

JAN VERCRUYSSSE

Opening: Sunday, 21 May, 11 am to 5 pm

Until 24 September 2023

From Wednesday to Sunday, 10 am - 1 pm | 3 - 6.30 pm

Jan Vercruysse started out as a poet. In 1974 he stopped writing and devoted himself completely to visual art. His works arise from the need to reflect on the role of the artist, the role of art and the validity of representation. Vercruysse sees himself as the first observer of the work, which is then, with temporal detachment, left 'to the world' and other viewers, becomes autonomous and no longer belongs to him.

The present exhibition brings together works from 1981 to 2013 displayed in the spacious gallery space and divided into four rooms. Characteristic of Vercruysse's artistic procedure is, depending on the time of his creations, to create works in series. Each series refers to the next and the one after that, until a total narrative is achieved that represents his thoughts and reflections.

Between 1977 and 1984, Vercruysse used photography in the form of the self-portrait as a means of expression. The artist himself plays a central role in this series of works, often depicted as a figure rather than as identifiable person.

In each room, a photographic work from both the self-portrait series and later works by the artist in the same medium are presented. These works are like a thin Ariadne's thread that accompanies us on our visit.

The fundamental themes of Vercruysse's artistic work are a continuous reflection on **being an artist**, on **art** in the broad sense, on art that materialises as a **place** and **non-place** in which it completes itself, on the sense of **time, memory** and **existence**: see the sculptures of the M series in which the work is presented as a plaster and wood plane, a mute instrument. The title M, the initial of Memory, Momentum, Monumentum... Memory, first of all, capable of retaining the present moment, Monumentum that celebrates silence, Momentum to be interpreted as a transit phase that materialises between Being and Non-Being.

To these themes is added a reflection on the concept of the **place of Art**, of **absence** and **waiting**. The objects – the frames not enclosed in their perimeter, the empty chair – become the place closed in on itself but open to our memory or imagination, as in the exhibited work, *Petite Suite* (1986/2003).

Room by room, the exhibition develops a 'chosen' dialogue, giving physical vision to the artist's thought through the works.

We would like to thank the Jan Vercruysse Foundation and the private collections for their loans.

Jan Vercruysse (Ostend, Belgium, 1948 - Brussels, Belgium, 2018) first trained in law before turning to poetry and then the visual arts. Solo exhibitions include: Museum M, Leuven, Belgium (2009); Kunstmuseum aan Zee, Ostend, Belgium (2009); Centro Arti Visive Pescheria, Pesaro, Italy (2008); Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens, Deurle, Belgium (2001); The Netherlands National Gallery, Amsterdam, Netherlands (1994); Castello di Rivoli Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Turin, Italy (1992); Stedelijk Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, Netherlands (1990 and 1997); Kunsthal Bern, Bern, Switzerland (1989); Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels, Belgium (1988 and 1999); ARC - Musée d'Art Moderne, Paris, France (1986). In 1993 he represented Belgium at the 45th Venice Biennale, and in 2001 he was awarded the prestigious *Flemish Culture Award for Visual Arts*. In 2002 he participated in Turin's permanent public project 'Luci d'Artista' with a work entitled *Fontane Luminose*. Represented in prestigious public and private contemporary art collections in Europe and the United States, Jan Vercruysse is considered one of the most influential Belgian artists of his generation.