



**Espace de l'Art Concret**  
centre d'art contemporain / Mouans-Sartoux

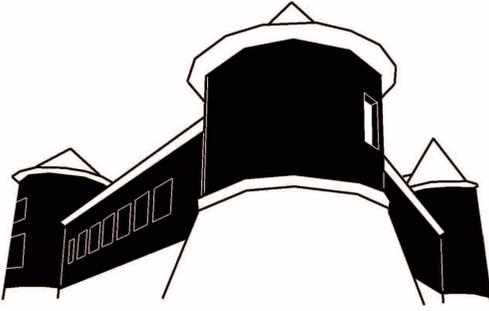
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# **Belgian geometric abstraction**

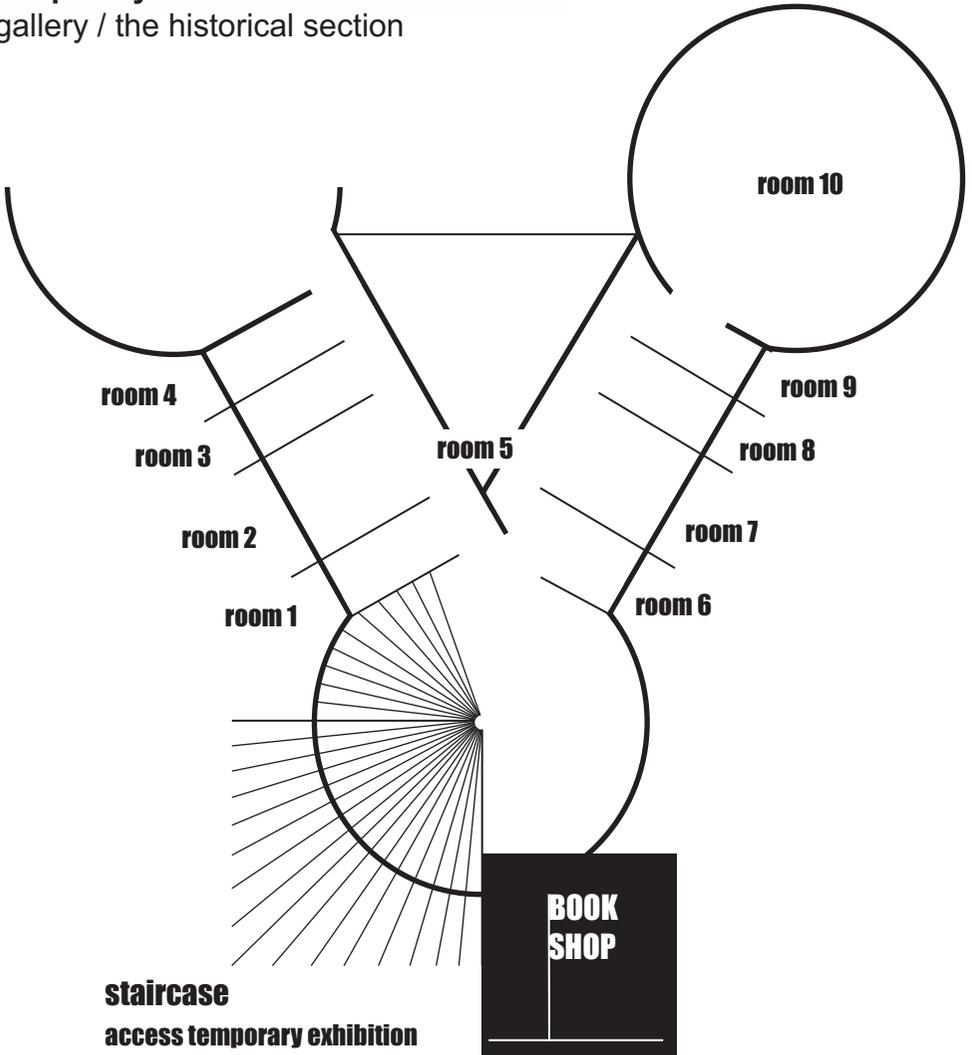
**28 June - 29 November 2015**

**Artists / Marcel-Louis Baugniet, Gaston Bertrand, Pol Bury, Jo Delahaut, Marthe Donas, Francis Dusépulchre, Pierre-Louis Flouquet, Henri Gabriel, Ann Veronica Janssens, Paul Joostens, Bas Ketelaars, Walter Leblanc, Karel Maes, Jean-Pierre Maury, Jozef Peeters, Victor Servranckx, Michel Seuphor, Guy Vandenbranden, Georges Vantongerloo, Pieter Vermeersch, Léon Wuidar**

Curator: Fabienne Grasser-Fulchéri, assisted by Alexandra Deslys and Claire Spada



**temporary exhibition**  
gallery / the historical section



For 25 years, the "Espace d'Art Concret" shares the identity of its collection, the Donation Albers-Honegger, with attempts to understand art in its various manifestations.

Today, the exhibition honors this abstract trend that has developed in a new way throughout Belgium. Indeed, in almost a century of creation, from Flanders to Wallonia, dozens of artists have worked in this field of art for the benefit of research on shape and color.

In the gallery of the castle, this historical exhibition offers a broad overview of the evolution of Belgian geometric art from the 20s to the present day. The questioning of representation among the pioneers, was in allowing the pictorial space to acquire its autonomy, until renunciation of painting as a traditional medium. Inherited from the avant-gardes, "interdisciplinarity" is a major feature of this movement. This art is also investing into public space for many "integrations" into architecture.

To extend the historical course presented in the gallery of the castle, in the building of the Donation Albers-Honegger, the work of three contemporary artists is exhibited, illustrating this continuity in exploring pathways initiated by their elders.

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## ROOMS 1 à 3 -----

**Marcel-Louis Baugniet** 1895 (Liège, Belgium) – 1995 (Brussels, Belgium)  
After studying at the Fine Arts Academy in Brussels, in 1933, he fell in with the Belgian avant-garde around the review *7 arts*, alongside Flouquet, Maes and the Bourgeois brothers, who advocated for the complementarity of all art forms and for art's functionality. He created artworks of a cubist nature: carpets, interior designs, ballet sets and costumes. After a foray into figuration at the end of the 30s, he returned to geometric abstraction at the end of the 50s, and co-founded the review *Mesures* with Jo Delahaut and Jean-Pierre Maury in 1987.

**Marthe Donas** 1885 (Anvers, Belgium ) – 1967 (Audregnies, Belgium)  
Marthe Donas discovered cubism and modernisme in Pais during the first world war. In 1918, she became a member of the groupe the *Section d'Or*. She created

works based on the interplay of shapes and a combination of different painting techniques: pasta in relief, glued materials.

Around 1920, her work was exhibited throughout Europe and she intrigued the Avant Gardists under the the male pseudonym: Tour Donas. On returning to Belgium, family circumstances forced her to give up painting. But in 1947, after an interruption of twenty years, she took up her brushes and began a second career. In 1949, at the Apollo gallery in Brussels, she exhibited, figurative paintings where she was looking for mouvement in her compositions. In 1958 she came back to abstraction. Her research lead her at the beginning of the 60's and just until her demise in 1967, in wanting to explore the "beyond matter"and to find "the infinite in the finite".

**Pierre-Louis Flouquet** 1900 (Paris, France) – 1967 (Brussels, Belgium)

After arriving in Brussels in 1910, Pierre-Louis Flouquet trained at the city's fine arts academy and began his career with a cubist phase before embracing what he personally dubbed la *Plastique Pure* in 1920. He was a contributor to the review *7 Arts* from its founding in 1922. His works from that period make use of contrasting forms like cylinders and planes—shapes that remained visible despite being highly stylized. Paintings such as *Construction n° 34* (1925) are quite reminiscent of Fernand Léger and Willi Baumeister's works. Flouquet also made numerous linocuts in which he played with black and white contrasts. Increasingly, his work moved toward an expressionism marked by deep existential anxiety and powerful surges of mysticism. The artist abandoned painting after 1930 to devote himself to journalism and literature (he published 21 books of poetry).

**Paul Joostens** 1889 (Antwerp, Belgium) – 1960 (Antwerp, Belgium)

Paul Joostens' imagination was a rich and surprising one. After the war, he frequented avant-garde circles in Paris and Antwerp: Dadaism for its iconoclastic rebelliousness and Cubism for its synthesis of form. He contributed to the reviews *Het Overzicht* and *Ça Ira* and created photomontages and Dadaist assemblages without ever belonging to the movement. Paul Joostens developed a particularly inventive abstract approach to painting, collage and drawing as well as sculpture. Passionate about the cinema, he explored the language and methods of film montage. After an existential and mystical crisis in 1925, Joostens turned his back on the avant-garde and broke with his friends, isolating himself completely. He returned assertively to a dark and tragic style of painting and notably the religious subject matter and Primitivist structures discovered in his youth.



**Karel Maes**, *Composition n°10*, 1924. Huile sur toile 60 x 50 cm. Collection de la Communauté française de Belgique © Sylvain Jennebauffe

**Karel Maes** 1890 (Mol, Belgium) – 1974 (Brussels, Belgium)

Considered one of the pioneers of Belgian abstract painting, he also worked in the applied arts, including graphic design. He produced illustrations for a

number of avant-garde magazines such as *Lumière*, *Ruimte*, *Ça ira*, *Het Overzicht*, *De Driehoek*, and *7 Arts*. During the same period, he expanded the scope of his work by combing his specific abstract language with furniture design, stained glass and carpets. Starting in the late 20s, Karel Maes cut himself off increasingly from the art world, which gradually lost sight of his work. Still, he never stopped painting and creating. He drew inspiration from the dominant art trends like surrealism and expressionism without ever fully abandoning abstraction.

**Jozel Peeters** 1895 (Antwerp, Belgium) – 1960 (Antwerp, Belgium)

Jozef Peeters, like Karel Maes, is considered one of the precursors of Belgian abstraction. His painted works are based on the play of geometric forms, circles, squares, triangles, blocks of uniform color, but also the pursuit of chiaroscuro. In parallel, he devoted himself to linocuts: these compositions, which use stark contrasts between black and white and angular forms, were published in book form or in avant-gardist reviews of the period like *Het Overzicht* or *Der Sturm*, whose cover he designed in 1924. He expressed his aesthetic opinions and ideas about the artist's role in several theoretical texts advocating for community art.

**Victor Servranckx** 1897 (Diegem, Belgium) – 1965 (Vilvoorde, Belgium)

Starting in the 1920s, he developed an art based on the language of abstract geometry. Servranckx's fascination with factories and machinery, when translated into an artistic philosophy, went far beyond the canvas, embracing a range of artistic disciplines. Victor Servranckx is emblematic, not only of the versatility of the artist—he was painter, manifesto writer, wallpaper designer, architect, cabinet maker, etc.—but also of the degree to which the modernism of the 1920s truly impacted all aspects of daily life. His work evolved from mathematical constructions to experimental use of materials, from symmetrical structures to abstract and surrealist subjects. His contact with René Magritte and Filippo Tommaso Marinetti would contribute to these new directions.

**Georges Vantongerloo** 1886 (Antwerp, Belgium) – 1965 (Paris, France)

Starting in 1917, Georges Vantongerloo developed sculptures around the concept of geometric construction: *Construction dans la sphère* and *Composition emanente de l'ovoïde* painted in three colors. These were effectively concrete works before their day. At the same time, Vantongerloo became fascinated by mathematics: geometry and algebra freed him of any

subjective approach and strengthened his conviction that art must partake in the gestation of a new world. In 1918, he met Théo Van Doesbourg and was among the signatories of the *De Stijl* movement, to whose review he contributed several articles on the principles of orthogonality.

## ROOMS 3 et 4 -----

**Jo Delahaut** 1911 (Vottem, Belgium) – 1992 (Brussels, Belgium)

After art school, Jo Delahaut pursued his PhD in Art History. His love of learning compelled him to write numerous texts on the philosophy of modern art informed by his own exploration of sculptural and architectural practice. In 1946, as a member of the *La Jeune Peinture Belge*, he created his first abstract work. In 1952, he helped found the *Art abstrait* group with Pol Bury, among others. It was then that he truly found his style, turning to the use of shapes as units of measure: a half-circle or a rectangle with a rounded corner. He started the group *Formes* in 1956 and *Art constructif* four years later. He also signed the 1954 manifesto *Le Spatialisme*. He steered his art toward a form of simplification, which was then very close to *American Hard-edge* Painting. The artist also made numerous relief sculptures and transposed his experiments into the architectural domain, even decorating a Brussels metro station in 1975.

**Guy Vandenbranden** 1926 (Brussels, Belgium) – 2014 (Antwerp, Belgium)

Guy Vandenbranden broke away from figuration around 1951 to develop constructed abstract art based on horizontal and vertical divisions of the plane. Starting in 1954, he added color to the black and white of his early works. He participated in numerous groups: *Art Abstrait* in 1952, *Formes* in 1954 and *Art Construit* in 1960. At the end of the 1950s, Guy Vanderbranden settled in Antwerp, where he maintained very close relationships with Jef Verheyen, Vic Gentils and Walter Leblanc. His work was increasingly shown abroad (in Switzerland, Italy and Germany), where he met artists of the group *Zero* like Uecker and Klein.

## ROOM 5 -----

**Gaston Bertrand** 1910 (Wonck, Belgium) – 1994 (Brussels, Belgium)

Starting in 1938, Gaston Bertrand was active in the groups *La Route Libre* and *Apport*, and participated in the founding of *La jeune Peinture Belge*. Giving

free rein to the subjectivity of his vision, the painter submitted figurative subjects, like portraits or highly architectural landscapes, to an ascetic pallet and a stylization that would gradually become geometrical. His work is part of a process of synthesis applied to space. In the late 1940s, he was drawn, like so many artists of his generation, to a geometric-type abstraction; only he would utilize it like no one else. His apparently abstract works refer to reality using a sort of lyrical weightlessness steeped in spirituality.

## **ROOMS 7 et 8** -----

**Pol Bury** 1922 (Haine-Saint Pierre, Belgium) – 2005 (Paris, France)

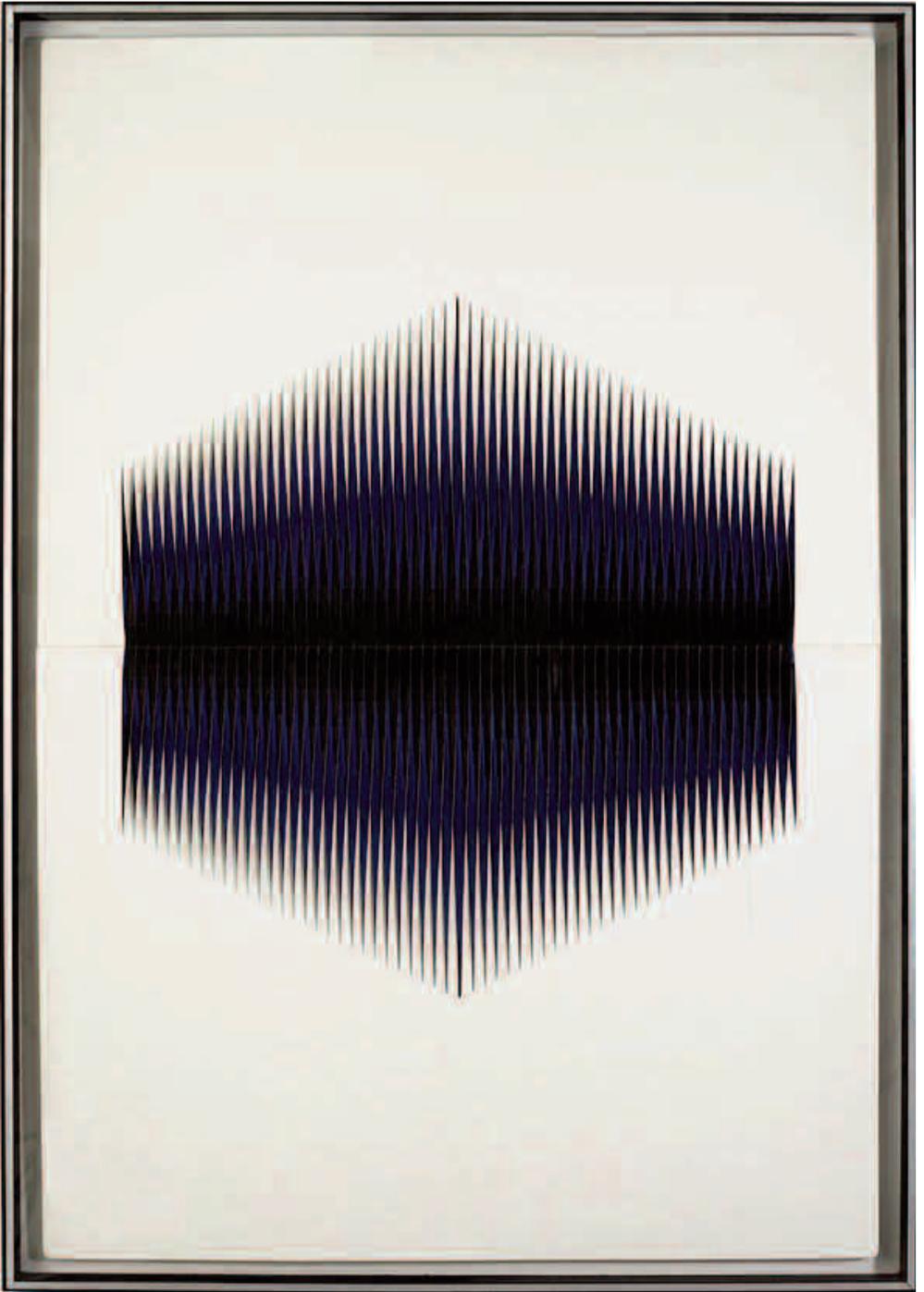
A member of the surrealist group, which he left in 1947, Pol Bury frequented the artists of the *Cobra* movement before dedicating himself to pure abstraction in 1951. Four years later, he participated in the *Le Movement* show at the Denise René gallery, in which he experimented with a wide range of materials (wood, steel, copper). He used these to build relief sculptures whose elements, starting in 1968, he set in motion using magnets. After several stays in the United States, he moved to the Paris area where he realized his first hydraulic fountain in 1976. Numerous “ball fountains” combining the movements of water and sunlight, were set up in France, Japan, the United States and Korea.

**Walter Leblanc** 1932 (Antwerp, Belgium) – 1986 (Silly, Belgium)

The work of Walter Leblanc merges with the optical and kinetic art movements. Starting in 1957, he turned against the spontaneous and emotional impulse of informal art. Instead, he employed impoverished materials to introduce sobriety and serenity to his works, spreading sand across the surface of the canvas starting in 1958. He later adopted “twist” as a fundamental plastic element using cotton strings, alone or in series. “The three-dimensional twisted form is the element behind all of my experimentations” he confides. The “mobile-static” twists with colored ribbons would later evolve into what he dubbed “archetypes.” Using drawing and sculpture, these introduced relations between the triangle, circle and square.

**Henri Gabriel** (also known as Henri-Jean Brouwers) 1918 (Brussels, Belgium) – 1994 (Brussels, Belgium)

The exhibit *50 Years of Modern Art* at the 1958 World’s Fair in Brussels was an artistic revelation for Henri Brouwers. Using the moniker Henry Gabriel, he



**Walter Leblanc**, *Torsions CO 459*, 1974. Latex blanc et noir sur toile de coton, torsion sur fond mauve 179 - 120 cm. Fondation Walter & Nicole Leblanc © François Fernandez

began his early work in Tachisme and paper cutting. In 1965, he began to develop towards more optical compositions, turning his interest to kinetic art which he discovered through the Paris-based *Groupe de Recherche d'Art Visuel*. That same year, he founded the group *D.4*, which would become *Geoform* in 1966 after the arrival of Jo Delahaut. In the 1970s, he completed his Op' metal drawings using a drypoint needle on aluminum sheets. In 1978, he designed *Mobilo-sculptures*, combining sculpture and mobile.

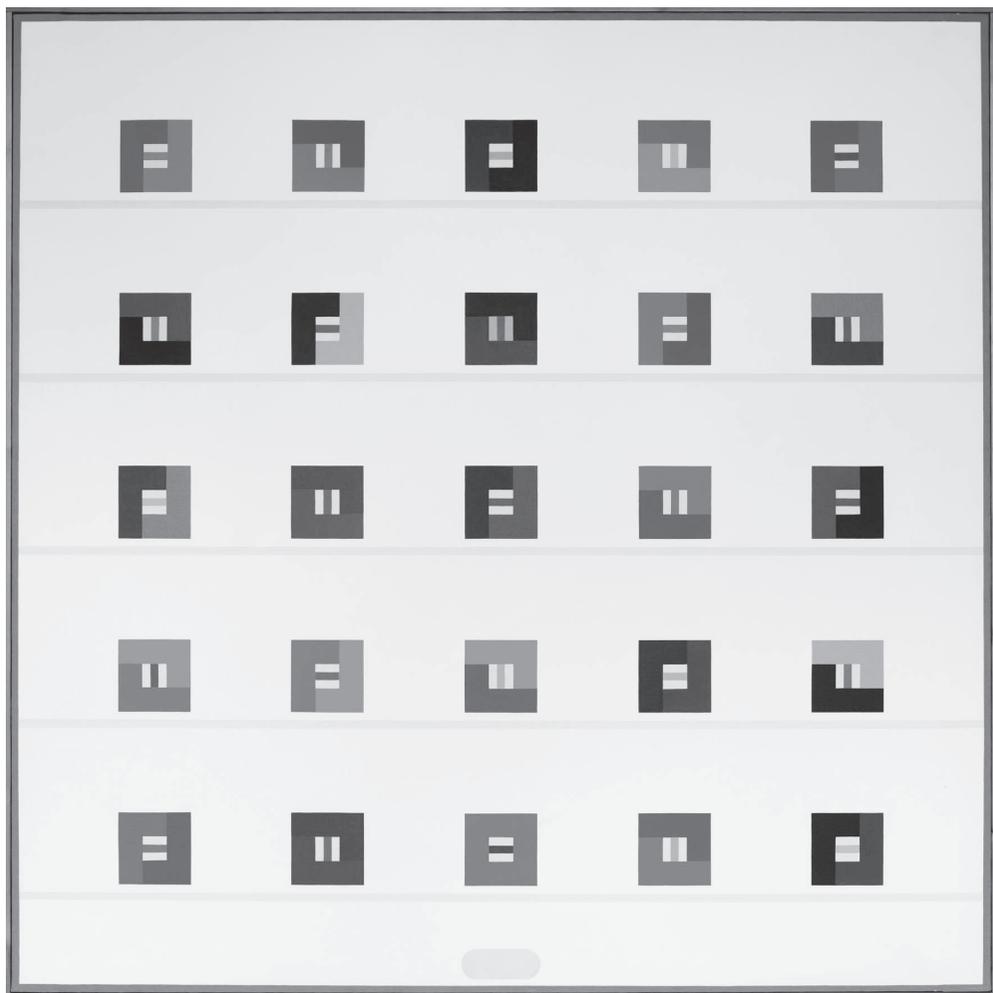
**Francis Dusépulchre** 1934 (Seneffe, Belgium) – 2013 (La Louvière, Belgium)  
After getting his start in surrealist painting in the late 1960s, Francis Dusépulchre shifted to pure abstract construction in the form of geometric painting-sculptures on chipboard panels. This development eventually led him toward monochrome works. The canvases or panels are slit and creased to generate surface rhythms. In 1973, he was one of the founders of the *Art concret* group in Hainaut, along with Jean Dubois, André Goffin, Marcel-Henri Verdren, Jacques Guilmot and Michel Renard. He took an active interest in monumental sculpture, but also integrated threads of string into his works (1979) to create the play of shadow, and then optical fibers (1983) which generated points of light.

## **ROOMS 9 et 10** -----

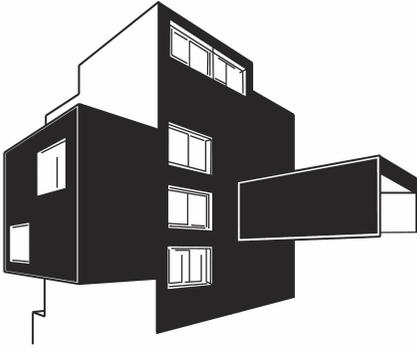
**Léon Wuidar** 1938 (Liège, Belgium), lives and works in Esneux, Belgium.  
Originally a figurative painter, Léon Wuidar changed directions in 1963. His abstract experiments found expression in the artist's drawings, which favored the line, its thickness, and the absence of color. Limited information which the artist would use to invent impressive combinations. Convinced of the continuity between the architect and the visual artist, he created numerous works for public space. A lover of words and letters, he turned his attention to verbal games, experimenting with the rhythm of language, its typography, and its ties to symbols and illustrations, with visual wordplays and innumerable variations on the "ABCs."

**Jean-Pierre Maury** 1948 (Uccle, Belgium), lives and works in France and Belgium  
Since 1968, Jean-Pierre Maury has been pursuing work within the *Mouvance construite*. He functions according to a logical principle inspired by computer science that determines the division of surfaces and the ordering of colors. Black and white dominate a large part of the surface because they

constitute “the simplest way to get to the point of a composition.” Beyond the rigor and the demands of this theoretical and practical work, Jean-Pierre Maury adds a dimension of pure sense intuition to materials and colors, in order to contribute to the perpetuation and renewal of his work. Jean-Pierre Maury was cofounder and coeditor of the review *MESURES art international*. He is the creator of several architecturally integrated works.

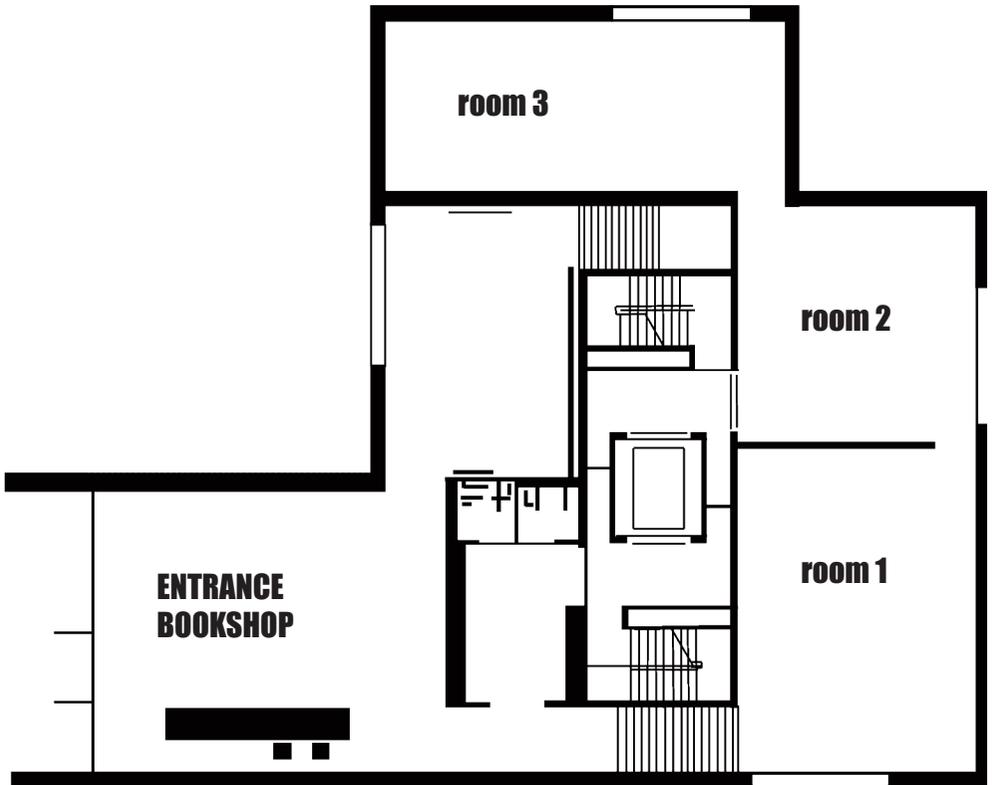


**Léon Wuidar**, *25 carrés rouges ou bleus*, 1981. Huile sur toile 122 x 122 cm. Collection de la Banque nationale de Belgique © BNB - Patrick Van DenBranden



**temporary exhibition**

Level -1 Donation Albers-Honegger / Contemporary section



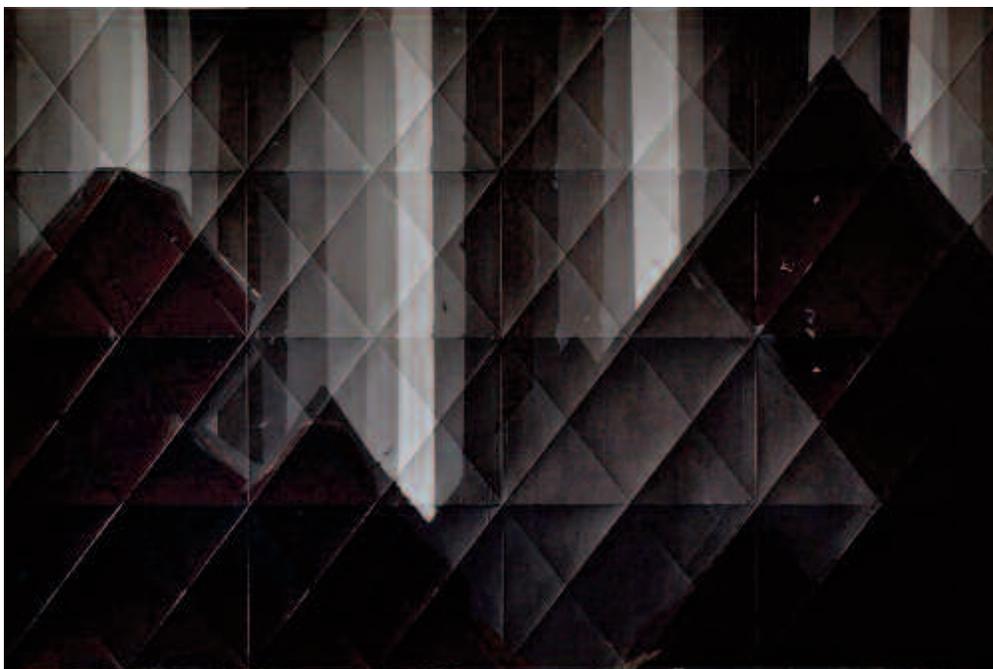
**ENTRANCE - ROOM 1 ----- Ann Veronica Janssens**

1956, Folkestone (United Kingdom), lives and works in Brussels (Belgium)

Since the early 1980s, Ann Veronica Janssens has mainly pursued in-situ installations, purposely choosing simple and even impoverished materials such as wood, glass and cement; or immaterial ones like light, sound, or artificial fog. Often basing her projects on technological or scientific facts, Ann Veronica Janssens makes them visible by plastic propositions that explore the threshold of instability and disrupt perception: dazzlement, vertigo, saturation, speed, flashing, depression, infinite sounds, slowing. Beyond the experience of living and feeling, Ann Veronica Janssens also continues to ponder the links between her approach and a history of pictorialism that explores color and light.

**ROOM 2 ----- Bas Ketelaars**

1979, Goirle (Netherlands), lives and works in Moergestel (Netherlands)



After beginning his training in the applied arts in the Netherlands, Bas Ketelaars chose to pursue his experimentations in Belgium, at the Antwerp University of Art and Design. He focuses on the representation of space through graphical works and sculptures utilizing simple forms (lines, planes, grids) to suggest depth. Folding is one of the artist's preferred operatory modes. Bas Ketelaars strikes a balance between figuration and abstraction, between the real and fake, between painting, sculpture and hints of architecture. Particularly interested in the density of space, the artist explores the reality of a connection between the spaces in which we live and work... This preoccupation is at the basis of works on paper that are often personalized for a particular space.

**ROOM 3 ----- Pieter Vermeersch**  
1973, Kortrijk (Belgium), lives and works in Brussels (Belgium)

Color occupies a central place in the work of Pieter Vermeersch and is forced into a constant dialogue with notions of time and space. Through his painted compositions, the artist seeks to create relevancy with space and to explore chromatic nuance in its relationship to natural or artificial light, using it to transform environments such as the gallery walls, a museum's forms, the originality of a building, or even the landscape of a city. The images created by the artist offer the viewer multiple levels of interpretation, and can be seen equally as an abstract chromatic variation or a mental image. The color tells each individual a different story, evoking different mental or emotional connotations for each of us.

# ÉVÉNEMENTS /

<b>JUIN</b> 30	exposition / Atelier Regards sur Image / 9h - 20h
<b>JUILLET</b> 01 06 / 10 16 12	exposition / Atelier Regards sur Image / 9h - 20h cocktail / 18h30 ateliers vacances rendez-vous concret <i>L'abstraction géométrique belge</i> / 18h30 dimanche en famille / 15h
<b>AOÛT</b> 16 19	dimanche en famille / 15h cinéma plein-air <i>Pol Bury, la poésie de la lenteur</i> / 21h30
<b>SEPTEMBRE</b> 05 19 / 20 27	rendez-vous documentaire / à partir de 14h journées européennes du patrimoine / 13h - 18h dimanche en famille / 15h
<b>OCTOBRE</b> 02 / 04 14 17 18 17 / 18 19 / 23	l'eac participe au festival du livre de Mouans-Sartoux pass art contemporain télérama / 13h - 18h rendez-vous documentaire / à partir de 14h dimanche en famille / 15h l'eac participe au festival P'tits Cannes à you ateliers vacances
<b>NOVEMBRE</b> 15	dimanche en famille / 15h

Nous remercions les artistes grâce auxquels cette exposition a été rendue possible :  
**Ann Veronica Janssens, Bas Ketelaars, Jean-Pierre Maury, Pieter Vermeersch et Léon Wuidar**

Nous remercions les prêteurs pour leur collaboration :

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La **Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles**, Direction du Patrimoine culturel, Pôle Valorisation, Belgique

La **Fondation Gaston Bertrand**, Bruxelles, Belgique

La **Fondation M.L Jacques**, Bruxelles, Belgique

La **Fondation Walter et Nicole Leblanc**, Bruxelles, Belgique

Le **musée d'Ixelles**, Belgique

La **Banque nationale de Belgique**

La **Callewaert-Vanlangendonck Collection**, Anvers, Belgique

**Proximus Art collection**, Bruxelles, Belgique

La **galerie kamel mennour**, Paris, France

La **galerie Quadri**, Bruxelles, Belgique

La **galerie Paola Sapone**, Nice, France

La **galerie Roberto Polo**, Bruxelles, Belgique

La **galerie Thessa Herold**, Paris, France

Ainsi que : **Bart Albrechts, Guillaume Bleret, Yolande De Brontridder, Ben Durant, Filip D'Havé, Liliane Dusépulchre, André Garitte, Anne Lenoir, Claude Lorent, Arjen Nélis, Laura Neve, Marie Thonnard, Yves Randhaxe, La galerie Emmanuel Perrotin**, Paris, France

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du **conseil régional Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur**  
et du **Département des Alpes-Maritimes**.

