

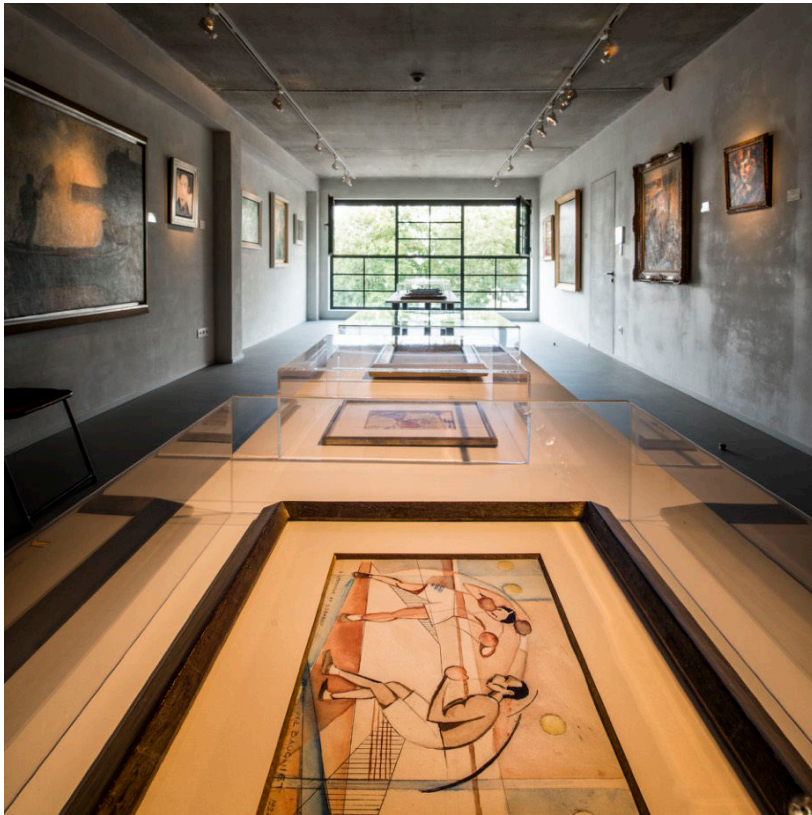


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Content Table

Introduction	5
Works on paper: James Ensor	6
Intermezzo: sculpture by Paul Troubetzkoy	14
Works on paper: Léon Spilliaert	17
Fauvism	28
A dear friend: Ernest Wynants	42
Artistic lovers: Marthe Guillain and Médard Maertens	54
Expressionism	65
Bauhaus master: Paul Klee	93
Congo	94
Lyrical abstraction	100
Abstract expressionism	101
European abstraction lyrique	105
Where it comes together: Paul Jenkins	107
Geometric abstraction	109
Intermezzo: sculpture by Jean-Michel Folon	120
Contemporary	122

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Introduction

Fine art since the 1860s can be divided into two main categories. Paintings from the 1860s to the 1970s can be seen as modern art. Partly overlapping, contemporary art covers the periods 1940s until today. Traditionally, our sales catalog covers mainly modern paintings, with a few references to the contemporary art scene. It is not different this time. Only in terms of quality, we try to take it a step further each time.

"Stay hungry. Stay foolish." – Steve Jobs

It is our mission to give the viewer a comprehensive view of the fine art scene. A seasoned art lover might have a preference for a certain painter or art movement. But by presenting a wide body of art movements, we force the spectator to perceive the paintings with an open view and continue to train the eye. The paintings will be presented at BRAFA 2025 in a refined setting at Brussels Expo.

Works on paper: James Ensor

In the first section of this catalog, we begin at the origins of the modern art scene. Modern art roughly started at the end of the 19th century, and it was around this time that James Ensor was born in the seaside town of Ostend. Another reason why Ensor is the perfect introduction to modern art is that his work does not fit into one specific art movement. In fact, his work is considered a foundation for many different art movements. Modern art was a period of experimentation with various visual elements, such as line, shape, color, and light, which were combined in new ways, often disregarding reality. Ensor was one of the pioneers of this process, and not surprisingly, he is widely recognised as the most important innovator of modern art in Belgium.

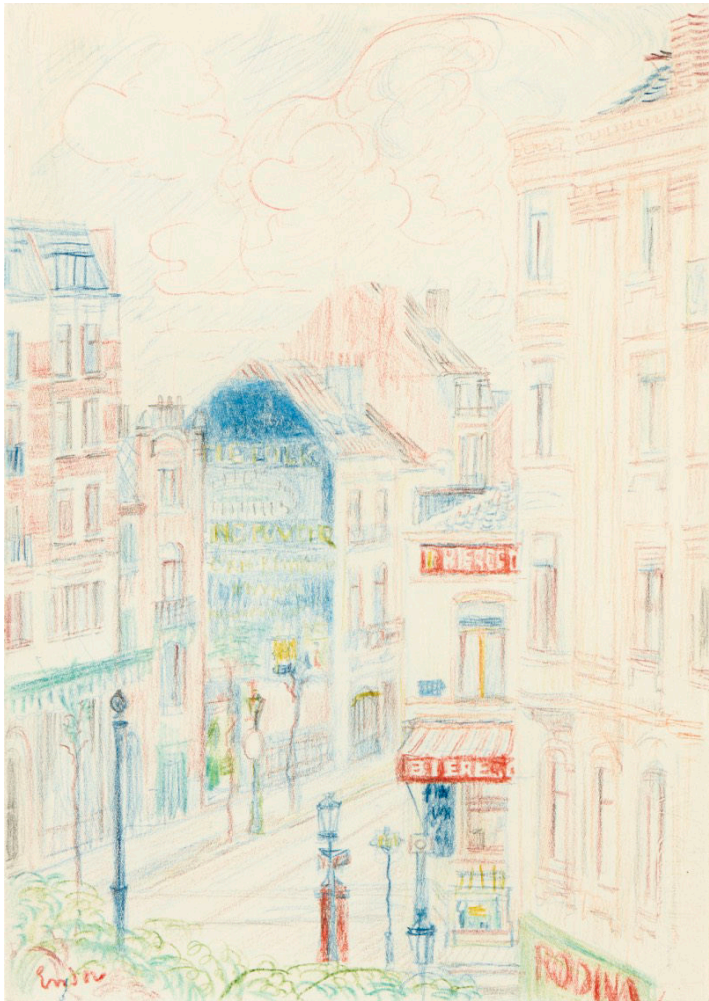
Just as Ensor's painting style incorporates elements from different art movements, the subjects of his paintings represent a wide range of themes. He draws inspiration from the Bible, literature, history, ballet, commedia dell'arte, ... Additionally, he incorporates elements from his own life into his work (such as the souvenir shop of his parents and his appointment as Baron). And he doesn't just express this information and inspiration on canvas. He also does so as a writer, composer, and graphic artist. This makes Ensor's work a goldmine, and this is precisely what makes Ensor and his art so intriguing.

One of the recurring themes in Ensor's work is humor. The people in his paintings are often depicted with cartoonish features, such as puffed-up lips, red noses, terrifying eyes, and high hats. The various characters are portrayed in comical situations, but also in crowded scenes often revolving around a larger event (see works below). Through these, he mocks certain social classes of his time.

In these types of scenes, we also often see a skeleton and, of course, the most iconic feature, masks. These masks originated from the souvenir shop of Ensor's parents. This distinctive feature in his paintings strengthened his international reputation. For example, it earned him the nickname "peintre des masques" in Germany. German painter Paul Klee, who is featured in this catalog on page 92, was strongly inspired by the Ostend master.



James Ensor (1860–1949)
Two figures, "signé par moi James Ensor à Ostende" annotated at the back; Geschenk ter gelegenheid van hun huwelijk
drawing on paper, 23 x 17 cm
Provenance: private collection Belgium



James Ensor (1860-1949)

Avenue de la Chasse, Bruxelles, to be dated c1938

watercolour, coloured pencils on paper, 20 x 14 cm

Literature: Haesaerts nr 86 , Prov; Coll. Augusta Boogaerts;

Provenance: private collection Belgium



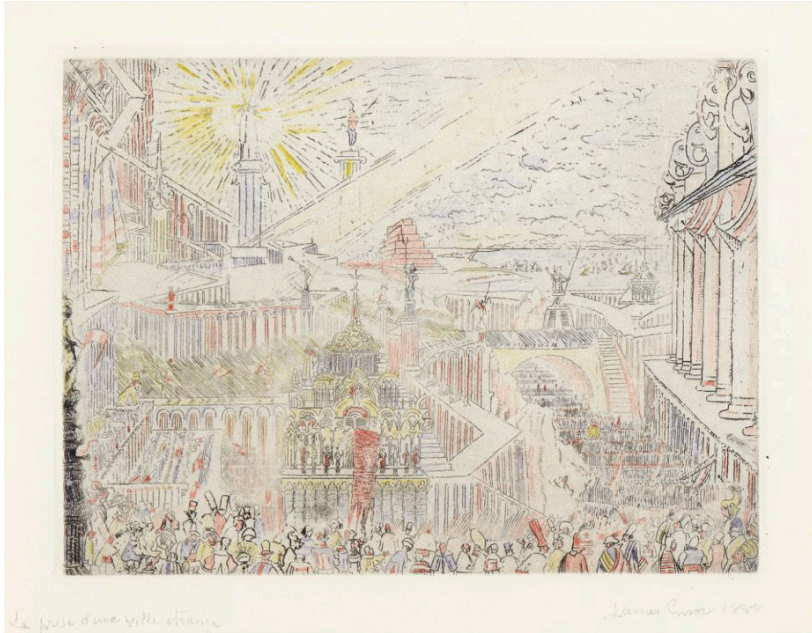
James Ensor (1860-1949)

Le christ insulté, dated 1886

etching watercoloured, 23 x 15.5 cm

Notes: Tavernier 1

Provenance: private collection Antwerp



James Ensor (1860-1949)

La prise d'une ville étrange, dated 1888

etching watercoloured, 29 x 34 cm

Notes: Elesh 33

Provenance: private collection Antwerp



James Ensor (1860-1949)

Jardin d'Armor, dated 1888

etching watercoloured, 11.7 x 8 cm

Notes: Tavernier 61

Provenance: private collection Antwerp



James Ensor (1860–1949)
La vengeance d'Hop-Frog, dated 1898
etching, 35 x 24 cm
Notes: Tavernier 112
Provenance: private collection Antwerp



James Ensor (1860–1949)
Les vieux polissons, dated 1895
etching watercoloured, 9.6 x 13.6 cm
Notes: Tavernier 101
Provenance: private collection Antwerp

Intermezzo: sculpture by Paul Troubetzkoy

To conclude this section on James Ensor, we include a sculpture by Paul Troubetzkoy. Troubetzkoy was an Italian artist of Russian descent. Now, you might wonder: what does Troubetzkoy have to do with James Ensor? Well, before we answer that, take a moment to examine the sculpture.

Does it remind you of anyone? If not, don't worry—a fair bit of imagination is required. The sculpture bears a slight resemblance to James Ensor!

If we delve deeper into the sculpture, it's worth exploring Troubetzkoy's Russian heritage. Paul Troubetzkoy (1866–1938) was the son of a Russian diplomat and created several sculptures of Russian figures. The sculpture featured here, depicts the Russian prince Vladimir Galitzine. To place Troubetzkoy and this work in its historical context, it's important to note that the Russian Empire (1721–1917) was still in existence at the time, with the tsar serving as its absolute monarch. One of the iconic features associated with the tsar is the prominent moustache, which is also present in this sculpture. The moustache obviously inspired the citizens of Russia and became a symbol during that era. However, it's worth noting that moustaches were generally in vogue at the time—a topic best left to fashion historians. For now, let's refocus on the art!

Beyond the resemblance to Ensor, there are other connections between Troubetzkoy and Ensor. Both lived during the same period, and while Ensor was a pioneer of impressionism in painting, Troubetzkoy represented impressionist ideas in sculpture. Troubetzkoy drew great inspiration from artists such as Auguste Rodin and Medardo Rosso. Throughout his career, he worked in Italy, Russia, France, England, and the United States, earning international recognition. One of his most famous works is the monumental equestrian statue of Tsar Alexander III in St. Petersburg.

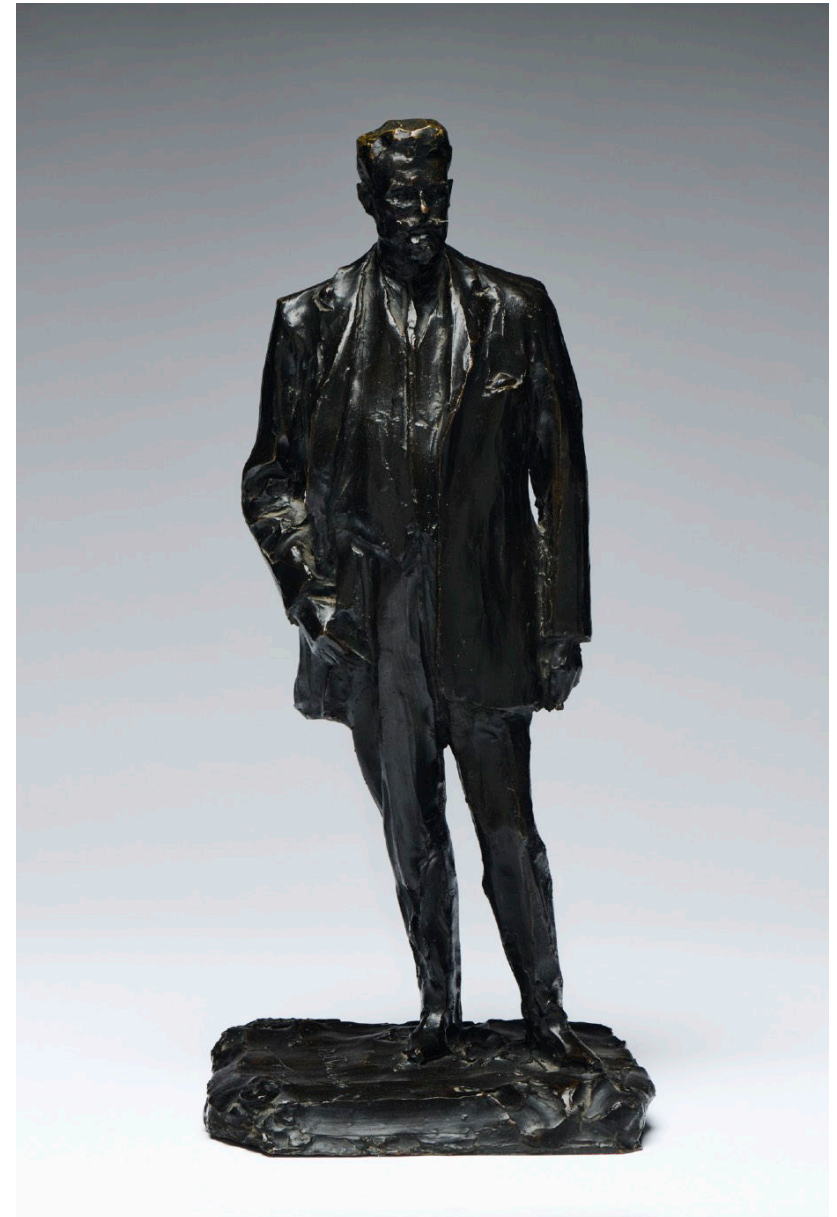
Paul Troubetzkoy (1866–1938)

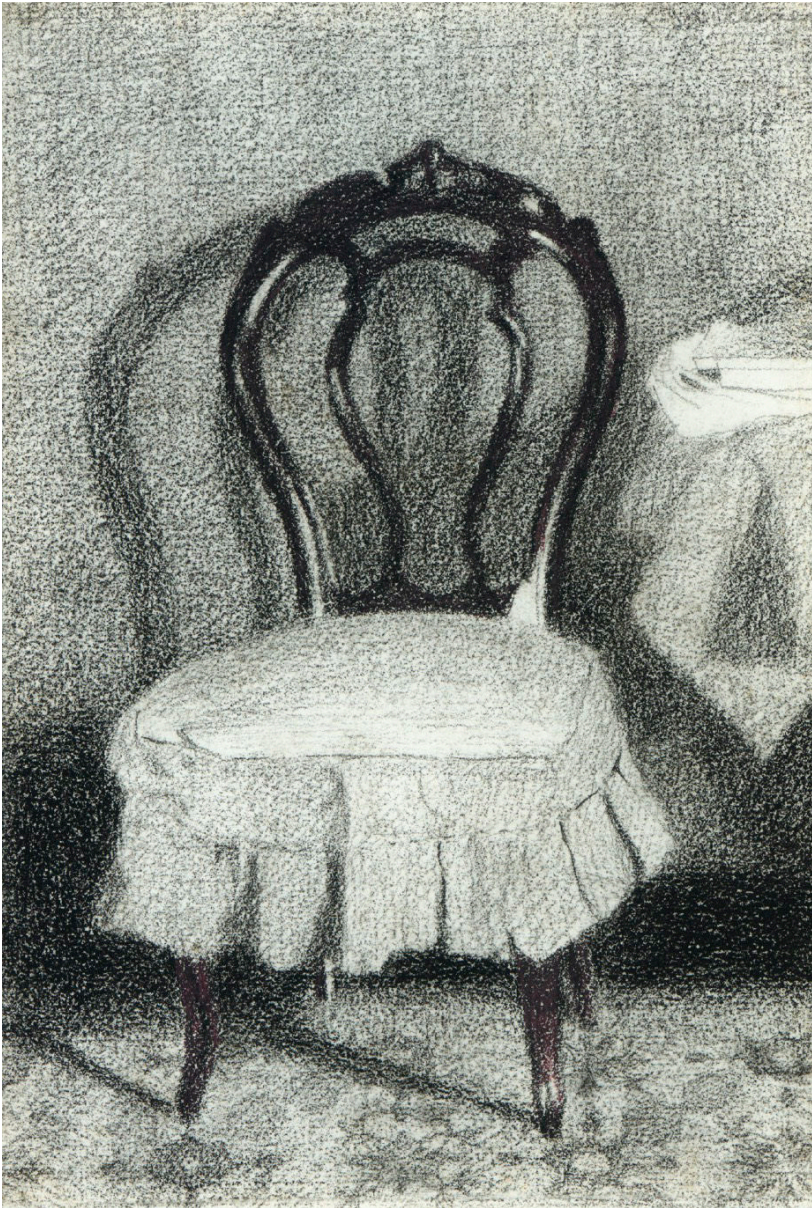
Prince Galitzine, dated 1911

bronze, 53 cm

Provenance: Collection Jef Van Hoof; private collection Antwerp

Literature: Paolo Troubetzkoy Museo del Paesaggio, Palazzo Viani Dugnani, Verbania 2017, p. 235 nr 198; Paolo Troubetzkoy Museo del Paesaggio, Palazzo Viani Dugnani, Verbania 1990, p.271





Works on paper: Léon Spilliaert

Born in 1881 in Ostend, Léon Spilliaert spent most of his life in this seaside town, aside from a few brief trips. His loyalty to his hometown symbolises his withdrawn lifestyle, an introspective nature reflected in the somber tone of his works. While paintings are conventionally the most sought-after pieces from artists, Spilliaert is an exception. He primarily created works on paper, which are unanimously considered his top works. By working on paper, he could experiment with mixed media such as India ink, capturing a uniquely mysterious and melancholic atmosphere unmatched by others.

Léon Spilliaert (1881-1946)

La Chaise, to be dated 1909/1910

pencil, colour pencil on paper, 25 x 17 cm

Notes: Adriaens-Pannier

Provenance: private collection Belgium



In a later period, Léon Spilliaert created a series of works depicting the trees of the High Fens (Hoge Venen) in East Belgium. The painting on your left originates from this period, and the style is reminiscent of his contemporary, Valerius De Saedeleer. Spilliaert typically painted bare trees in black, often set against a winter landscape. In the painting on the left, the forms seem more like clouds, but the white color once again enhances the contrast between the trees and the background. Another element that frequently recurs throughout his career is the religious theme, as seen in the foreground of this work.

Léon Spilliaert (1881–1946)

Vrede, dated 1929

gouache on paper, 55 x 76 cm

Notes: Adriaens-Pannier

Provenance: private collection Belgium



As *The Scream* by Edvard Munch is one of the most famous paintings in the world, it is likely that a seasoned art lover would immediately recognise the reference in the painting on the left. Indeed, Léon Spilliaert was heavily influenced by Edvard Munch, and similar figures frequently appear in his works. Edvard Munch described the inspiration behind *The Scream* as follows:

"I was walking along the road with two friends – the sun was setting – suddenly the sky turned blood red – I paused, feeling exhausted, and leaned on the fence – there was blood and tongues of fire above the blue-black fjord and the city – my friends walked on, and I stood there trembling with anxiety – and I sensed an infinite scream passing through nature."

While Munch expressed what he felt, he did not explicitly state who or what the figure in his painting represents. If left to interpretation, we might say the ghostly figure in *The Scream* either embodies the overwhelming emotion Munch experienced on his walk or depicts an actual person screaming.

In contrast, there is less ambiguity about the figure in "*Sirène*" by Spilliaert (the painting on your left). To put it bluntly, the man in the paintings is being grabbed by his manhood by a siren. Sirens are the mythological figures who lure many poor humans into the depths of the sea and its deadly abysses. So, although Spilliaert is often associated with dark and somber scenes, he also shows a special form of humor in this painting.

Léon Spilliaert (1881–1946)

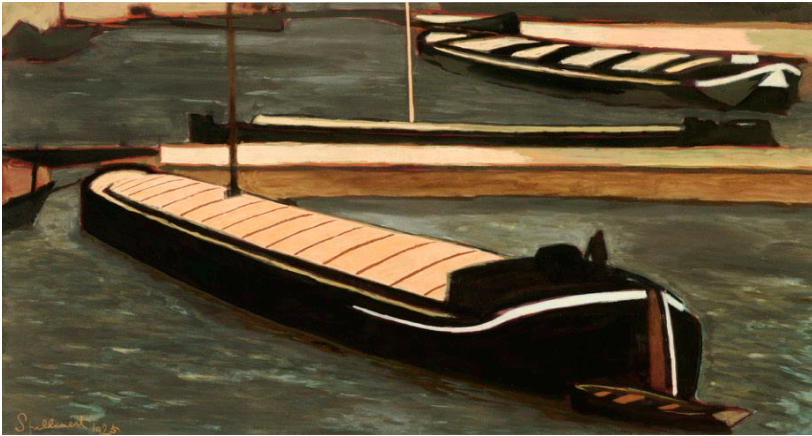
Sirène, dated 1904

mixed media on paper, 26 x 17.5 cm

Notes: Adriaens-Pannier

Provenance: private collection Belgium

Exhibited: Hybriden, De Warande, Turnhout, 2023/2024



Léon Spilliaert (1881-1946)

Le Port, dated 1925

gouache on paper, 47 x 88 cm

Notes: Adriaens-Pannier

Exhibited:

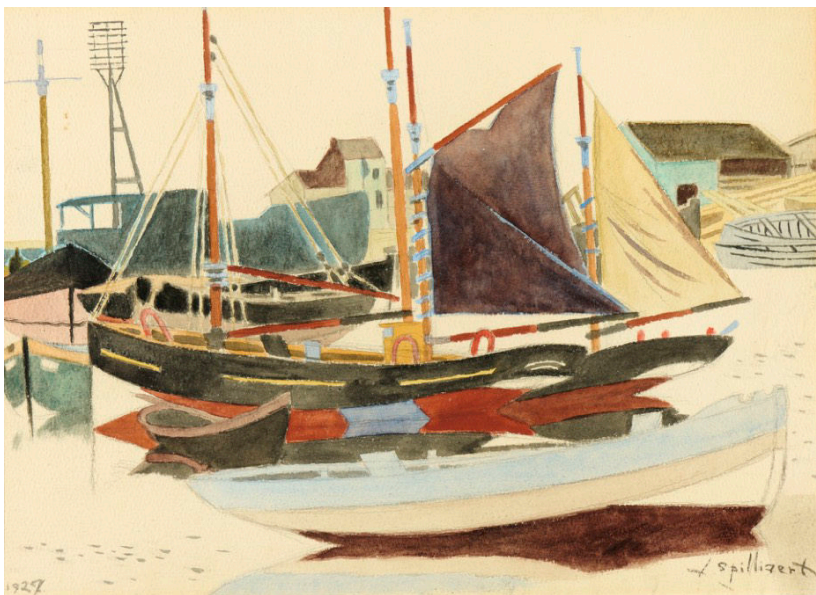
Paris, Art Moderne Flamand de Ensor A Permeke, 1980;

Gent, Moderne Vlaamse Schilderkunst, 1980, Kredietbank, cat. nr.30;

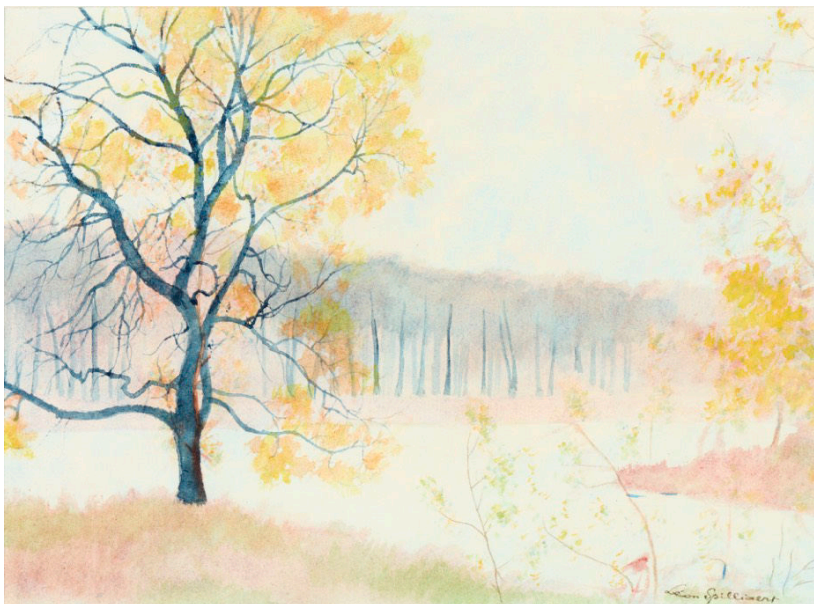
Brussels, Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Léon Spilliaert, 1982

Provenance:

Private collection Belgium



Léon Spilliaert (1881-1946)
Marine, dated 1927
watercolour on paper, 34 x 47 cm
Notes: Adriaens-Pannier



Léon Spilliaert (1881-1946)
Paysage, dated 1931
watercolour on paper, 31 x 42 cm
Notes: Adriaens-Pannier

Fauvism

At the beginning of the 20th century, the art world was still recovering from impressionism when the first counterreaction emerged with fauvism. Although the impressionist style already featured looser lines and more vibrant colours, the fauvists took it a step further. Using bold and wild brushstrokes, it was the color blocks themselves that defined the shape and outline of the objects.

The fauvist art movement got its origin in France, with for example Paul Gauguin as one of the precursors. In Belgium, the Brabant fauvists adopted a similar painting style, but literature says their contrasts between the different color blocks were less pronounced. Ferdinand Schirren was one of the first to experiment with the fauvist style using watercolour on paper. He had a brief affair with Nel Duerinckx. However, this was short-lived, and Nel went on to become the muse of another famous fauvist, Rik Wouters. Several artworks in this catalog demonstrate Nel being a model for Rik Wouters.



Rik Wouters (1882-1916)

Figures in park

pastel on paper, 19 x 28 cm

Provenance: private collection Brussels



Rik Wouters (1882-1916)
Le braconnier, dated 1913
drawing black ink on paper, 48 x 64 cm
Provenance: private collection Antwerp



Rik Wouters (1882-1916)
Koeien in het landschap
drawing on paper, 36 x 54 cm
Provenance: private collection Antwerp



Rik Wouters (1882-1916)
La toilette
drawing on paper, 46 x 35 cm
Provenance: private collection Antwerp

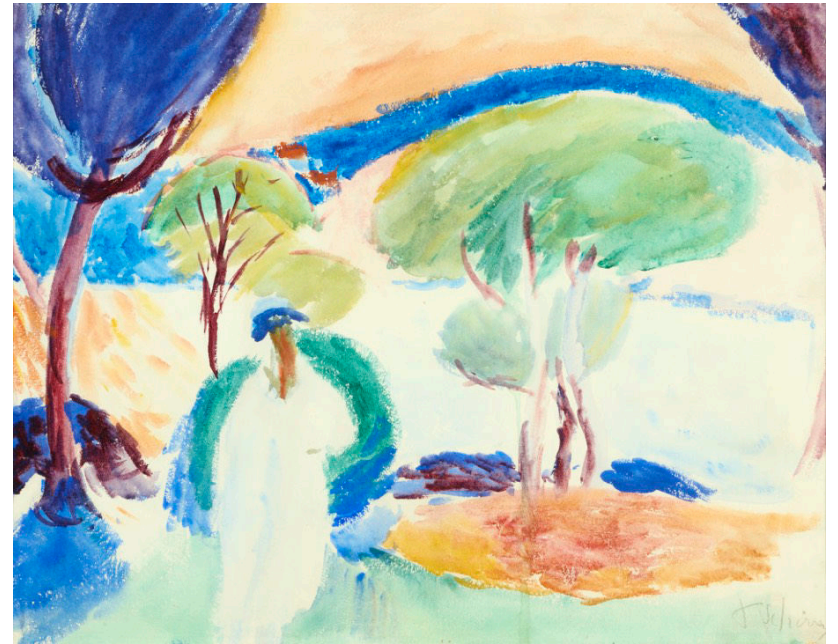


Rik Wouters (1882-1916)
Attitude repassage
drawing on paper, 41 x 32 cm
Provenance: private collection Antwerp

Ferdinand Schirren (1872-1944)
Landschap
watercolour on paper, 50 x 60 cm
Provenance: private collection Belgium



Ferdinand Schirren (1872-1944)
Dame in landschap
watercolour on paper, 42 x 55 cm
Provenance: private collection Brussels



Rik Wouters (1882-1916)

Vrouw aan venster, Bosvoorde, dated 1912
oil on paper, 30 x 44 cm

Provenance:

Galerie Georges Giroux Bruxelles; John Convent, Bruxelles; Gustave Van Geluwe, Bruxelles, inv. 151; Albert Van Geluwe, Bruxelles; Mme Madeleine Van Geluwe, Bruxelles; private collection Antwerp

Exhibited:

Bruxelles, Galerie Georges Giroux, Rik Wouters, 1922, nr 250;
Bruxelles, Palais des Beaux-Arts, Rik Wouters, 1935, nr 66;
Antwerpen, Galerie Breckpot, Rik Wouters, 1944, nr46;
Tilburg, Paleis- Raadhuis, Rik Wouters, 1953, nr 31;
Antwerpen, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, L'Art Contemporain, salon 1955, nr 249;
Antwerpen, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Collection G.Van Geluwe, 1956, nr 109;
Brugge, Groeningemuseum, Hedendaagse Vlaamse meesters uit de verzameling G.Van Geluwe, 1957, nr 36;
Antwerpen, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Rik Wouters, 1957, nr 45;
Léopoldville, Grandes figures de la peinture belge du demi-siècle, 1958, nr 5;
Stanleyville, Grandes figures de la peinture belge du demi-siècle, 1958, nr 5;
Bukavu, Grandes figures de la peinture belge du demi-siècle, 1958, nr 5;
Elisabethville, Grandes figures de la peinture belge du demi-siècle, 1958, nr 5;
Bruxelles, Palais Provincial du Brabant, Rik wouters, 1992, nr 106

Literature:

Inventaris Nel Wouters; Inventaris Roger Avermaete p.211; Rik Wouters, De schilderijen, Olivier Bertrand, Petraco-Pandora, 1995, nr 79



In his short life, Rik Wouters did not have much luck. Because he died so young, he never truly had the chance to enjoy the financial rewards of his talent. For much of his life, Rik Wouters lived in poverty. This is perhaps reflected in his work, as the subjects are often everyday scenes, yet they are greatly enriched by featuring Nel as the central figure. Nel was not particularly artistic herself, but she was Rik Wouters' number one supporter. On the one hand, she supported him as a model, and on the other, many works show Nel taking on various household tasks. Most of these scenes were created during the time they rented a small house in Bosvoorde. Surrounded by the Sonian Forest, with light streaming through the windows, this was one of Wouters' most productive periods.

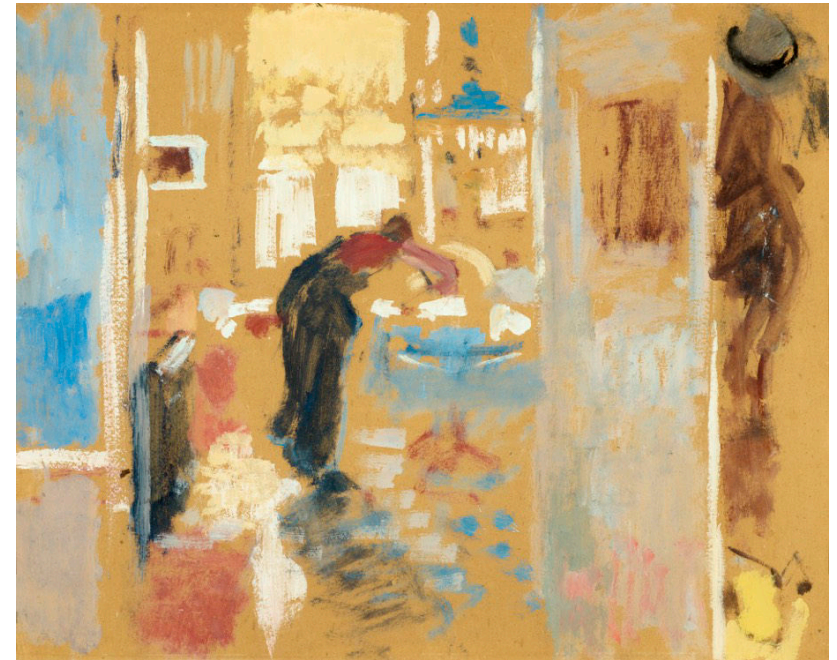
Rik Wouters (1882-1916)

De Strijkster, Bosvoorde, dated 1907

oil on board, 39 x 49 cm

Provenance: François Franck, Antwerpen; private collection Antwerp

Literature: Inventaris Nel Wouters; Inventaris Roger Avermaete; Rik Wouters, De schilderijen, Olivier Bertrand, Petraco-Pandora, 1995, nr 23



A dear friend: Ernest Wynants

Rik Wouters was born and raised in Mechelen. As the son of a sculptor and furniture maker, Wouters quickly realised that sculpting was in his blood. He decided to develop this talent further at the local Academy of Fine Arts in Mechelen, where he enrolled in 1897. It was there that he met a lifelong friend, Ernest Wynants. Together, they were pupils under Theo Blickx. Indicative of their friendship, was a portrait of Wynants, created in Wouters' home in Bosvoorde in 1912. Where Wouters eventually shifted his focus to painting and became Belgium's most important fauvist, Wynants remained dedicated to sculpting. Above all, he adorned his hometown of Mechelen with an extensive collection of sculptures. This catalog also features a sculpture by Ernest on page 45.

Rik Wouters (1882–1916)

Portret van Ernest Wynants, Bosvoorde, dated 1912
oil on canvas, 63 x 74 cm

Provenance:

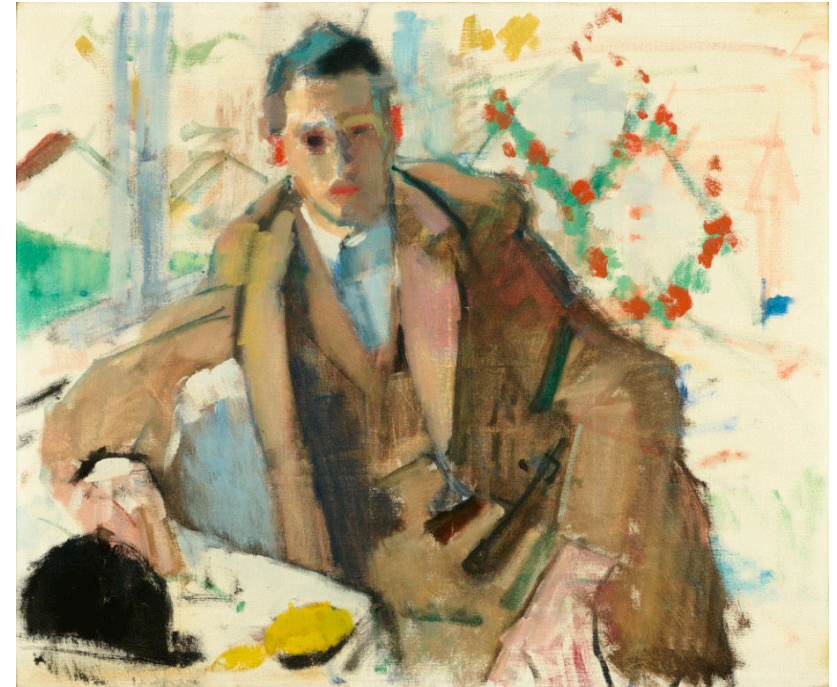
Nel Wouters; Gustave Van Geluwe, Bruxelles; Roland Leten, Gent; private collection Antwerp

Exhibited:

Bruxelles, Palais des Beaux-Arts, Rik Wouters, 1935, nr 63;
Antwerpen, Galerie Breckpot, Rik Wouters, 1944, nr 44;
Antwerpen, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Rik Wouters, 1957, nr 64;
Amersfoort, De Zonnehof, Rik Wouters, 1961, nr 33

Literature:

Nel Wouters, La vie de Rik Wouters à travers son oeuvre, Lumière, Bruxelles, 1944, p.47, 65;
Avermaete R., Rik Wouters, L'Arcade, Bruxelles, 1962, p.142; Inventaris Nel wouters 47/75;
Inventaris Roger Avermaete, p. 208; Rik Wouters, De schilderijen, Olivier Bertrand, Petraco-Pandora, 1995, nr 114



Ernest Wynants (1878–1964)

Bacchante, dated 1928

Afrikaans hout, 168 x 52.5 x 39 cm

Provenance:

Collection Dr. G. Vydts, Sint-Niklaas;
private collection Mechelen

Exhibited:

Brussel Galerie Georges Giroux 1928 nr 34;

Brussel, Pour l'Art 1930 nr 210;

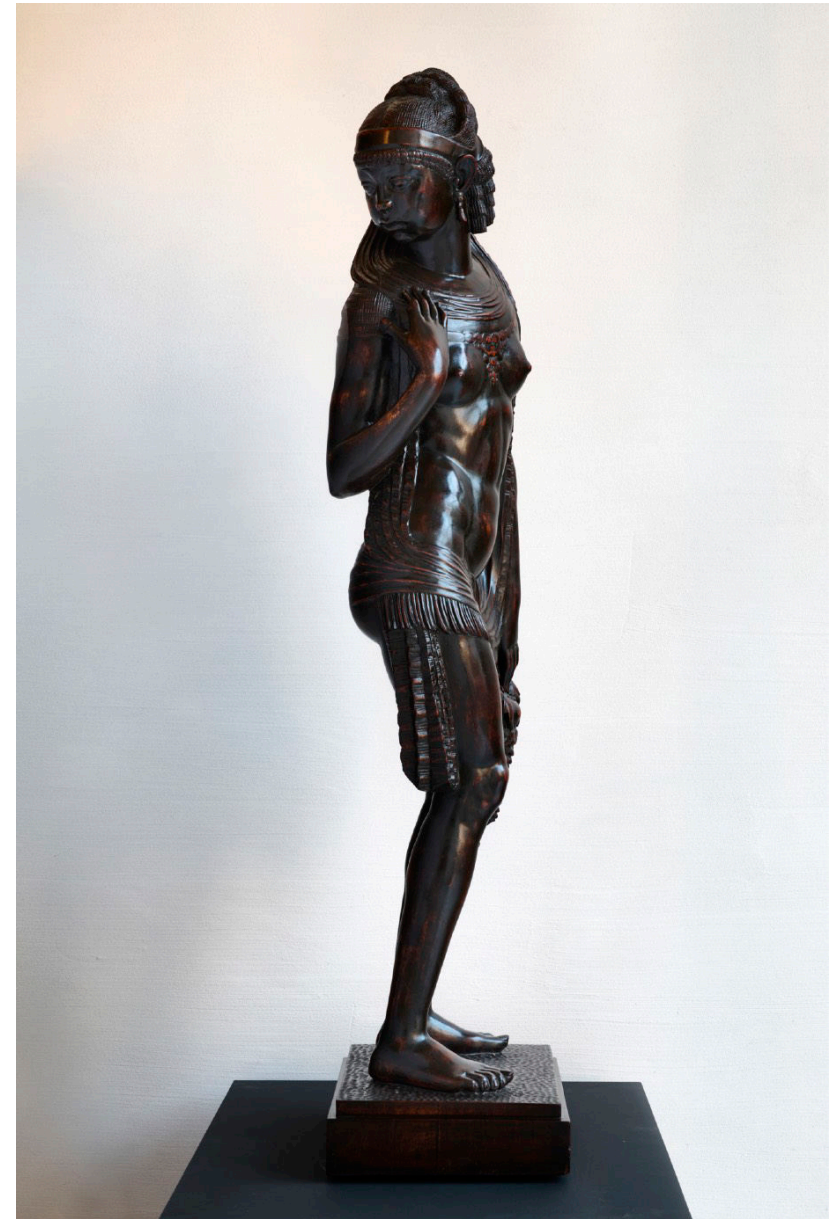
Nieuwpoort, De Belgische beeldhouwkunst 1961, nr 33;

Mechelen, Retrospectieve Ernest Wynants, Cultureel Centrum 1964;

Bergen, Nervi, Musée des Beaux-Arts 1972, nr 164

Literature:

Catalogus Van De Beeldhouwkunst, Koninklijke Musea voor Schone Kunsten van België, inv
4902



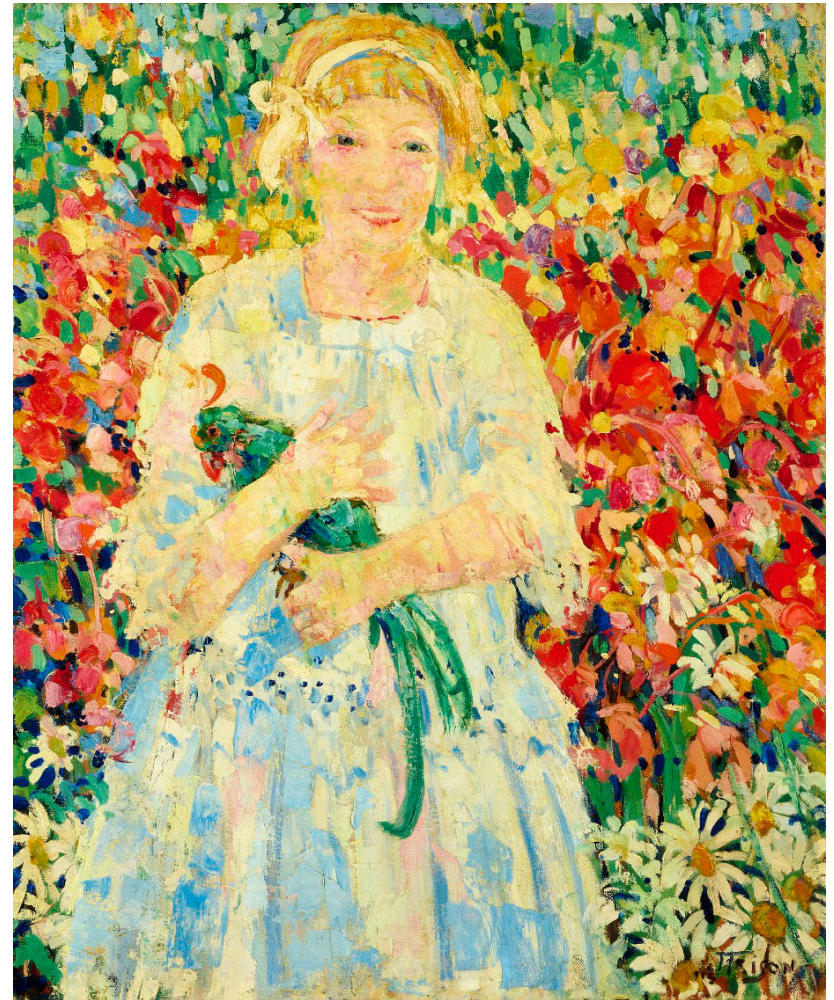
Georges Lemmen (1865–1916)
Fruit, dated 1916
oil on board, 35 x 45 cm
Provenance: private collection Brussels



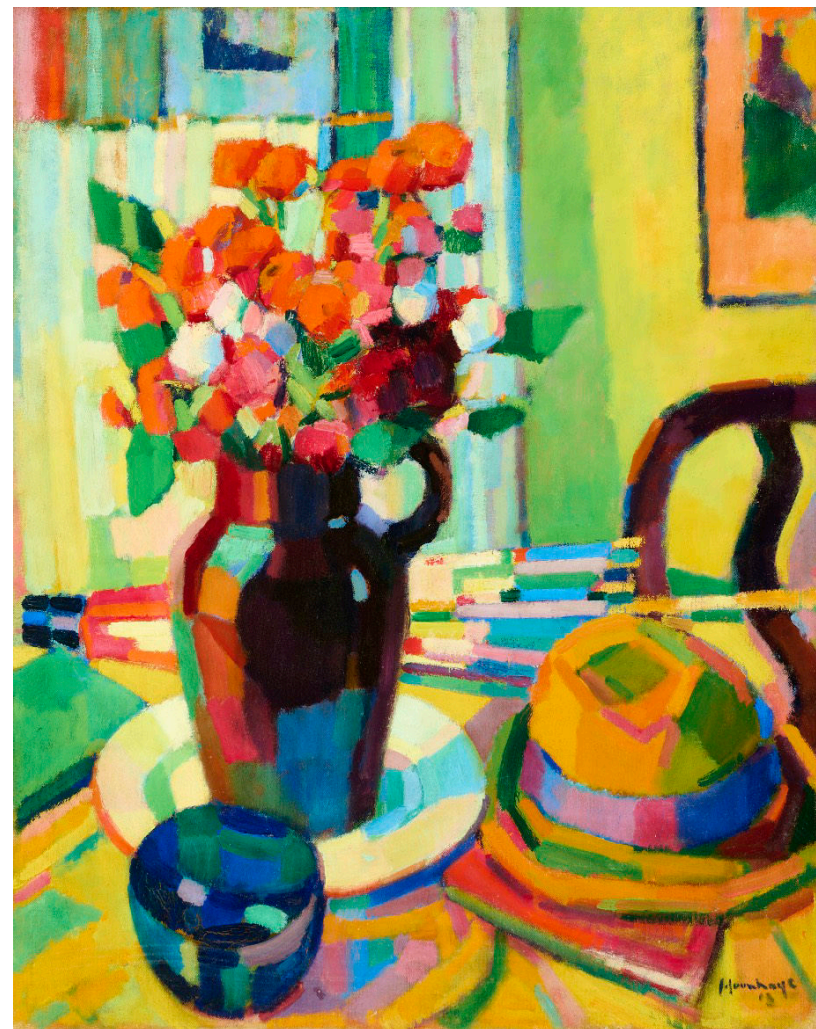
Willem Paerels (1878-1962)
Le Port, to be dated 1914/1916
oil on canvas, 74 x 71 cm



Jehan Frison (1882-1961)
Woman in garden of flowers, dated 1918
oil on canvas, 80 x 65 cm
Exhibited: Mark Colle, Cross Pollination, Antwerp, 2024



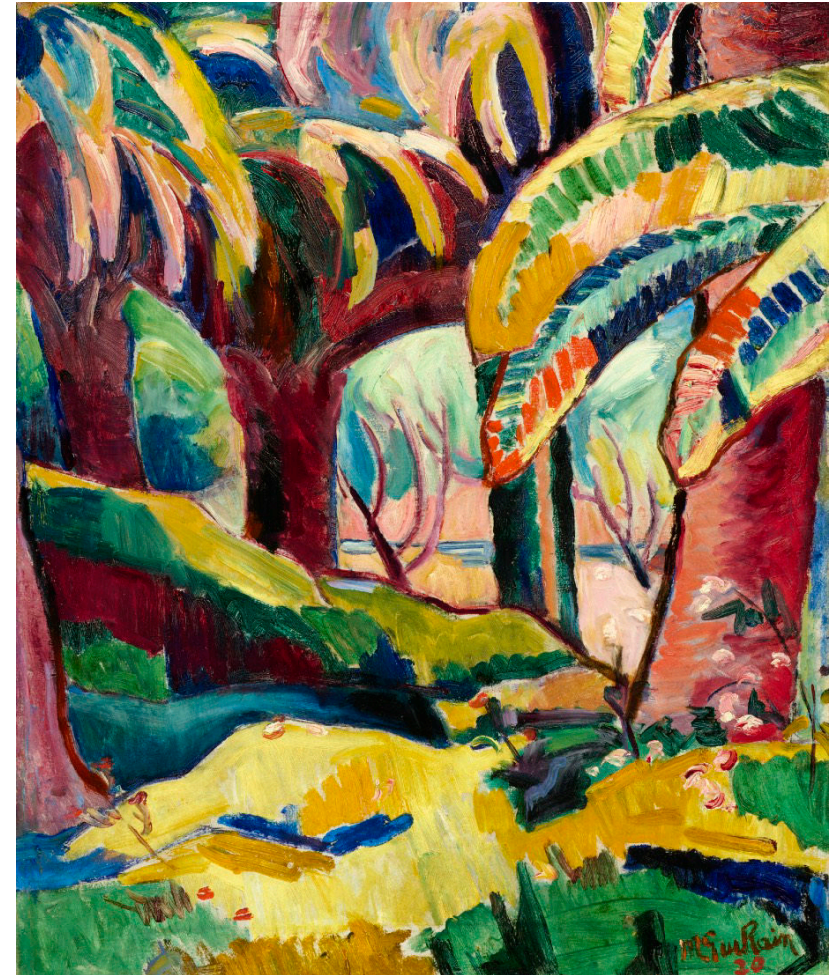
Charles Counhaye (1884-1971)
Flowers, dated 1913
oil on canvas, 80 x 65 cm
Exhibited: Mark Colle Cross Pollination, Antwerp, 2024



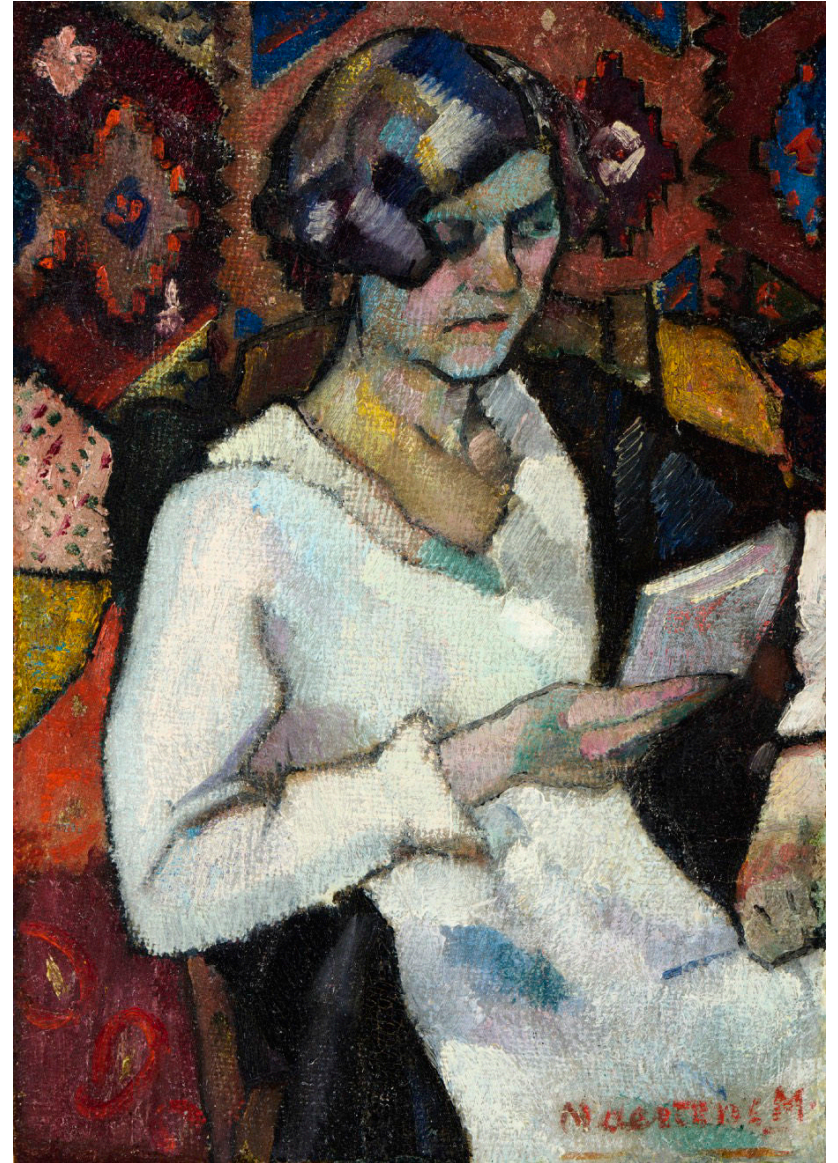
Artistic lovers: Marthe Guillain and Médard Maertens

Rik Wouters was not the only fauvist who painted his partner. Médard Maertens also created several portraits of his wife, Marthe Guillain (see page 57), who was an accomplished painter herself. The two met at the front in 1917, where Marthe was working as a nurse. To escape the horrors of the war, they found comfort in their shared passion for painting. Médard was one of the so-called "Frontschilders", tasked with capturing the scenes during the war on canvas. Where Nel showed unconditional love for Rik Wouters until the end of her life, the story between Maertens and Guillain had a less happy ending. They divorced in 1935.

Marthe Guillain (1890–1974)
Jardin exotique, dated 1920
oil on canvas, 72 x 60 cm



Médard Maertens (1875-1946)
Portret van zijn vrouw Marthe Guillain
oil on canvas laid down on board, 46 x 32 cm



Marthe Guillain (1890-1974)
Kinderportret
oil on canvas laid down on board, 35 x 25 cm



As previously mentioned, fauvism originated in France. Where it was the Brabant Fauves who dominated the movement in Belgium, it was more exhibitions than groups representing fauvism in France. For example, the *Salon des Indépendants* in 1906 was the first time all the Fauves exhibited together. The fact that Herbin's works were also part of this exhibition indicates he was one of the first to experiment within Fauvism. He found himself in remarkable company, alongside Henri Matisse, Paul Signac, ... The work on your right, dating from 1906, is also from this period. This makes it a unique and historical masterpiece, as it was created during the height of the short-lived Fauvist art movement (1905–1908).

Great artists do not adapt to trends; they set the trends themselves. Auguste Herbin was one of them, constantly evolving as a painter. Well before the peak of fauvism was truly over, he already began experimenting with Cubism. He did this alongside his good friend Pablo Picasso, as seen in a picture from 1911. In 1912, he participated in the exhibition *La Section d'Or*, where his work was displayed alongside renowned names such as Léger, Gris, Delaunay, Metzinger, ... Later, Herbin incorporated even more geometric forms into his paintings and that eventually led him to co-found the group *Abstraction-Création*.

Auguste Herbin (1882–1960)

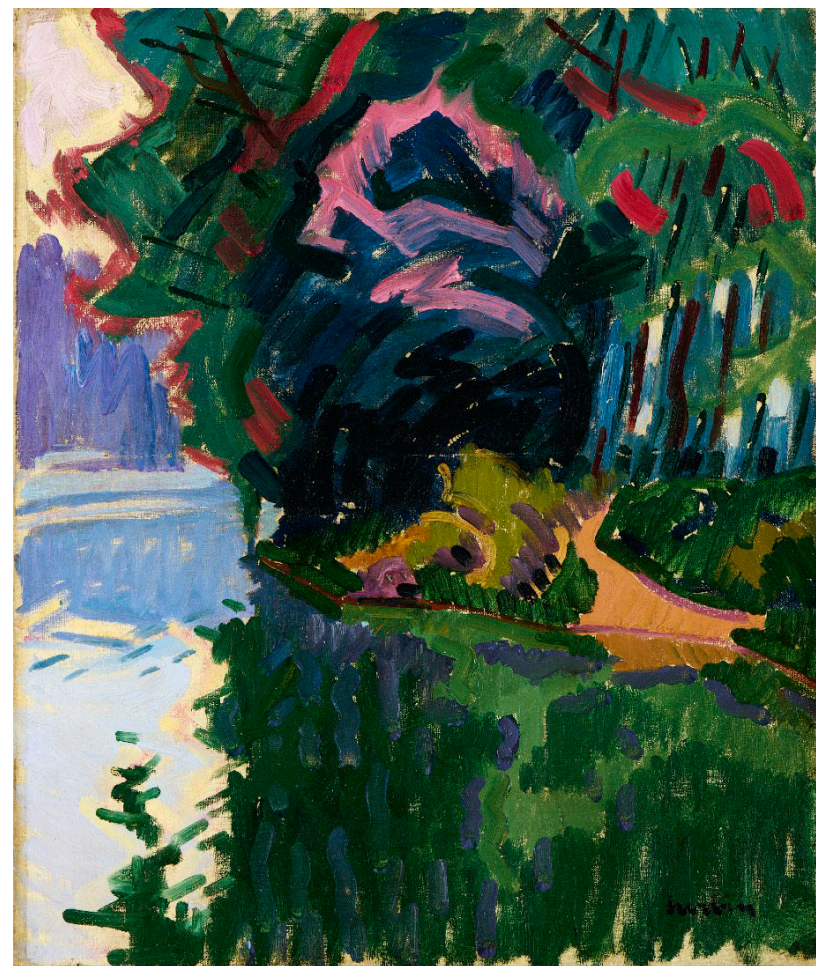
Bord de rivière, dated 1906

oil on canvas, 55 x 46 cm

Notes at the back: Stamp of canvas dealer Lucien Lefèvre-Foinet; Label of sale nr 79 Bellier et Schoeller, 28.10.48

Provenance: Sale Bellier et Schoeller 28.10.1948; Private collection Paris

With certificate of Mr Laurent Claisse.



Henri Ottman (1877-1927)
Musique de Chambre, dated 1920
oil on canvas, 138 x 178 cm
Provenance: Pucci, Brussels; Private collection France





Paul Schmitz (1910–1974)

Hiver

oil on board, 82 x 72 cm

Provenance: private collection Liège

Literature: Paul Schmitz Editions La Dérive, nr 95

Expressionism

A subsequent art movement in the history of Modern Art is the expressionist movement and this one covered an extended period. As a result, many artists came and went over time and an extensive body of work was made during this period. Perhaps it was also the very nature of the style itself that contributed to the extended duration of the period. Because expressionism was a way for the artists to express their feelings and experiences on canvas. Naturally, this approach resulted in a lot of different painting styles.

Nevertheless, certain groups had a dominant influence on the rest. For instance, there was the Second School of Latem, also known as the Flemish Expressionists. Although, as mentioned in the previous paragraph, there were few rules governing expressionist painting, you can observe some common characteristics in the works of the Flemish Expressionists. The paintings often depict figures that are delineated with clear lines. In terms of color palette, a very striking pattern emerges. Earthy and somber colours are predominantly used, emphasising authenticity. These characteristics are also evident in a masterpiece by Gustave Van de Woestyne on page 66, as well as in the work on your left, by Paul Schmitz.



Gustave Van de Woestyne (1881-1947)

Adrienne De Zutter au violon, dated 1920

oil on canvas, 208 x 110 cm

Signed bottom left

Dedicated 'To Adrienne De Zutter', signed with the artist's initials and dated on the back

Provenance:

Collection of the model, Adrienne De Zutter (1905-1989), future Mrs. Paul Van de Woestyne (1905-1963), himself the son of the writer Karel Van de Woestyne (1878-1929) and nephew of the painter;

Private collection, Europe (by descent to the current owners, grandchildren of the model and great-grandnephews of the painter)

Literature:

Kultureel Centrum Mechelen, Gustave Van de Woestyne, 1881-1947, 1967;

Museum Voor Schone Kunsten, Ghent, Gustave Van de Woestyne, 2010, n° 78

"Adrienne De Zutter au violon" is a masterclass by the Belgian painter Gustave Van de Woestyne (1881–1947). Van de Woestyne was a prominent member of the first group of the 'School of Latem', and this portrait is a beautiful example of his very distinctive and own personal style. On a first and quick look, we see a majestic lady, gracefully rising above the landscape, painted in peaceful duff colouring. She has a violin in her hand and is modestly dressed. The fairytale landscape is composed of two trees with fine silhouettes, perhaps umbrella pines, rising from valleys.

Upon closer investigation, there are a few interesting references in this work. For example, in the foreground in the bottom right, you can see a rose. This is a reference to the story of "The Little Prince and his rose" by Antoine de Saint Exupéry. Another remarkable reference is the upper part of the sky. You can see a blue gloom at the top and this is an honouring to the Japanese artist Ando Hiroshige. He also painted landscapes and typically added such a dark coloured gloom at the top of his paintings.

To analyse the technique of the painting, we need to go back to Van de Woestyne's youth. In 1902, a young Gustave went to an exhibition for the first time, one of the Flemish

Primitives, like Jan van Eyck and Pieter Bruegel. It would leave an eternal mark on him. Gustave uses the same sharp outline for the figures, resulting in a sober and symbolic representation of the model.

Secondly, to explain the color palette, we take a little step in Gustave's life. At the time of the execution of the painting, Gustave had huge admiration for the French artist Douanier Rousseau. He also had that primitive factor in his paintings, just like the work by Van de Woestyne. However, the actual inspiration for the colouring lies in Italy. In 1913, he toured Florence and Tuscany with Valerius De Saedeleer. The many fresco's and mural paintings have a typical softer and lighter use of colours. So, we can say that, regarding colouring he leaned more to the works of the Italian masters.

Until now, we have discussed the painting style and everything surrounding the lady. But who is the lady Adrienne De Zutter? Well, at the outbreak of the First World War, the Van de Woestyne's fled the

country, and only returned after the war, in 1919. Around that time, Van de Woestyne settled with his family in the Rozenhuis (or House of Roses) in Waregem, belonging to art lovers and philanthropists Charles De Zutter and his wife Marguerite Taelman. It was there that Van de Woestyne made a portrait of their daughter Adrienne De Zutter.

The ties between the De Zutter and Van de Woestyne families predate the Great War. The couple played a role as patrons for the artist, as is evident from the booklet of the 'Van de Woestyne retrospective' in Brussels (Palais des Beaux-Arts, 1929). In a letter that Van de Woestyne addressed to Marguerite Taelman, on February 5, 1929, he encouraged her to let him lend the portraits he made of their family. Because she initially refused, he stated the following: "Without your paintings, it doesn't make sense to show those of other collections because, as you know as well as I do, yours are the best." It is therefore very likely that the portrait of Adrienne was commissioned by the De Zutters. At the same time, seen the clear admiration by Van de Woestyne, it is also possible to imagine that Gustave was simply touched by the languid and pale beauty of his model. Eventually, she would marry the eldest son of his brother Karel Van de Woestyne in 1929.

The exceptional quality of this painting and detailed story behind it, elevates it to the status of an absolute masterpiece and one of the highlights of this catalog.





A part from the second school of Latem in Flanders, there was also a lot of activity in the Walloon province during the expressionist art movement. One of the key figures in this context, was Anto-Carte. Before we discuss Carte's work, we need to mention some prudence. Carte's work is shown under the section expressionism in this catalog, but it would be a little bit too restricted to let it fall under that category alone. In some literature he is referred to as a 20th-century classical master. Nevertheless, there are strong and clear connections with expressionism, as we'll discuss in the two paragraphs below.

Carte (1886–1954) can be considered during the same time period as expressionism. He also studied at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Brussels. A classic path, one might think, for a successful artist of that era. However, Carte soon began to seek his way internationally, participating in events such as the Venice Biennale and exhibiting in the art epicenter of Paris. More specifically, he participated in an exhibition at the Salon d'Automne in Paris in 1923. One of his companions at that exhibition: Gustave Van de Woestyne. The meeting between the two would leave a lasting influence on Carte. Clear evidence of this connection can be seen in the work "La Violoniste", on your left. It was created in 1926, relatively shortly after their meeting. In this stunning piece, the similarities to Flemish expressionism are strikingly evident. For instance, you can see the robust facial expressions returning, and the color palette again shows these typical earthy colours.

Another characteristic that Carte and Van de Woestyne specifically share is their love for the Flemish Primitives. However, while Van de Woestyne's connection with the Primitives primarily relates to painting style, for Anto Carte, it is also the actual subjects that resemble the earlier works from the 15th and 16th centuries. For example, the works on pages 72 and 74 in this catalog feature Madone à l'Enfant. Many of his works were indeed religiously inspired.

Anto-Carte (1886-1954)
Le Violoniste, dated 1926
mixed media on paper, 53 x 34.5 cm
Provenance; private collection Antwerp



Anto-Carte (1886-1954)
Madone à l'enfant
gouache, 26 x 16 cm
Provenance: private collection Brussels



Anto-Carte (1886-1954)
Madone à l'enfant, dated 1943
gouache, 18 x 12.5 cm
Provenance: private collection Brussels



Frans Van Ermengem (1893-1985)

A seated girl, dated 1926

oil on canvas, 76 x 60 cm

Provenance: private collection The Hague

Literature: A.G. and Guus Maris "For Me and for You" Ghent 1998, p. 32



Edgar Scaufaire (1893-1960)
Personnage dresseur d'hibou, dated 1954
oil on panel, 50 x 70 cm
Provenance: private collection Liège



Another Walloon representative of expressionism is Marcel Caron (Enghien, 1890 - Liège, 1961). Caron was born the son of a Belgian decorator and studied at the "Académie Royale des Beaux-Arts de Liège". Studying sculpture and decoration he even exhibited with his father. This educational background is reflected in his paintings, in particular through the rigidity of the persons depicted, as well as the elegant color palette. His works feature distinctive, exaggerated figures, with almond-shaped eyes. As can be seen in the works in this catalog by Caron (pages 80, 84, and 86), the relation with the Flemish Expressionist is very obvious. Caron definitely held his own among artists like Gustaaf De Smet, Frits Van den Berghe, Permeke, ... and maintained a very high standard of quality himself.

Marcel Caron (1890-1961)

L'Escarpolette, dated 1928

oil on canvas, 160 x 125 cm

Exhibited:

Salon Quatriennal De Belgique Liège 1945;

XXVI eme Exposition Biennale Internationale Des Beaux-Arts- Venise 1952;

Musée d'Ixelles Bruxelles, Exposition Art Deco;

Expressionisme Wallon, Credit Communal Belgique

Provenance: private collection Liège



Roger Van Gindertael (1899-1982)
Le Cycliste
oil on canvas, 60 x 73 cm
Provenance: private collection Antwerp



Marcel Caron (1890–1961)
Les commères, to be dated 1926
oil on canvas, 70 x 90 cm
Provenance: private collection Liège



Marcel Caron (1890-1961)
L'homme à la cigarette, dated 1923
oil on canvas, 85 x 68 cm
Provenance: private collection Liège
Literature: Actuel XX, La peinture à Liège au XXe siècle, J.Parisse, p.72 Et 73



Jean Timmermans (1899-1986)
Feestdag
oil on canvas, 72 x 67 cm



René Guette (1893-1976)
Amoureux au port, dated 1928
gouache on paper, 51 x 39 cm
Provenance: private collection Brussels
Literature: CR René Guette nr 179



Bauhaus master: Paul Klee

Paul Klee (1879–1940) was a German artist born in Switzerland. During his career, Klee taught fine art at various academies, sharing his incredible talent with his students. He taught at the Bauhaus in Weimar and later at the Academy in Düsseldorf. However, his time there came to an abrupt end when he was dismissed by the Nazis in 1933, marking the beginning of a turbulent period for Klee. He was forced to return to Switzerland and in 1935, Klee began experiencing health problems. Nevertheless, during the periods when his condition improved, he experienced one of the most productive phases of his career. Reflecting on this time, Klee remarked: "Productivity is accelerating in range and at a highly accelerated tempo; I can no longer entirely keep up with these children of mine. They run away with me. There is a certain adaptation taking place, in that drawings predominate. Twelve hundred items in 1939 is really something of a record performance."

It was during this period, that "Kronen-Narr" was painted as well. As mentioned in the section about James Ensor in this catalog, Paul Klee drew inspiration from 'le peintre des masques', reinterpreting Ensor's trademark within the framework of expressionism. Regarding the meaning of the work, "Kronen-Narr" portrays a crowned fool as a symbol of freedom and satire, mocking the political situation in Germany at that time. So, although Klee definitely showed his concerns through this work, he would never see how justified those concerns turned out to be, as he passed away in 1940.

Paul Klee (1879–1940)

Kronen-Narr (Crown Fool), 1938

gouache, brush and ink on newsprint laid on board, 48.9 x 32.4 cm

Signed bottom right 'Klee'

Titled and dated on the paper backing, bottom centre

Provenance:

Hans and Erika Meyer-Bentelli, Bern until 1955;

Berggruen & Cie, Paris, 1955–58;

Saidenberg Gallery, Inc., New York, 1958–59;

James Wise, Geneva, New York and Nice from 1959;

Nahum Goldman, Jerusalem until 1983;

collection of Sidney Rothberg, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Literature:

Paul Klee-Stiftung, Kunstmuseum Bern, Paul Klee: Catalogue Raisonné, Band 7, 1934–1938, Thames and Hudson, London, 1998–2004, p. 344, n° 7250 (ill.)

Exhibitions:

1957, Amsterdam, Stedelijk Museum, Paul Klee;

1957, Brussels, Palais des Beaux-Arts, n° 97a

Congo

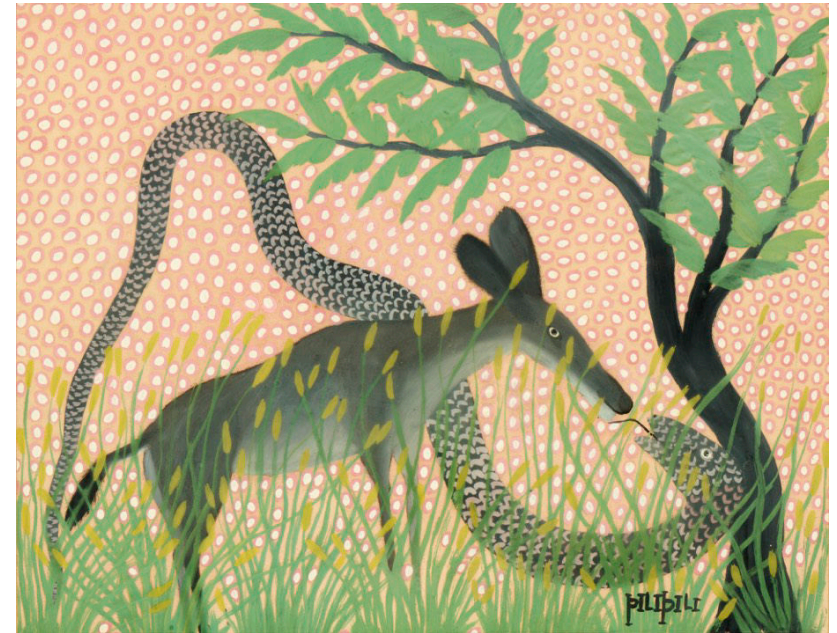
In this section, we focus on an important part of the rich Congolese art history: the painters of "Le Hangar". This art movement came to life under impulse of Pierre Romain Defossés. He was a French officer with a passion for painting. His diplomatic background is some key information in this story. Originally, he was sent on a mission to Chad in the 1940s. Here he met Bela Sara, a Congolese painter and their connection would become lifelong. Not much later Defossés and Bela settled in Elisabethville, Belgian Congo (modern-day Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of Congo). Sharing their passion for painting, Defossés started thinking of an initiative to promote art. In 1947, he put words into action by founding the atelier and in 1949, the atelier settled on the first floor of a hangar in Elisabethville. "Le Hangar" would become the breeding ground for various artistic talents such as Bela Sara, Pilipili Mulongoy, Mwenze Kibwanga, Sylvestre Kaballa, ...

Pilipili Mulongoy (1914–2007)

Antilope and a snake, to be dated c1946-1950

mixed media on paper, 38 x 48 cm

Provenance: private collection, Holland



Sylvestre Kaballa (1920-?)
Birds, fish and crocodile, dated 1957 and annotated E/ville (for Elisabethville)
mixed media on wood, 130 x 80 cm
Provenance: private collection Brussels



Pilipili Mulongoy (1914–2007)
Birds, to be dated c1950
mixed media on paper, 39 x 33 cm
Provenance: private collection Antwerp



Lyrical abstraction

The term lyrical abstraction can be a definition for two closely related but nevertheless distinct art movements: *Abstract expressionism* and *European abstraction lyrique*. We will illustrate both trends by looking at a few paintings from those periods.



Pierre Alechinsky (1927)

Muette, dated 1959

oil on canvas, 61 x 61 cm

Exhibited: Biennale de Venise/Pavillion Belge 1960

Provenance: private collection Antwerp

Abstract expressionism

The first definition of lyrical abstraction refers to Abstract Expressionism. This art movement spanned the period from the late 1940s to the early 1960s and is mainly associated with American artists. Their paintings give a spontaneous impression, as the colours blend into each other, and the brushstrokes show an irregular pattern. Nevertheless, the abstract expressionist artists carefully planned their compositions and were often guided by color theory and other principles.

The American Abstract Expressionism movement also had a European counterpart, with an important group in this context being the avant-garde movement Cobra. They represented a milestone in the development of "European Abstract Expressionism." Alechinsky was one of its prominent members. Characteristic of the art movement at that time, he employed a chaotic and dynamic use of colours. He achieved this effect through wild brushstrokes, as can be seen in the work on your left and on page 102.



Pierre Alechinsky (1927)

Les Pleins et les Déliés, dated 1962

oil on canvas, 100 x 80 cm

Provenance: Kunsthandel M.L. de Boer, Amsterdam, n° 8048; private collection, The Netherlands

“Les Pleins et les Déliés” is an abstract expressionist painting by the Belgian painter Pierre Alechinsky (1927). This painting is considered an early work in the oeuvre of Alechinsky and can be situated during the top period with the likes of Karel Appel. Paintings like “Barbaars Naakt” (SMAK, Ghent) by Karel Appel used a similar color palette with again violent paint strokes. As a result, the figures in their paintings are barely observable. But that was basically what they were trying to achieve. Together, the members of Cobra all tried to bring over the same message in their paintings. They wanted to disrupt an existing order and harmony.

As this is an early work, the painting is still oil on canvas. Not much later in his career, Alechinsky made the full-time switch to mixed media on paper laid down on canvas. In the latter technique, the viewer can recognise elements of calligraphy. That became a passion for Alechinsky, after he visited Japan in 1955. In these paintings, he started expressing his love for calligraphy, by using it on the canvas itself, more specifically the typical ink.

Even in this painting, we can already notice a reference to calligraphy or handwriting. Just not yet on the canvas, but in the title. “Les Pleins et les Déliés” is a concept used in calligraphy where “Les Pleins” refers to the thick strokes or the full, bold lines made when writing. “Les Déliés” refers to the thin strokes or the delicate, lighter lines. It is easier to comprehend by imagining a brush stroke. If you use your brush head on, you will get a thicker brush stroke, if you use it sideways, it’s possible to get a finer stroke.

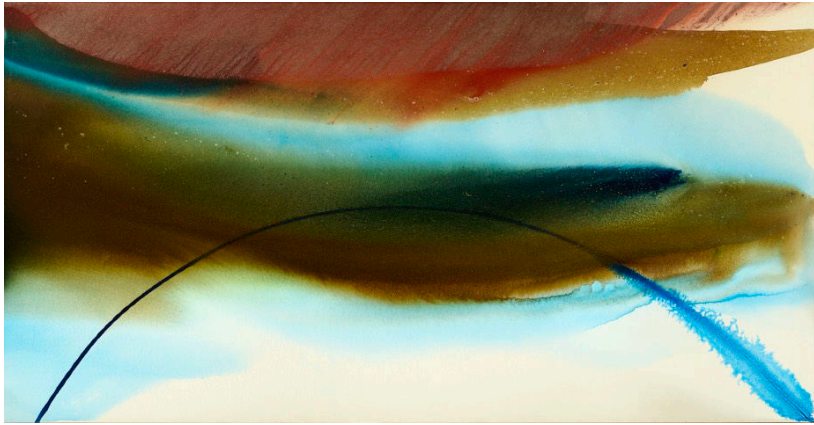


Angel Alonso (1923-1994)
Composition, dated 1963
oil on canvas, 16.5 x 24 cm

European abstraction lyrique

The second definition of lyrical abstraction refers to European *abstraction lyrique*. While the Cobra artists sometimes claimed their works were figurative, often containing hidden fantasy-like figures, lyrical abstract paintings were fully abstract. This movement originated in Paris. Shortly after World War II, Paris reclaimed its role as an artistic epicenter, attracting artists from around the world who sought refuge in art.

In terms of painting style, the artists employed spontaneous brushwork, similar to the techniques of the abstract expressionists. The movement is often associated with terms like action painting, where painters apply paint directly onto the canvas, sometimes straight from the tube. Another term used in literature to describe the movement is *tachism*, derived from the French word "tache", meaning stain or spot. The composition by Angel Alonso on your left is an excellent example of the technique of European *abstraction lyrique*.



Paul Jenkins (1923–2012)
Phenomena Reed is Bent, dated 1972
oil on canvas, 112 x 216 cm

Where it comes together: Paul Jenkins

The two previously discussed art movements come together in a masterpiece by Paul Jenkins. On the one side, because he is American and worked in New York, he is associated with the American abstract expressionism. On the other side, Jenkins also spent quite some time in Paris, and thus, experienced the development of the European abstraction lyrique from the first row as well.

To put it short, Jenkins was a prominent figure of lyrical abstraction and had mastered his technique like no other. That can also be taken in the literal sense of the word because his method of applying paint to the canvas was unorthodox. He avoided using brushes. Instead he directed the flow of paint by tilting the canvas. This technique allowed the paint to blend seamlessly, in some areas resembling watercolour. From the 1960s onward, he even used an ivory knife to manipulate the paint. This resulted in an impressive body of work of exceptional quality. His works are featured in prominent institutions such as the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York, Het Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam and the Tate in London.



Joseph Lacasse (1894–1975)

L'Equipe, dated 1933

oil on canvas, 65 x 82 cm

Provenance: private collection Ronse

Exhibited: Antwerpen, Expo Campo 80, 1977, nr 130; Amsterdam, Zaal Arti, Vlaamse kunst te Amsterdam, 1978; Antwerpen Campo&Campo, Campo 125, 2022, nr 79

Geometric abstraction

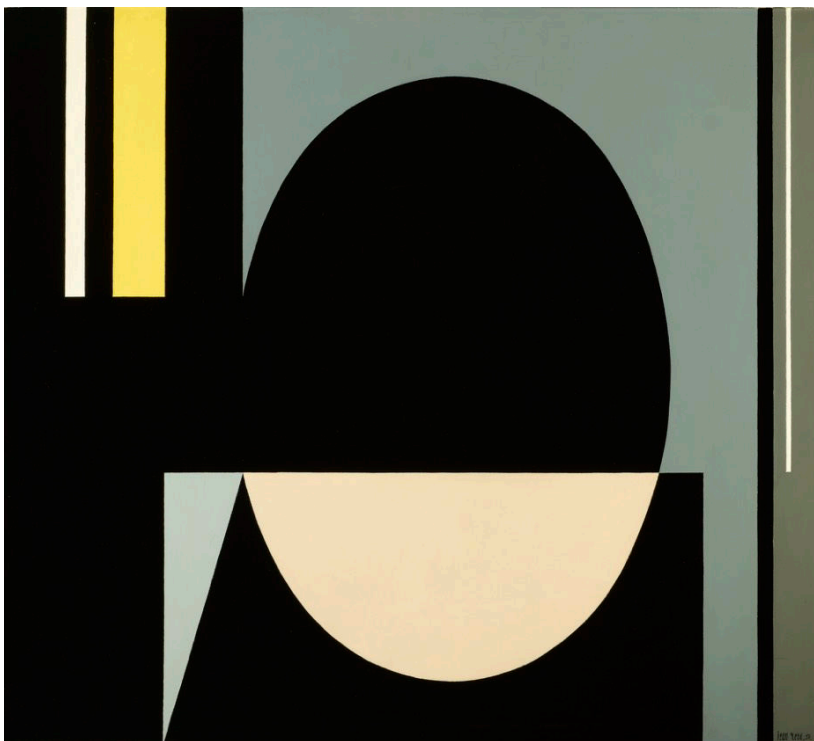
The origin of geometric abstraction is not easy to pinpoint. A potential explanation can be found, for example, in the context of Joseph Lacasse. Where did his inspiration for painting abstractly come from? Well, early in his career, he experimented with Cubism. This art movement was, of course, already a significant step closer to abstract art. In Cubism, the various forms were already delineated by clear lines, and these developments, in hindsight, clearly pointed towards abstraction. Gradually, Lacasse began practicing true abstraction by deliberately constructing different forms into a coherent whole. In assembling the forms, Lacasse always maintained a keen eye for the color palette, as can be seen on your left.

The Netherlands also had a geometric master among its ranks. Geer Van Velde was a Dutch painter who spent most of his life in France. In the painting on page 110, van Velde created layered compositions by dividing spaces into segments with vertical lines and central voids. You can recognise a diagonal composition, mainly induced by the matte blue plane in the upper left corner and the matte orange plane in the bottom right corner. The Mediterranean color palette is a leftover of his stay in Cagnes-sur-Mer in Southern France.

When you look at the two paintings discussed in the previous two paragraphs, you can see the use of rough colouring. The lines are also not perfectly straight but rather drawn with a loose hand. This contrasts with the more calculated geometric abstractions, represented in this catalog by Jean Rets (page 112 and 118), Victor Servranckx (page 114), and Gaston Bogaerts (page 116). Here, you immediately notice the difference in the sharp lines and nearly perfect circles. Victor Servranckx was one of the key figures in Belgian abstract art. Almost his entire career, he remained loyal to abstract art, even though it sometimes felt like swimming against the tide. In a conversation with Joos Florquin, he described Belgium as "a country that has been a desert for him".



Geer van Velde (1898-1977)
Composition, to be dated c1956,
oil on canvas, 65 x 81 cm
Provenance; Kunsthandel M.L. De Boer Amsterdam; private collection The Netherlands



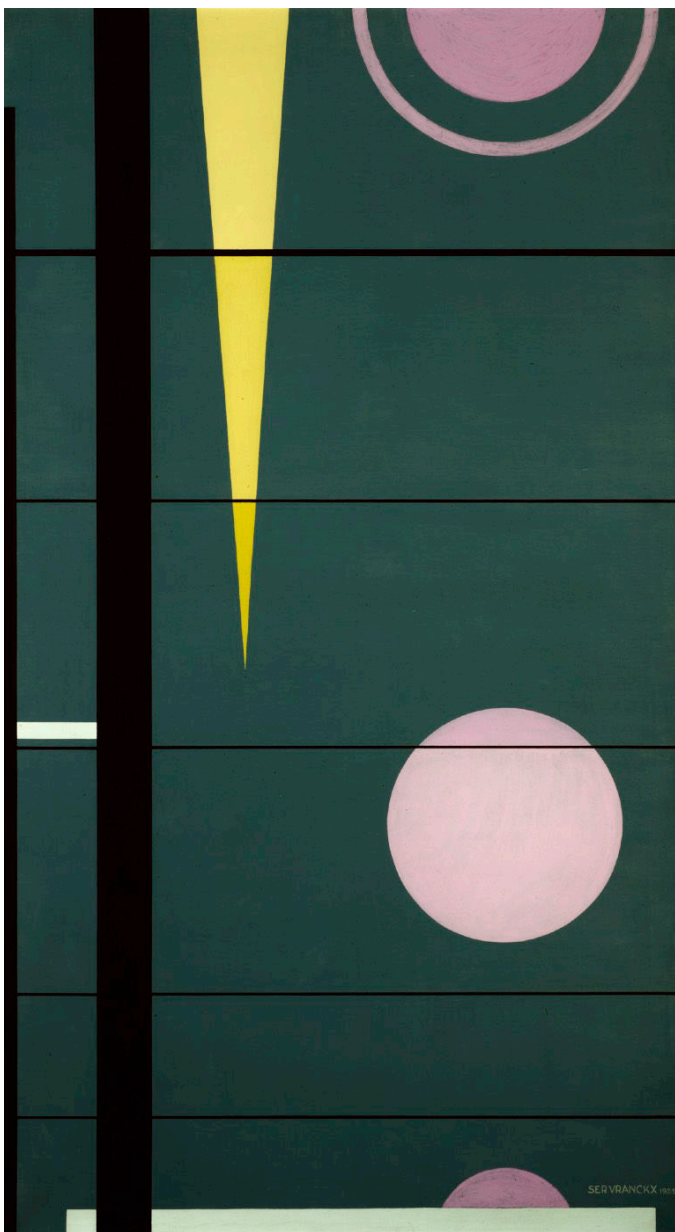
Jean Rets (1910-1998)

Le Balzaa, dated 1953

oil on canvas, 100 x 91 cm

Provenance: private collection Antwerp

Exhibited: Oostende, Provinciaal Museum voor Moderne Kunst, Art Abstrait, Le groupe Art
Abstrait 1952-1956, nr 79



Victor Servranckx (1897-1965)

Opus 2, dated 1955
oil on canvas, 146 x 81 cm

Provenance:

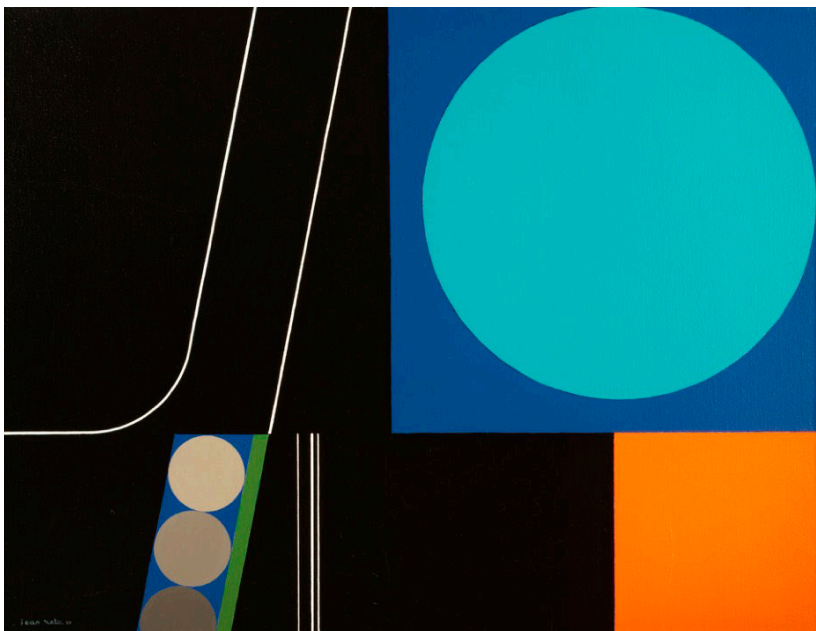
Mevr. Victor Servranckx, Kortenberg;
private collection Belgium

Exhibited:

Paris, Galerie Creuze, Salle Balzac, 1957, 50 ans de Peinture Abstraite;
Brugge, Concertgebouw, 1958, Hedendaagse Vlaamse Schilderkunst, cat. 74;
Rio de Janeiro, Museo de Arte Moderna, 1965, 45 anos de arte belga;
Bruxelles, Galerie Les Contemporains, 1968, Rétrospective Victor Servranckx, cat. 12;
Gent, Galerij Kaleidoscoop, 1968, Victor Servranckx, cat. 30;
Antwerpen, De Braekeleerstudio, 1969, Retrospectieve Victor Servranckx, cat. 33;
Brussel, Studio Rik Wouters, 1969, Victor Servranckx, cat. 36;
Hasselt, Provinciaal Begijnhof, 1970, Retrospectieve Victor Servranckx, cat. 104;
Mechelen, Galerie Nova, 1975, Herdenkingstentoonstelling Victor Servranckx;
Bottrop (D), Moderne Galerie, 1981, Victor Servranckx, cat. 75;
Bruxelles, Palais des Beaux-Arts, 1988;
Antwerpen, Galerie Campo, 1989, Omtrent Karel Geirlandt;
Brussel, KMSKB, 1989, Victor Servranckx 1897-1965 en de Abstracte Kunst, nr.120;



Gaston Bogaerts (1921–2008)
Bon Ordre
oil on canvas, 35 x 27 cm
Provenance; private collection Brussels



Jean Rets (1910-1998)
Kosty, dated 1977
oil on canvas, 70 x 90 cm
Provenance: private collection Liège

Intermezzo: sculpture by Jean-Michel Folon

For the transition from Modern to Contemporary art, we present a sculpture by Jean-Michel Folon. Folon was born in 1934 and initially studied architecture in Brussels. These studies gave him his first experience with technical drawing. After completing his education, Folon moved to Paris, where he fully dedicated himself to drawing and design. Struggling to gain local recognition for his work, he decided to share his creations abroad, which quickly brought him success. American magazines like *Horizon*, *Esquire*, *The New Yorker*, *Fortune* and *Time* gave him the platform to show his work to a broader public. It marked the beginning of Folon's success as an artist and he would exploit that to the fullest. From painting monumental murals, to directing short films and theatre pieces, to creating posters, sculptures, ceramics, ... The list goes on and on. You name it, he's done it. It proves the versatility of Folon as an artist and demonstrates that he was a creative genius.

Perhaps Folon is best known for his sculptures. *Le Roi des Chats* ("The King of Cats"), displayed on your right, is a bronze sculpture created towards the end of his life. At first glance, the sculpture portrays a humanlike figure, though its head doesn't quite resemble that of a person. The title of the work suggests that this figure is the 'King of the Cats' and indeed, we can recognise the shape of a cat's head. It's just that its nasal structure is heavily emphasised in the sculpture, and its ears are missing. We could interpret this as a personification of a cat. And what about the figure that the 'King of the Cats' holds in his right hand? We leave this open to interpretation, but since the little figure is wearing a hat, a possible explanation could be that this is the reverse of a personification, where the 'King of the Cats' treats a tiny human as his pet.

Jean-Michel Folon (1934–2005)

Le Roi des Chats, dated 2005, number 18/50

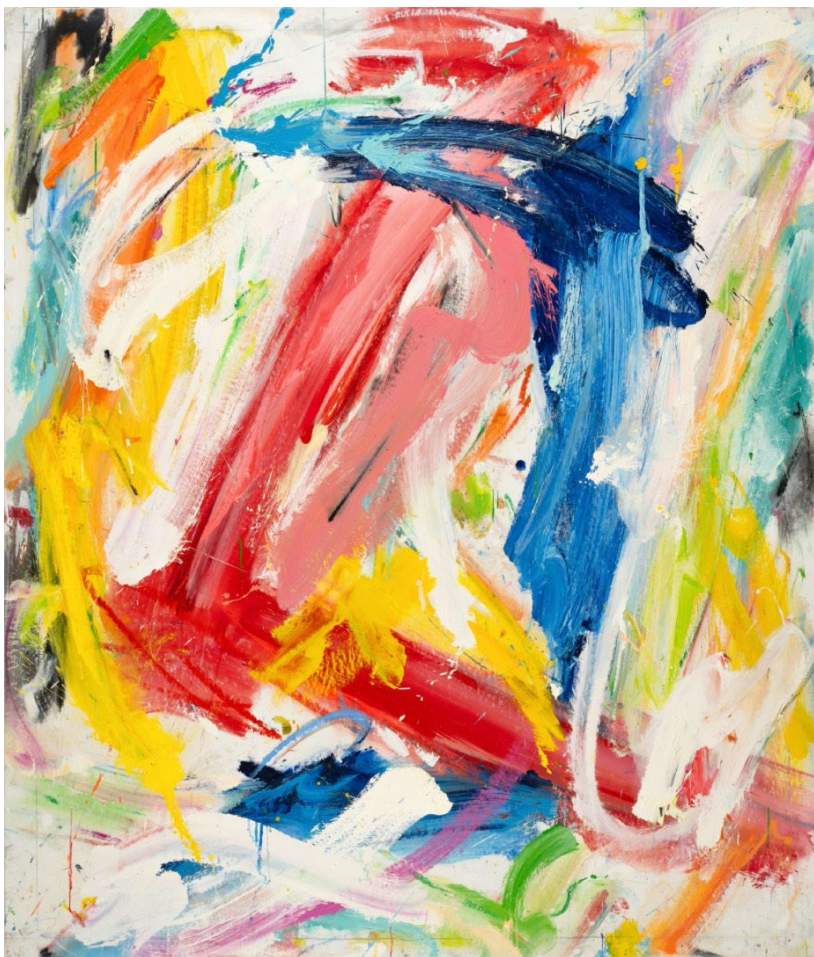
bronze, 51 x 22 cm, Stamp Foundry Romain & fils Cire perdue

Provenance: private collection Belgium



Contemporary

In our contemporary section, we present paintings from three upcoming artists, represented by Galerie Raf Van Severen. With Laurenz Coninx, Luis-Manuel Lambrechts and Gis Mari we present a wide and diversified selection. From harmonious scenes at the beach and imaginative naive landscapes, to carefully balanced, abstract compositions.



Gis Mari (1991)
Tango entre rio e mar, dated 2023-2024
oil on canvas, 213 x 181 x 7 cm
Signed, dated and annotated at back



Luis Manuel Lambrechts (1992)
Los tres Jardineros, dated 2024
acrylic and oil on canvas, 180 x 190 cm



Laurenz Coninx (1986)
The Gathering, dated 2024
oil on canvas, 150 x 200 cm

Colophon

All works available at
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