

Museum
Leuven



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VINCENT GEYSKENS

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INTRODUCTION

M presents a solo exhibition by Vincent Geyskens

From 28 May 2021, M Leuven will host a solo exhibition by the Belgian artist Vincent Geyskens, bringing together various series and types of works from the past ten years, supplemented by a number of older reference works.

The question 'what does painting mean today' runs like a red thread through Vincent Geyskens's oeuvre. When we look at images, we look for connections with our world, with the reality we know. Geyskens plays with these expectations of images and painting: what do images mean to us, what role do surfaces and paint play in how we read and analyse an image, what links do we make with images we encounter in our everyday life?

M presents both collages, sketches, paintings on canvas and painted series of frames and thus establishes links between different approaches to painting. According to Vincent, the body and the material are central in the process of painting. It is not only about a perception, but also about sensation. Painting is an activity.

Painted series of frames, with advertising boards as the surface, form the backbone of the exhibition. Through the succession of frames, Geyskens creates a certain rhythm. The artist applies areas of colour on them, sometimes alternating with empty sections that provide a view of the wall behind.

The collages start from existing images that are political or erotic in tone. The images have a certain intention. By folding, smearing, tearing and piercing them, a shift is created. They are constantly in flux.

Geyskens is constantly investigating the meaning of painting in our time. In that search he also looks to the past, to the practices of older artists. In the past year he has focused on the still life and these are the most recent work in the exhibition. In subdued tones and on a white background, he paints compositions with bottles, a loaf of bread, a skull, cups, etc. The objects are recognisable, but schematic – they flirt with abstraction.

In addition, the exhibition includes a selection from Vincent Geyskens' numerous drawing books full of quick sketches of nature made during his many walks. These landscape drawings show how he tries to visualise his observations with just a few pencil strokes. In M, a connection is made between the works of Geyskens and a number of works by Alfred Delaunoy (1877-1941) from the collection of M. Delaunoy was a painter who also placed texture and matter at the centre of his rough drawings.

'This exhibition provides a comprehensive overview of Vincent Geyskens' fascinating oeuvre of the past ten to fifteen years. Various works and series of paintings come together through different rooms. Not as a clear or chronological overview, but with numerous links connections, similarities and differences. The viewer is challenged to give meaning both to the individual paintings and to the succession of artworks in M.'

Curator Eva Wittocx

BIOGRAPHY

Vincent Geyskens (1971, Lier), has previously held solo exhibitions in S.M.A.K. (Ghent), Galerie Annette De Keyser (Antwerp), Trampoline (Antwerp), Envoy Gallery (New York), CC De Garage (Mechelen). He has participated in several group exhibitions including at KANAL - Centre Pompidou (Brussels), Roger Raveelmuseum (Machelen-Zulte), CIAP (Hasselt), Museum Dr. Guislain (Ghent), Wiels (Brussels). Since 2007, he has been a lecturer at the KASK in Ghent. He also taught at La Cambre in Brussels and at the HISK in Ghent.



WHAT DOES PAINTING STILL MEAN IN TODAY'S WORLD?

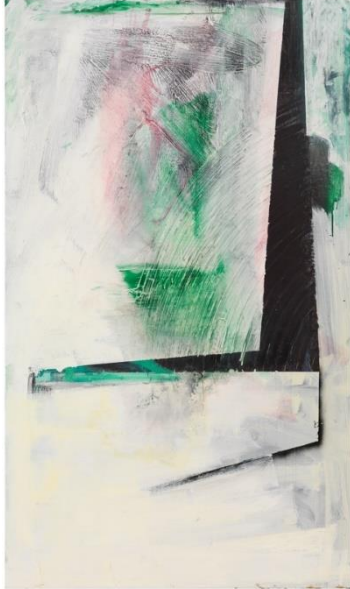
Vincent Geyskens researches the position of painting in our contemporary society. For him, 'the body, the matter', is an essential part of the art of painting. It cannot exist without it. Yet those very elements are ignored in today's visual culture.

In all of Geyskens' works, the physical act of making is clearly present, for example in the thickly applied strokes of paint. For him, painting is a way of making thoughts concrete and matter visible. His work challenges you, the viewer. Vincent Geyskens uses figurative and abstract elements interchangeably and experiments with different types of surfaces. These range from paper to plastic, from canvas to objects he has found, and in this way he explores the limits and possibilities of the chosen surfaces.

"I try to move away from images and concepts while painting, in order to find openings. For me, painting is not primarily about showing, but about seeing itself. (...) You cannot reduce that painterly seeing to the purely visual. It is not only about perception, but also and always about sensation. In my opinion, this is what distinguishes the art of painting from other visual media. You do not paint with your eye, but with your entire body. Both the body and the material are central in the process of painting. It is about a bodily understanding of the materiality of things. Seeing is not separate from, for example, the sense of touch or hearing. You paint how something feels, how something sounds. It is a sensation of what is seen."

Vincent Geyskens

Series are clearly visible in Geyskens' oeuvre, which are connected both in terms of content and form. The exhibition at M aims to shed light on the breadth of his practice and brings together a number of those series. The focus is on the past ten years, supplemented by older reference works.



Left
Apotheker, 2018
Oil and spray paint on canvas
160 x 95 cm



Right
Ik, ALI, 2018
Oil colour and varnish
on canvas
150 x 90 cm

© Vincent Geyskens
Photo: Lieven Herreman

PAINTINGS ON CANVAS

What the artist puts on canvas ranges from portraits and still lifes to abstract colour compositions with bold strokes of paint. Sometimes, he applies the paint very thickly in order to draw attention to the structure of the paint and to the physical act of painting. Vincent Geyskens compares a canvas with a skin: it is something that is alive, that has texture, that can be worked on just as a skin can be worked on with make-up. He uses paint and bright colours to build up abstract works. In the abstract works, Geyskens examines the role of motifs, colour and dynamics. He often uses white or black to create a sense of emptiness or openness. The thickly applied strokes of paint emphasise the physical and material aspect of painting.



BOR, 2018
Oil on canvas
50 x 60 cm

© Vincent Geyskens.
Photo: Lieven Herreman

SERIES OF FRAMES

Each work in this series is a polyptych. It consists of frames that you see in the street around posters. Geyskens removes the old poster, paints on them and creates vistas. The succession of frames provides a certain rhythm. The recurring shapes and colours allow complex relationships to emerge. The plastic textures and colours underline the pure materiality of the works.



Richmond L'O.M., 2013
Oil paint and collage on swap frames
84.5 x 357.5 cm

© Vincent Geyskens
Photo: Lieven Herreman

COLLAGES

For his collages, Geyskens starting point is existing images that have a clear function as advertisements and campaign images. The erotic or political images that he tears out, have the function of convincing, of exciting. By brutally cutting up and folding the image, he makes it his own and creates a distance to the original image. They become new compositions that change our first impression of those images and pictures.



Rees Mogg II, 2018
Collage on paper
40 x 30 cm
Private Collection



Angst, 2018
Collage on paper
40 x 30 cm
© Vincent Geyskens



Seneca III, 2016
Collage on paper
26.2 x 28.2 cm
© Vincent Geyskens

STILL LIFES

The most recent works in the exhibition are the paintings that Geyskens has been making in the privacy of his studio since the start of the lockdown in 2020: subdued still lifes on a white background. What is depicted is recognisable, but flirts with the abstract. As in his other works, here too the painting technique used gives almost a tangibility to the work. For his still lifes, he uses light and dark to create a sense of emptiness and openness.



i conformisti, 2020
Oil on canvas
60 x 80 cm

© Vincent Geyskens
Photo: Lieven Herreman

DRAWINGS

For his exhibition, Vincent Geyskens also delved into M's historical art collection. He found affinities with his own work in the paintings and drawings of Alfred Delaunois, – especially with his recent landscape drawings, which he made on his walks. He feels a connection to Delaunois' rather rough way of painting, and with his use of matter and texture.

Alfred Delaunois (1877-1941) was born in Brussels, but spent most of his life in Leuven. There he came into contact with sculptor and painter Constantin Meunier (1831-1905), who had an important influence on his work. Delaunois was an esteemed painter. He was a teacher and director of the Leuven Municipal Academy of Fine Arts and also enjoyed international fame. In his work, he often tries to evoke an atmosphere of silence and contemplation.



ARB, pierre noire krijt, graphite, ... on paper, 21 x 39,7 cm

© Vincent Geyskens

NEW MONOGRAPH

The publication focuses on Vincent Geyskens' practice over the last ten years and brings together different series in an open context. Dominic van den Boogerd's essay interprets his recent artistic practice. Eduardo Lamas focuses on the still life genre. Vincent Geyskens himself talks in conversation with Eva Wittocx about his choices and trains of thought. The book is amply illustrated.

Dominic van den Boogerd lives and works in Amsterdam. His reviews and essays have been published in numerous exhibition catalogues and art magazines, including Metropolis M, ArtReview and De Witte Raaf. His collected essays on painting 'Great Temptations' (2018) is published by Roma Publications. He is currently Head of Education & Research at De Ateliers, Amsterdam, where he was director from 1995 to 2018.

Eva Wittocx is senior curator of contemporary art at M Leuven. She has exhibited with, among others, Ugo Rondinone, Eija-Liisa Ahtila, Yto Barrada, Patrick Van Caekenbergh and Markus Schinwald. She has previously worked for STUK (Leuven) and S.M.A.K., among others. (Ghent) as curator. She is also curator and co-founder of the live arts festival Playground, which M organizes annually with STUK. She represented Belgium at the Venice Biennale with artist Dirk Braeckman in 2017.

Eduardo Lamas is an art historian at the Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage (KIK-IRPA) / Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage. After a master's degree from the Sorbonne in Paris, he earned a doctorate from the Vrij Universiteit Brussels and focused his research on painting and drawing from the Renaissance and Baroque in Spain and its artistic and cultural relations with the Low Countries. In 2018, he participated in the exhibition The Spanish Still Life in Brussels with a contribution on the artistic tradition of the still life in the Low Countries.

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NEW POEM

In 2021 Vincent Geyskens will release a new poem with het balanseer, 'Het Geslacht van de Paling' the successor to 'Op Stijgend Vocht' (2015).

Following 'Op Stijgend Vocht' (het balanseer, 2015), 'Het Geslacht van de Paling' (2021) is Vincent Geyskens' second literary work. 'Het Geslacht van de Paling' worms its way into the reverberating fragments of an irrevocably mythical past, deepening a surging existence. When one's own name is forgotten, remnants and debris mark themselves out, repeating, splitting, reconnecting, like the sparkling ashes of a history on a body.

Publication date: 28.05.2021
Price: € 20,00
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Published by het balanseer

FAMILY OFFER

Museum Detectives

This search game for toddlers takes them through the exhibition of contemporary artist Vincent Geyskens. Families can explore together using a detective map, mysterious detail photos and stickers. They get to know the world of Vincent Geyskens by carrying out various viewing, doing and imagining assignments.

Practical:

- 4-7 years
- Free | Children, M-bassadors & M-art patron
- EUR 12 | Adults (entrance ticket)
- There is no need to register but you must book a time slot for M.

Family Trail

Families who love mysterious works of art will enjoy this family trail. Like a born sleuth, M takes you on a voyage of discovery through the exhibition of contemporary artist Vincent Geyskens.

Thanks to a folder with various assignments, families can immerse themselves in the world of this idiosyncratic artist.

Practical:

- 8+ years
- Free | Children, M-bassadors & M-art patron
- EUR 12 | Adults (entrance ticket)
- There is no need to register but you must book a time slot for M.

THERE IS MORE

Food for thought

M presents a diverse range of lectures, debates and encounters in connection with the exhibitions. Parallel to the exhibition of Vincent Geyskens we organize two evenings.

Thursday June 24 20:00 - book launch

Dominic Van den Boogerd, Eva Wittocx and Vincent Geyskens will talk about the art of painting today.

Reservations and tickets via www.mleuven.be

Thursday 2 September 18:00 - 22:00 - literary evening

Vincent Geyskens also makes films and writes poetry. On Thursday evening, 2 September, we will be highlighting these aspects of his work.

- 19:00 - 20:00 Film screening with an introduction by Veva Leye. Veva Leye is one of today's most linguistically innovative young Flemish poets. She tirelessly searches for the limits of our unlimited world via numerous languages, topographies and linguistic registers.
- 20:00 - 21:00 Presentation of the new poem 'Het Geslacht van de Paling'. Vincent Geyskens reads from his own work and invites other performers for the occasion.
- 18:00 - 22:00 The exhibition can be visited for free that evening (with a reservation)

Reservations and tickets via www.mleuven.be

Podcast

Curator **Eva Wittocx** talks to **Johan Pas**, **Lisa Vlaemminck**, **Dominic Van den Boogerd** and **Simon Delobel** about the work of **Vincent Geyskens**, about painting, frames, still lifes and collages. We delve into the rich history of art with specific attention to these elements. In a fifth podcast, Vincent Geyskens himself reads from his new poem 'Het Geslacht van de Paling' with an introduction by **Marc Kregting**.

THE WORKS

The exhibition includes more than 100 works from the period 2000-2021, with a focus on the last 10 years and work that will be shown to the public for the first time. Some 100 new sketches will also be shown. Works from private collections and from the artist's collection are brought together.

A selection from the exhibition:

Collages

- Self-portrait, 2001, collage on wood, 49 x 35 cm
- AS51, 2011, collage on paper, 30 x 30 cm
- AS52, 2011, collage on paper, 30 x 30 cm
- AS53, 2011, collage on paper, 30 x 30 cm
- The Spam IX, 2012, collage, 37 x 29 cm
- The Spam III, 2014, collage, 29,7 x 21 cm
- Clapotis IV, 2013, collage on wood, 56 x 43,5 cm
- Clapotis V, 2013, collage on wood, 56 x 43,5 cm

Frames

- Richmond F.A., 2013, oil paint and collage on swap frames, 84,5 x 409 cm
- King FOOK, 2018, oil on poster frames, 88 x 322 cm
- Senec, 2016, oil on swap frames, 88,5 x 381 cm
- UnDEAD, 2012, oil paint, varnish, spray paint and collage on swap frames, glass and wooden frames, 85 x 363 cm
- Nadering I, 2020, oil on swap frames, glass and canvas, 88 x 220,5 cm

Painting on canvas

- Barbados, 2000, oil on canvas, 150 x 90 cm (private collection Schoten)
- Encore une fois, 2000, oil on canvas, 55 x 40 cm (private collection)
- Kelly, 2009, oil on canvas, 66 x 51 cm (collection Eric Dewachter)
- Le Non-Réconcilié, 2016, oil on canvas, 40 x 50 cm
- Hondzocht, 2019, oil on canvas, 170 x 150 cm
- Loss Leader I, 2017, oil on canvas, 67 x 43,5 cm
- Dender I, 2020, oil on canvas, 170 x 140 cm

Still Lifes

- Grijze G., 2021, oil on canvas, 41 x 45 cm
- Z.T. (Stil life with brick), 2020, oil on canvas, 35 x 50 cm
- i conformisti, 2020, oil on canvas, 60 x 80 cm
- Appelen, 2021, oil on canvas, 30 x 40 cm

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

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Plan your route to the museum

By bike

Cyclists are very welcome. It is easy and safe to leave your bike in the bike park under Rector de Somerplein. From there, it is a two-minute walk to the museum.

By public transport

The museum is ten minutes' walk from Leuven Station. If you come by bus, the nearest stop is Rector de Somerplein. Plot your route with Google Maps.

By car

The new circulation plan leads you in different loops to Leuven and the car parks. Prefer to avoid city traffic? Then park your car in one of the peripheral car parks and take a free bus to the centre. Do you prefer to park nearby? Then there is parking Ladeuze, a two-minute walk from the museum. You will also find 18 places for disabled persons (height-limit: 1.90m). Click [here](#) for more information on the circulation plan and all parking options.

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High resolution images can be downloaded at the bottom of this press page:

<https://mleuven.prezly.com/media>