It becomes a concept to be re-envisioned that functions as a quantifiable entity necessary for the creative process as well as for the intimate experience requested by the works. Mediums are plural. They question the object as much as the environment that hosts it, making the image / the constructed object no longer anecdotal but very much essential to the apprehension of the work. The message is never political, it simply witnesses a deep thought, the visible image of an invisible truth, food for thought for the spectator that re-appropriates the act of creation by perpetuating it.

Marco De Sanctis lives and works in Brussels. His works have been exhibited in solo and group exhibitions both nationally and internationally, such as *L'Art de Rien*, Centrale Brussels; *La Chute*, Eduardo Secci, Florence (2022); *Appocundria*, Dauwens & Beernaert Gallery, Brussels (2020); *Transalantico*, Mana Contemporary, Jersey City USA (2019); *Les Portes Royales*, Art on Paper, Bozar, Brussels (2018); *Crepusculo*, Artissima, Art Fair, Turin (2018); *Ossessione*, Palazzo Monti, Brescia (2018); *Monographie D'Artiste 10+7*, Musée Mediatine, Brussels (2017); *a rebour*, Dauwens & Beernaert Gallery (2017); *Futuri Interiori*, Fondazione Rivoli2, Milan (2016) and *Shoreline*, Francis Carrette gallery (2015). His works are included in collections such as MErode (BE), P.O.K. collection. Galila Barzilai Hollander (BE), Voorlinden Museum (NL), Spazio Almag: Umberta Gnutti Beretta, Collections (IT), Palazzo Monti Collection (IT), Club Gamec Collection (IT), Aurelio Petron foundation (IT) and Rivoli 2 foundation (IT).



Untitled 2022. Courtesy the artist.

RITSART GOBYN

At first glance, Ritsart Gobyn's (°1985) paintings appear to be a random collection of traces of a creative process. Paint splatters, spray paint and smears cover unprimed pieces of linen, on which all kinds of collage-elements such as pieces of tape, colorful snippets, or post-its are attached. Sometimes the raw linen itself is attached to a white background, which in turn becomes a collage element. The temporary nature of the tape and the carelessly composition of loosely attached scraps and image fragments seem to suggest an unfinishedness. An unfinishedness that confronts the viewer with the creative process a painting goes through before it reveals itself to the viewer.

Perception changes however when it turns out that the tape, the snippets and even the folds in the canvas are painted 'trompe l'oeils'. Ritsart Gobyn uses the trompe l'oeil as a painterly strategy to make the viewer aware of the creationprocess through the illusion of a result. In this way, instead of being a matter of optical illusion and painterly virtuosity, trompe l'oeil becomes a searchlight in the artistic process itself, and it questions the 'status' of the painting as an image and as an object.

Ritsart Gobyn lives and works in Ghent and is represented by PLUS-ONE Gallery, Antwerp. He had many solo exhibitions, such as: *Prologue*, PLUS-ONE Gallery, Antwerp (2023) and *Memories of things to be done*, Kunsthal Gent, Ghent (2020) and participated in many group exhibitions such as: *Head Games*, Piermarq*, Sydney (2023), *Stille Levens*, Venetiaanse Gaandbedrijven, Ostend (2023), *A Moment*, Tesoro Collection, Amsterdam (2022), *1.1 Million Pounds*, Barbé Gallery, Ghent (2021), *One way or another*, SMAK, Ghent, (2021), *Nuages*, La Maison des Arts, Brussels (2021), *Door het doek het schilderij*, Roger Raveel Museum, Machelen (2021). Posture Editions has published two books about Gobyn's work: *In Between* (2020) and *Reclining Fragments* (2023).



Ants Ants Ants 2024. Courtesy the artist.

GIDEON KIEFER

Memories, dreams and the question of how to deal with the unreliability of our own memory form the common thread in the painting and drawing oeuvre of Belgian artist Gideon Kiefer (°1970). On a secondary level, Kiefer's work is often read as sociocritical. Over the years, his work increasingly takes on an apocalyptic atmosphere, closely linked to the growing climate crisis. Fluttering canvases, inspired by sheets used to protect melting glaciers, landscapes safely tucked away under a bell jar, trees stripped bare to brittle branches, ... These are just a few of the many metaphors depicting this theme.

In Home Before Dark Kiefer presents two paintings. The monumental portrait named FILIP is a posthumous tribute to a childhood friend. Memories of this friend frequently appear in the artist's oeuvre. Due to circumstances, the artist couldn't attend the funeral of his childhood friend. He aims to make amends through this painting.

The second work is a personal confession of guilt by the artist. In Ants, Ants, Ants Kiefer confronts a dark memory from his past. Around the age of ten, he and a neighbor boy once drowned ants in a bucket filled with a dirty sludge. This gruesome act has always haunted Kiefer, and when he reflects on it, he feels nothing but shame and disgust.



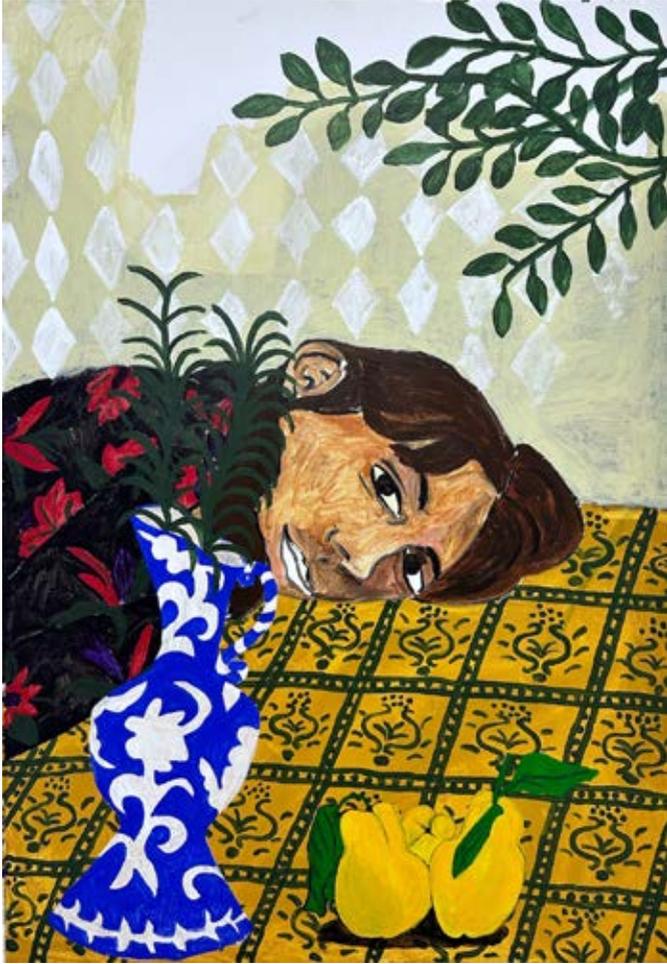
My Puddle of a Thumb 2022. Courtesy the artist and Base-Alpha Gallery, Antwerp.

NADIA NAVEAU

Nadia Naveau's (°1975, Brugge) sculptures are usually meeting points of highly whimsical elements and stylised, abstracted parts. Each sculpture has a partial origin in her vast collection of photographs, photocopies, newspaper and magazine clippings, fragments from books, on the one hand, and her instinctive inspiration from motifs and memories ranging from relics from ancient Greece to a Disney cartoon from her childhood, on the other. Her work was once described as "Bernini meets The Simpsons;" a catchy formulation, which can never fully encompass the intricate thoughts that shape her oeuvre, but does translate the relative absurdity and bold humour nestled in her mind, method and practice.

In 2021, Naveau created a fountain for the first time in her career. The sculpture is a modest homage to Brancusi's *Sleeping Muse*. The face is that of her earlier work *Olympia & Figaro*, which recurs in different versions and constellations in her work. The same goes for the outstretched hand on which Olympia's head rests - which we can recognise, for instance, in Goofy's glove, but also in the hand on Crazy Diamond's head. From the mouth of the little face, which is possibly asleep, flows a fine, endearing stream of water that surrounds the image. The fountain is by no means a festive, baroque spray; rather, it is an intimate stillness, in which the water gently produces the only movement.

Text by Tamara Beheydt



Dusty Memories with a Smell of Nostalgia 2024. Courtesy the artist.

SHIRLEY VILLAVICENCIO PIZANGO

Hailing from both Lima's urban bustle and the serene landscapes of the Amazon, Shirley Villavicencio Pizango (°1988 Lima) draws her inspiration from the rich tapestry of everyday life in Peru and her new life in Ghent.

In her exploration of melancholy, Villavicencio Pizango invites viewers into a world where emotions run deep and resonate with the human experience. Through her raw strokes, she captures the essence of longing, melancholy and introspection, inviting viewers to delve into the complexities of the human psyche.

At the core of Villavicencio Pizango's artistry lies a fervent commitment to vindicate the non-white model. With unwavering dedication, she challenges societal norms and redefines beauty standards by proudly depicting dark-skinned individuals in all their glory. Through her art, she sheds light on the inherent beauty and resilience of marginalized communities, offering a powerful commentary on the need for inclusivity and representation in the art world.

Villavicencio Pizango's work is a testament to the multi-layered nature of human existence. With each brushstroke, she unveils a new dimension, inviting viewers to peel back the layers and uncover the intricate tapestry of emotions that lie beneath the surface. Her art serves as a mirror to the soul, reflecting the complexities of the human experience in all its raw and unfiltered glory.

In her exploration of womanhood, Villavicencio Pizango offers a nuanced portrayal that celebrates the strength, grace and resilience of women from diverse backgrounds. Through her art, she seeks to challenge stereotypes and empower women to embrace their unique identities with pride and confidence.



Woke Up Laughing (Dreaming Dioramas) 2023.
Courtesy the artist and Gallery Fifty One, Antwerp.

BRUNO V. ROELS

Bruno V. Roels' (°1976) artistic practice is primarily rooted in analog photography but he combines analog techniques with other art forms, non-photographic processes, or Artificial Intelligence and generative imaging.

He questions the properties of the image: how it operates, influences, and deceives. What defines photography as photography? And how do viewers interpret it, in an era marked by image manipulation and production, where visual communication sets the tone? These are significant questions embedded in his body of work.

The yellowed, coffee-coloured prints give his work a recognizable vintage look. Artistic imperfections and incidental elements, such as creases and stains that occur during printing, remain visible and characterize his visual language.

Woke Up Laughing (Dreaming Dioramas) is a captivating work of art that embodies the artist's unique approach to photography and his exploration of the natural world through a contemporary lens.

Bruno V. Roels is renowned for his deep fascination with the palm tree as a symbol, which he recurrently explores in his works, delving into its various representations and meanings across different cultures and historical periods. *Woke Up Laughing (Dreaming Dioramas)* continues this exploration, perhaps inviting viewers to consider the dreamlike qualities of nature and the way it can be reimagined through art. Roels' work stands out for its ability to evoke emotion and curiosity, encouraging a deeper reflection on our relationship with nature and the ways in which it can be represented. Through this piece, Roels contributes to the ongoing dialogue between nature and art, offering a contemporary perspective that is both thought-provoking and visually attractive.



Return from the Hunt 2022. Courtesy the artist.

GUY SLABBINCK

Guy Slabbinck (° 1979, Brugge) mainly creates large-format paintings that overwhelm with their wealth of colours, textures and motifs. He places mythological or magical figures in exotic landscapes that exude something both paradisiacal and menacing. Here and there, the artist himself figures in the works, an expression of the dialogue Slabbinck constantly enters into with art history.



The Veil 2012. Courtesy the artist.

JAN VANRIET

Jan Vanriet's (c1948) works surprised and enraptured me. His painting combines formal sophistication with subject matter that is very dear to me, i.e. the subject of a "wounded Europe." Jan Vanriet seems to believe in the aesthetics of the whole, which I too find compelling. He wants to record or, perhaps, only emphasise what is, in almost all of the countries of our little continent, the wounds of the twentieth century, the wounds of the war(s), of Nazism and barbarism—although he prefers to contemplate, not the cruelty itself, but rather the human reaction to it, the negative of evil.

He also loves what is surely the most important object in the entire visible universe: the human face, ever changing, full of meanings. He paints men and women. His portraits are full of tenderness, sometimes irony. They are not free from ambivalence, just as human faces are not free from ambivalence. In his portraits and in his other paintings, he achieves that "something extra" to make an invisible halo of poetry hover above the depicted person or object, the same that once hovered above the heads of angels.

Text by Adam Zagajewski



Our Living Room at the eve of the end of the world 2022. Courtesy the artist.

BENT VAN LOOIJ

After a never-ending concert tour with Das Pop and some solo work, Bent Van Looij (°1976 Antwerp) has returned to his original vocation, which is painting.

In watercolour, on large sheets of Arches paper, he has been recording the impressions from his travels and family life. Bent's visual art is unashamedly romantic, with swirling shapes and saturated colours. Uninhibited and generous, but at the same time often alienating and hushed. His works aim to seduce, question and unbalance the observer. They should be seen in the tradition of romanticism and neo expressionism in visual arts, but perhaps even more so in the literary tradition of short stories. The works are not illustrations to a story, they are the story.

Bent Van Looij works and lives in Antwerp.



PANG PANG 2023-2024. Courtesy: Rossicontemporary

JOHN VAN OERS

The anecdotal method is viewed sceptically in both art and science, because it leads to fallacies and easy generalisations. Single isolated evidence is at odds with the scientific method, which examines its subjects broadly; it is not because your bird is a parakeet that all birds are parakeets.

In art, the anecdotal stands for navel-gazing, for the glorification of one's personal experience. It is the opposite of universality or the possibility of making abstraction of things, which allows one thing to mean another or makes the pure form sufficient to transcend the primary. Poetry, music and abstract art appeal to our deeply rooted and eroded emotions that no longer refer to specific, but to general feelings. It is the language that we feel but do not understand.

No other artists uses the anecdotal method more than John van Oers. Autobiographical events small and large are a recurrent cause for visual processing in his work. Drawn diary excerpts become a storyboard for sculptures that seem unpretentious and light as a feather. But what we see are not narrative stories or family chronicles; the motivations behind these works are cryptically hidden in extremely reduced forms that are executed in pure materials such as wood, metal, plaster or bronze. John Van Oers does not narrate, he suggests. Herein lies the magical transition from the strictly anecdotal to forms that we all feel but do not understand.

Text by Bert Danckaert



Triptych (Menhirs) 2015-2018. Courtesy the artist.

SIMON VERHEYLESONNE

Simon Verheylesonne (°1991) is a multi-disciplinary artist whose work delves into the exploration of iconicity within cultural and art-historical imagery, visually employing it as a semiotic device to convey his perspectives on themes such as mythical and factual, natural and the artificial, religious and ethnic motifs among others.

Infused with references to the arts, our collective past, and the artist's own memories, Verheylesonne's oeuvre can be perceived as a cohesive whole, wherein each project or individual piece interacts with and builds upon previous ones. Each series or work stands as an individuated entity that can be interpreted individually, yet their full significance often emerges within the context of the exhibition to which they belong.

The artist's body of work is characterized by a penchant for analyzing concepts surrounding cultural integration, context manipulation, freedom, historical/contemporary ideologies and our pursuit of it. Within this framework of intentions and relationships, certain meanings can only be revealed through a system that is based on—partly visually, partly intrinsically— semiotic understanding.



Zonder titel 2023. Courtesy the artist and Hopstreet Gallery, Brussels.

TINUS VERMEERSCH

Tinus Vermeersch always express the same shapes in his work, but in a different guise. Over the years, he has created his own world with several archetypes that transform constantly. While the world that he depict seems to be unrelated to reality, he often finds that reality has had more impact on his work than he realised at the moment.

The process of creating a work is ritualistic for him.

This interest in disused drawing and painting techniques, and by extension in everything that is lost or in danger of disappearing, partly betrays his romantic attitude. It is also a certain criticism of the obviousness of things around us and the corresponding indifference with which they are treated.

Works by Tinus Vermeersch (b.1976 in Kortrijk, Belgium) can be found in private collections as well as in the Flemish Parlement in Brussels; the National Bank of Belgium; the Belfius Collection, Belgium; MU.zee, Ostend, Belgium; Broel Museum, Kortrijk, Belgium; the Province of West Flanders, Belgium; the City of Harelbeke, Belgium; MUba in Tourcoing, France and The Francks-Suss Collection, (England).



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