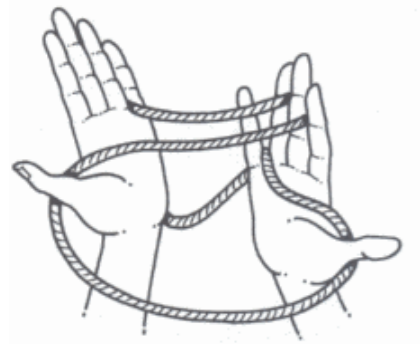
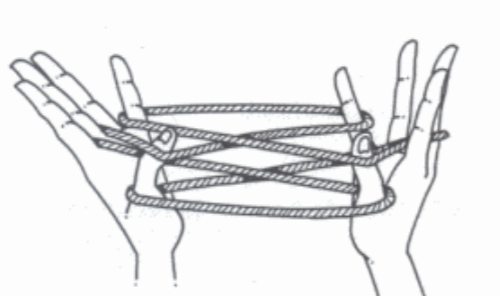


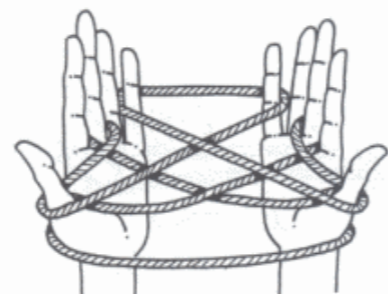
MAKE YOUR OWN STRING FIGURE.



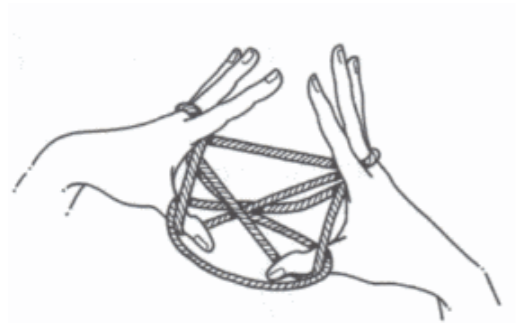
1. Starting position



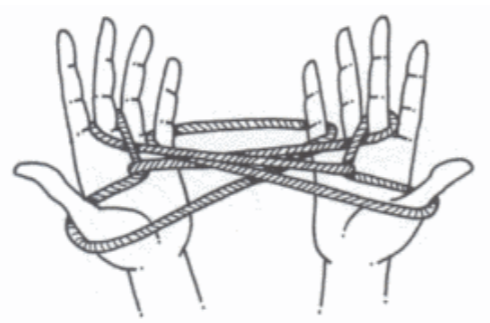
2. Hook your thumbs behind the middle-finger strings furthest away and bring them forward.



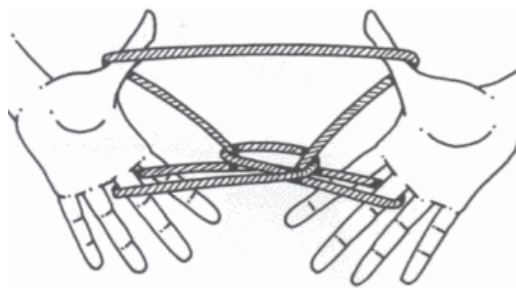
3. You now get this figure. There are two loops around each thumb.



4. Lower your thumbs and allow the thumb-loops at the bottom to slip away. Now you only have one loop around each thumb again.



5. Take your little fingers out of the loops and move your hands apart until all of the strings are taut.



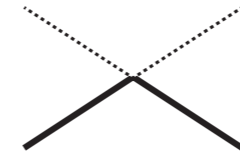
Turn your hands as in the drawing.
And there's your cup and saucer.

CERA AND M STRING TOGETHER!

Art and culture help to bring social issues to the fore and can be a source of great creativity and innovation in people's lives. As a cooperative, Cera believes in active participation in the arts by and for everyone.

M-Museum Leuven manages Cera's art collection and is now showcasing the works of eight artists from that collection together with new works by Katrien Vermeire. Unravel the strings and see for yourself...
Learn more at www.cera.be

Follow us on Facebook: Cera investeert in maatschappelijke projecten



M VAN
**MUSEUM
LEUVEN**

TWISTED STRINGS

24.06.16 × 04.09.16

The interplay of lines is the thread running through this exhibition. M has chosen eight Belgian artists from the Cera collection to take part, all of whom use forms and lines as basic elements in their visual idiom. The works explore the boundaries between geometric abstraction and optical illusion. The selection includes artworks by Amédée Cortier, Jo Delahaut, Lili Dujourie, Ann Veronica Janssens, Walter Leblanc, Caroline Van Damme, Dan Van Severen and Philippe Van Snick.

M has also commissioned Katrien Vermeire to create a series of photographs and a film on the theme of play. Her latest project follows a trail of string figures. This children's game with hands and a loop of string is played all over the world and in the most diverse cultures. In many societies, moreover, string figures have the status of a fully-fledged, but ephemeral art form with a narrative, religious or magical charge. Katrien Vermeire unravels this lively, centuries-old and largely overlooked tradition.



STRING PAVILION

Get down to work in the String Pavilion in Room 18. Explore literature on string figures, make a large string figure together, or try your hand at one of our assignments with line and form.

ROOM 15

ANN VERONICA JANSSENS (1956)

Bain de lumière, 1998
Disque, 1998-1999

Ann Veronica Janssens applies an almost scientific eye in her artistic production to intangible phenomena such as light, sound and colour. The results consist of fragile and ephemeral sculptures in simple, transparent and reflective materials. Her sculptures arouse a sense of wonder, while focusing on the visitor’s sensual experience. Your position, the way you look and the time of day when you view the works all help shape your experience of the artwork. In *Bain de lumière*, for instance, Janssens allows the entire space to reflect in the sculpture, while the transparency and weight of the liquid are experienced as ‘matter’. Disque likewise makes the immaterial visible in the subtle refractions and rays of light created by the gossamer-fine laser-etched circles on the disc.

JO DELAHAUT (1911-1992)

Germination, 1959

The painter Jo Delahaut is one of the key figures of Belgian geometric abstraction. Colour and form are given their own expressive power in geometric-abstract painting, with no reference to the outside world. Perspective and depth are likewise banished. The primary characteristics are clarity and pure geometric forms. Jo Delahaut developed his own style within this geometric abstraction, which is immediately recognizable from the repetition of forms – often rectangles and circles – to create patterns that stand out from the background. Although Delahaut’s work is characterized primarily by geometric forms, *Germination* features undulating lines that flow across the canvas.

ROOM 16

PHILIPPEVAN SNICK (1946)

Duif en duiven, 1974
(0-9) Stoel, 1975

As a young artist in the 1970s, Philippe Van Snick began systematically to explore logical patterns. His approach has been applied in a variety of media, from photography and drawings to paintings and installations. He aligns himself with conceptual art and applies a simple formal vocabulary, but also pays attention to small, everyday observations and allows chance to play a role. Van Snick looks for ways in which to order reality. One of the results of this research has been a variety of works in which he connects points in a linear way to form figures. In *Duif en duiven* (Dove and

Doves), for instance, a flock of doves is turned into a line drawing, like a children’s game, in which you have to join the numbers to draw a figure. The installation *(0–9) Stoel* (0-9 Chair) is a spatial variation on this, in which Van Snick has painstakingly stretched ten lengths of iron wire between the legs of a stool.

WALTER LEBLANC (1932-1986)

Torsions, 1969
Gouache, 1959
Gouache, 1959
Twisted Strings, 1970
Twisted Strings, 1970

In the 1950s, Walter Leblanc initially made abstract paintings, in which he added non-pictorial elements such as sand or pieces of string to the paint. He altered course around 1960, introducing a more systematic element to his work through the repetition of the single basic element: the twisted form. Leblanc initially used twisted string, followed by strips of vinyl, both white-on-white and in bright colours. His Twisted Strings incorporate plaited cotton threads stretched over a monochrome cotton surface. The shifting fall of light on the relief is part of the artwork. The pattern of shadows on the work changes continually, for instance, as the sun moves during the course of the day. The viewer’s shadow also influences the lighting effects: the work seems to vibrate before your eyes. With this form of optical art, Leblanc aligned himself with international avant-garde groups.

AMÉDÉE CORTIER (1921-1976)

Untitled, 1974
Untitled, 1974-75
Untitled 1974-75

Cortier underwent a long artistic journey, in the course of which he distilled his work to an ever greater degree. He began as an Expressionist, later worked as a Cubist, and turned in the 1960s to geometric-abstract painting. A key element of painting in that period is that artists began once again to explore its basic principles. What that meant in Cortier’s case, was an exploration of colour. At the end of 1966, he began to paint with acrylics, precisely because of their more powerful colour intensity compared to oil paint. Expanses of colour became increasingly important, with the result that his work evolved towards the monochrome. He based the construction of his figures on the ‘golden ratio’, a harmonious system of proportion that has existed since antiquity. Cortier’s final works, such as those exhibited here, are monochrome panels in gloss paint with a slight relief, which causes the forms to stand out. The reflectiveness and texture of these panels are such that colour, light, form and space combine in them.

“*Colour and form in a painting have to merge into a perfect unity.*” Amédée Cortier

ROOM 17

KATRIEN VERMEIRE (1979)

String Figures, Brussel, 2016 (14’)
Oxen Inspanned, Sarah, Inverness USA, 2016
Murphy’s 3D Ten Men Figure, Forum Romanum, 2016
Murphy’s Ten Men and Inuit Net Variations, Villa Borghese, Rome, 2016
Inuit Net, Carlo, Vatican City, 2016

In many cultures, string figures are more than just the children’s game we know today. They can also be linked to religion, mythology and prophecies. String figures are artefacts of extremely old traditions: ephemeral, simple and direct expressions of an abstract language. The process of making them is at least as important as the final result. String figures tell stories without words, in a succession of figures, almost like an animated silent film.

M commissioned Katrien Vermeire to explore this tradition. Her photographs and 16 mm film focus on the tangible and visual aspects of string figures: their geometry, the abstract element, the choreography of the hands, and the volume that is temporarily created. The visual impact of string figures, with their choreography of hands and fascinating interplay of lines, makes them a rewarding subject for the visual artist. Human body and object are inseparably connected in the final representation. Katrien Vermeire has synthesized this dynamic relationship between body, brain and object, while calling on the implicit memory of contemporary viewers, who might still have the art in their fingers.

ROOM 18

KATRIEN VERMEIRE (1979)

Navajo Many Stars, Sarah, Inverness USA, 2016

LILI DUJOURIE (1941)

Koraal, 1978

Lili Dujourie has been building a personal oeuvre since the 1960s. She makes videos, sculptures, collages, drawings and photographic series. Dujourie is viewed as a pioneer in the field of Belgian video art. In *Chorale* we watch the artist’s hands peeling an orange in grainy black and white. The video focuses on the graceful movement of the hands as they split the orange into segments almost tenderly. It is an everyday action, but its enlargement gives it something sacred. This sacred aspect is also expressed in the title *Koraal* (Chorale): a chorale is a kind of stately Protestant hymn. As is often the case in her work, the elapsing of time is a central theme of this video. There is no trace of narrative, only a slow and soundless recording of an everyday act: there is no editing. The visitor is asked to join in the process of slowing down. The video also addresses the destruction of a form and the idea of transience: the segments disappear one by one from the image, and by the end, the entire fruit has disappeared. Are they being eaten?

CAROLINEVAN DAMME (1955)

Drawing Graphe / Folio 0.10., Folio 0.16., Folio 0.2., 1993
Séghia I, 1999
Orcade no 1, 1999-2000
Quadrat I, 1999
Sagaponack II, 1998

Van Damme explores the correlations between line and colour, and between surface, the limits of the canvas and the relationship with space. It is as if she painted with a ruler, so strict and ordered is her work. Van Damme does not seek to create meanings. Her work is all about the quest for line, surface, colour, delineation and space. Van Damme has been working since 1990 on series done on canvas, to which she gives unusual titles. The canvases she shows here are built up from different layers of acrylic applied on top of one another, using paint-resistant tape that she carefully removes. White lines break up the expenses of colour. She sometimes works on aluminium supports or graph paper too. Van Damme’s canvases are the synthesis of years of research. Hundreds of sketches serve as the basis for the selection of usable forms, the colour, movement and spatiality of which she then tests out in scale models on paper or linen, before translating them into her works on canvas.

DANVAN SEVEREN (1927-2009)

Untitled, ca. 1985-90 (series)

Van Severen was a representative of abstract art in Belgium. He evolved from his early, impastoed, expressionistic paintings towards a geometric-abstract style that he continued to strip down further. Van Severen searched for the essence, approaching his work like an ascetic. Although the works do not betray the fact, the artist spent several days in his studio making them. From around 1970, a purely linear alphabet arose of simple, geometric forms and lines in a limited palette of colours and with only a few materials. Van Severen sought a way of achieving maximum expression with the fewest means possible. He eventually arrived at the cross form, which he saw as universal and which would become a key element of all his later compositions, as shown in this exhibition.

“*(...) I see the cross as a contrast, like air and earth for the Chinese, or the male and female principles, height and depth, left and right. The artist sits in the middle and can therefore think in four directions. I did not seek a new sign, but limited myself to the simplicity of the horizontal and vertical line, from which diamond, square, ellipse and circle can grow.*”
Dan Van Severen