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This second *Stories* edition is ready just in time for the shortening days and colder nights. Autumn lurs us to our cozy interiors where we have the time to flip through the magazines laying on our coffee table and to enjoy our surrounding art to the fullest.

Curiously peering through the windows of illuminated houses and wondering about the stories unfolding inside has always been one of my guilty pleasures. Today, I have the privilege of presenting art in people's private environment, which gives me the chance to discover how they live. By offering advice, I become part of the unique result that arises when a piece of art enters its new home. In this edition, we hope to share this joy, by giving you access to three remarkable homes, each belonging to collectors with distinctive tastes which is reflected in their furnishing and art. Jesse Willems, one of our artists, should not be missing as to him creation, collection, and admiration are indispensable and inseparable.

We also visit the studio of Michiel Veireman, whose passion is to present art with utter finesse. The combination of careful dialogue with the artists and elegant craftsmanship and proves to be key in this achievement.

The creative minds of the talented team of Wilder and the colorful drawings of Eliza Pepermans have merged nicely, and we are delighted to present its remarkable outcome.

Finally, allow me to introduce you to Elie Schönfeld, the owner and moving spirit behind the gallery. His unwavering love for art has been the breeding ground for the creation of these stories. For nearly five years, he has been the indispensable engine of this gallery. We perceive it as the perfect occasion to invite him to curate the first exhibition of 2024, which will allow us to delve into his personal story.

What lies ahead promises to be a festive year filled with surprise, this edition is merely a glimpse of what we have in store.

Greet Umans
Gallery director



Frans Masereel & Albert Pepermans

Rencontre dans la ville

Frans Masereel (1889-1972) and Albert Pepermans crossed paths in the vibrant city of Brussels. Both are astute observers of humankind, with a boundless imagination, driven by an unwavering passion for drawing. Another shared passion between them was their love for the city as a subject. In the work of both artists, you can find recurring urban motifs – bridges, chimneys, factories, towering apartment buildings, and city dwellers, among others – rendered in a distinctive graphic style with a pronounced emphasis on black and white. It's an energised type of style; the speed and immediacy with which their brushstrokes graced the paper not only reflect the artists' zeal and inexhaustible energy, but also mirror the frenetic pace of urban life. While Masereel's visual novel *La Ville* (1925) reads like a symphony of the city, Pepermans' urban compositions dance – a bit bold and cheeky – to the beats of rock 'n' roll and punk.

However, the cityscapes by Masereel and Pepermans carry different undertones, largely shaped by the differing contexts in

which these artists live. Masereel portrays a dystopian city, his work carries a political orientation and profound social critique. The artist lived through two world wars, coped with the horrors of these conflicts by drawing them, and sought to persuade his

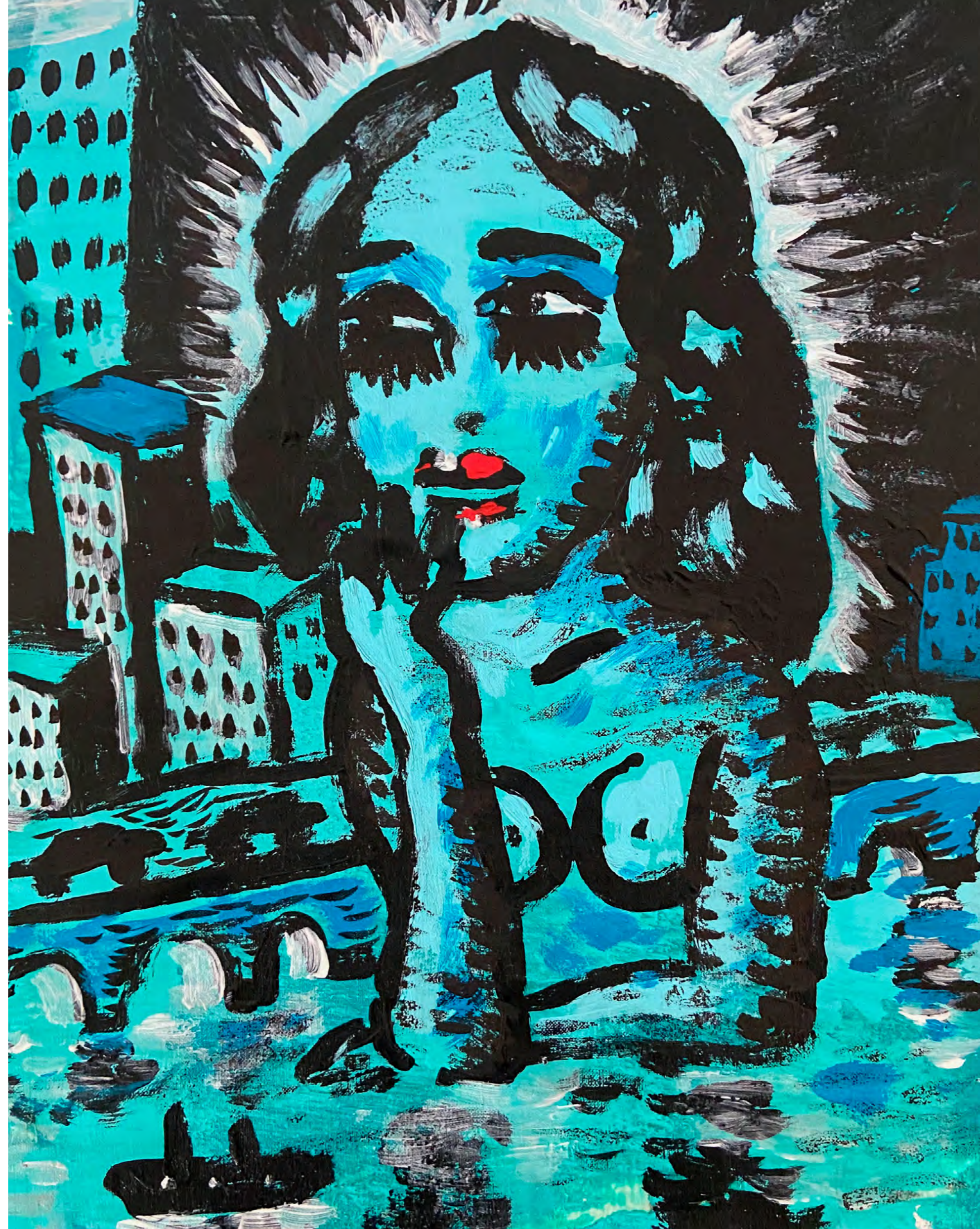
contemporaries towards pacifism. Residing in the industrial city of Ghent, he was confronted by the struggles faced by socialist movements fighting for improved living conditions for workers. Within Masereel's body of work, the exploitation of labourers by our capitalist society emerged as a prominent theme, with nameless masses of workers symbolised as billowing factory chimneys, and those in positions of power depicted as larger than the factories themselves. His time in Paris, a city marked by its anonymity, left a significant

imprint on Masereel's art. Within his works, the artist juxtaposed the lonely individual against the teeming crowds of people, rendering the masses with remarkable technical precision.

Pepermans also delves into the human condition, though his approach is less militant, and he deliberately steers clear of politics. His body of work possesses a somewhat dreamy quality, imbued with humour and a rather innocent form of critical reflection. His art bears clear influences from Pop Art, Dada, the Neue Wilde movement, happenings, rock 'n' roll, anarchist punk, and underground comics. Pepermans, a product of his era – the vibrant 60s and 70s – holds a decidedly more optimistic view of the city. The urban landscapes he draws are defined by a vibrant 'joie de

vivre'. In contrast to Masereel's rather negative portrayal of the city's traffic with its hustle, chaos, and danger, Pepermans elevates the car as the reigning monarch of the urban jungle. It emerges as a recurring motif in his work, serving as a metaphor for travelling, being on the road, and the exhilaration of reaching one's destination, a symbol of freedom, endless possibilities, and a great deal of enjoyment.

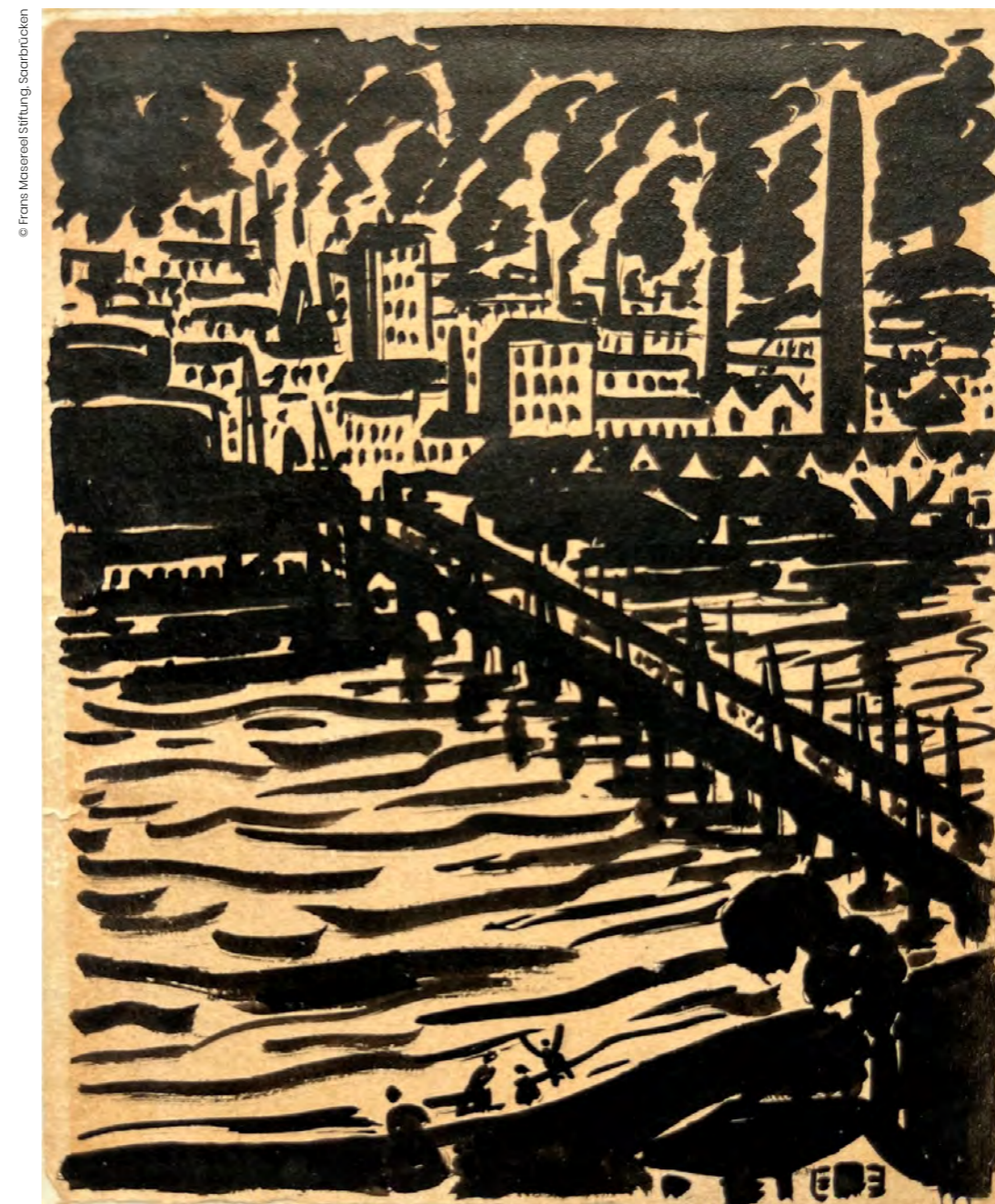
Rencontre dans la Ville, curated by Frank Hendrickx, showcases brush drawings and woodcuts by Masereel spanning various periods: preliminary studies for



Masereel inspired I, 2023, 24 x 30 cm, acrylic on canvas



Art & Saucers, 1998, 150 x 200 cm, oilstick on paper



© Frans Masereel Stiftung, Saarbrücken

Frans Masereel, Pontonbrug voor fabrieksgebouwen, 1918, ink on paper, 11,1 x 9 cm



© Frans Masereel Stiftung, Saarbrücken

Frans Masereel, *Soldaten optocht*, circa 1918, ink on paper, 11 x 9,15 cm

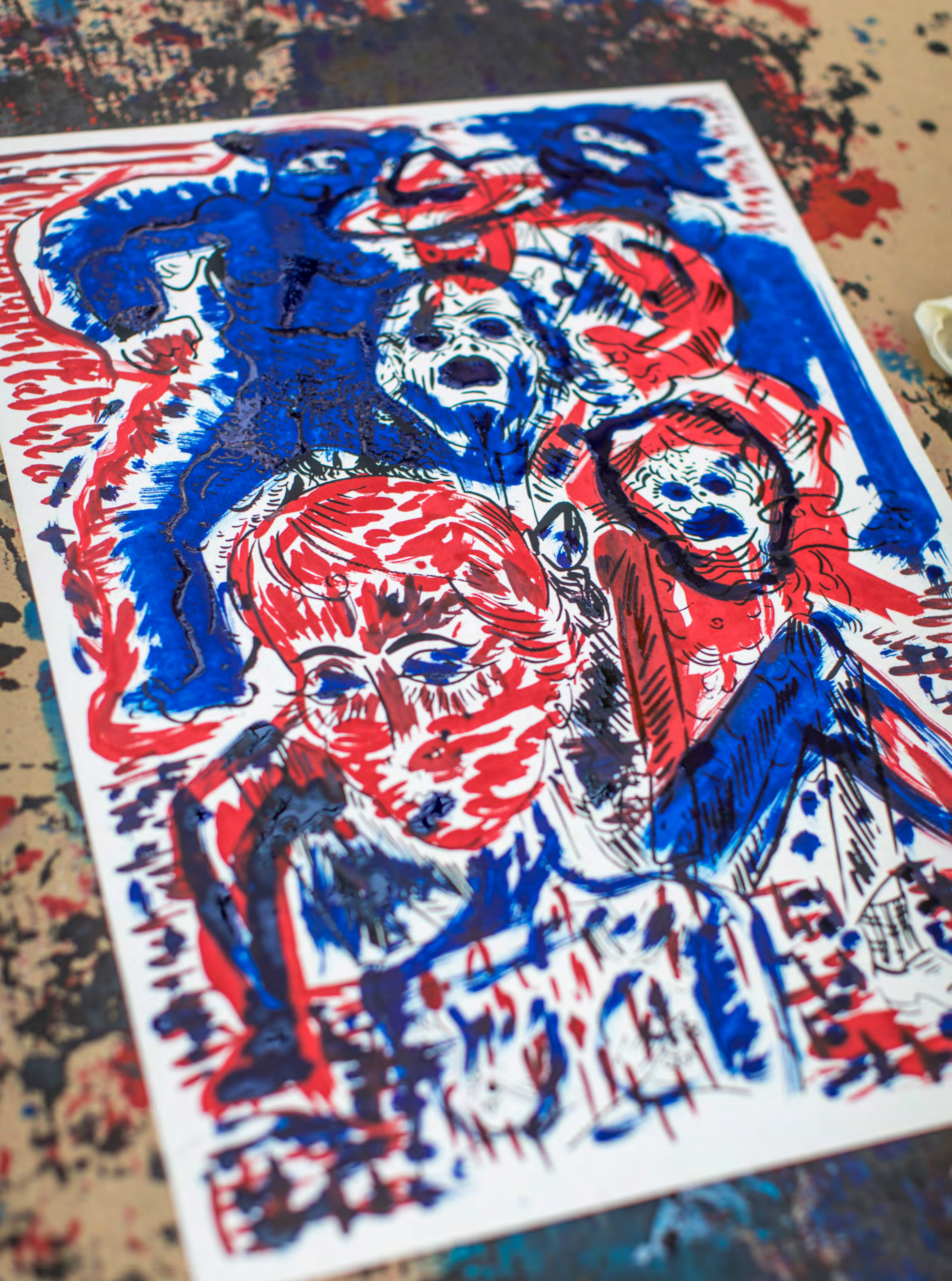
In contrast to Masereel's rather negative portrayal of the city's traffic with its hustle, chaos, and danger, Pepermans elevates the car as the reigning monarch of the urban jungle.



Peppered Silkscreen VI, 2023, 42 x 60 cm, acrylic on paper

his pioneering graphic novel, *La Ville*, and for Stijn Streuvels' *De vlaschaard*, and also works from the series *Histoire de fou* and *La condition humaine*. These works aptly demonstrate that, alongside his status as one of the most significant woodcut artists of the last century, Masereel was also a remarkable illustrator. Pepermans introduces new creations inspired by Masereel's oeuvre; a series of small acrylic canvases, and

several larger paintings on wood. Furthermore, he adapted, as if they were 'modifications', some test prints from a series of screen prints originally published posthumously by Ronny Van de Velde in 1983-1984; blow-ups of Masereel's original small drawings. And so, Pepermans actively engages in a dialogue with Masereel's legacy here as well.



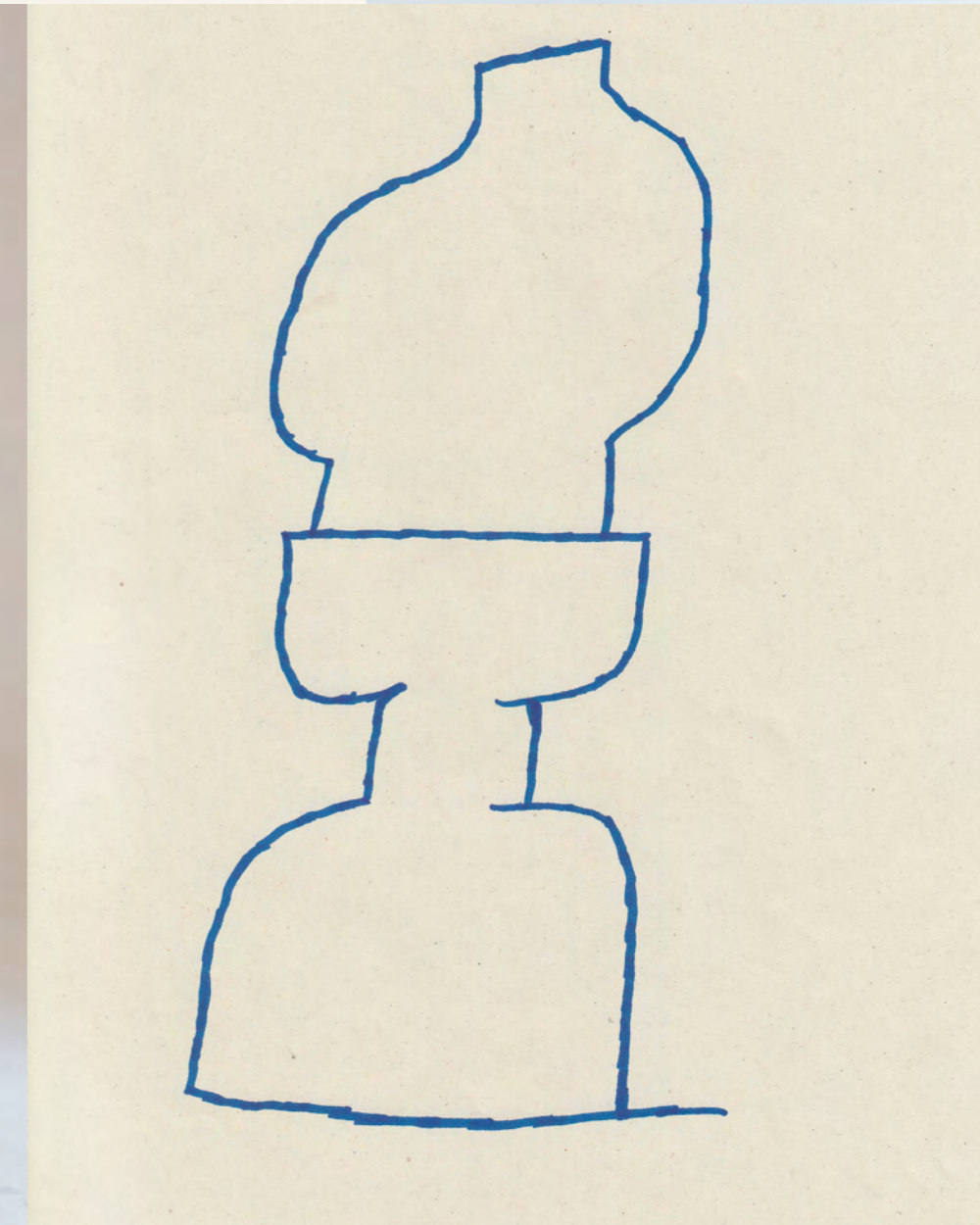
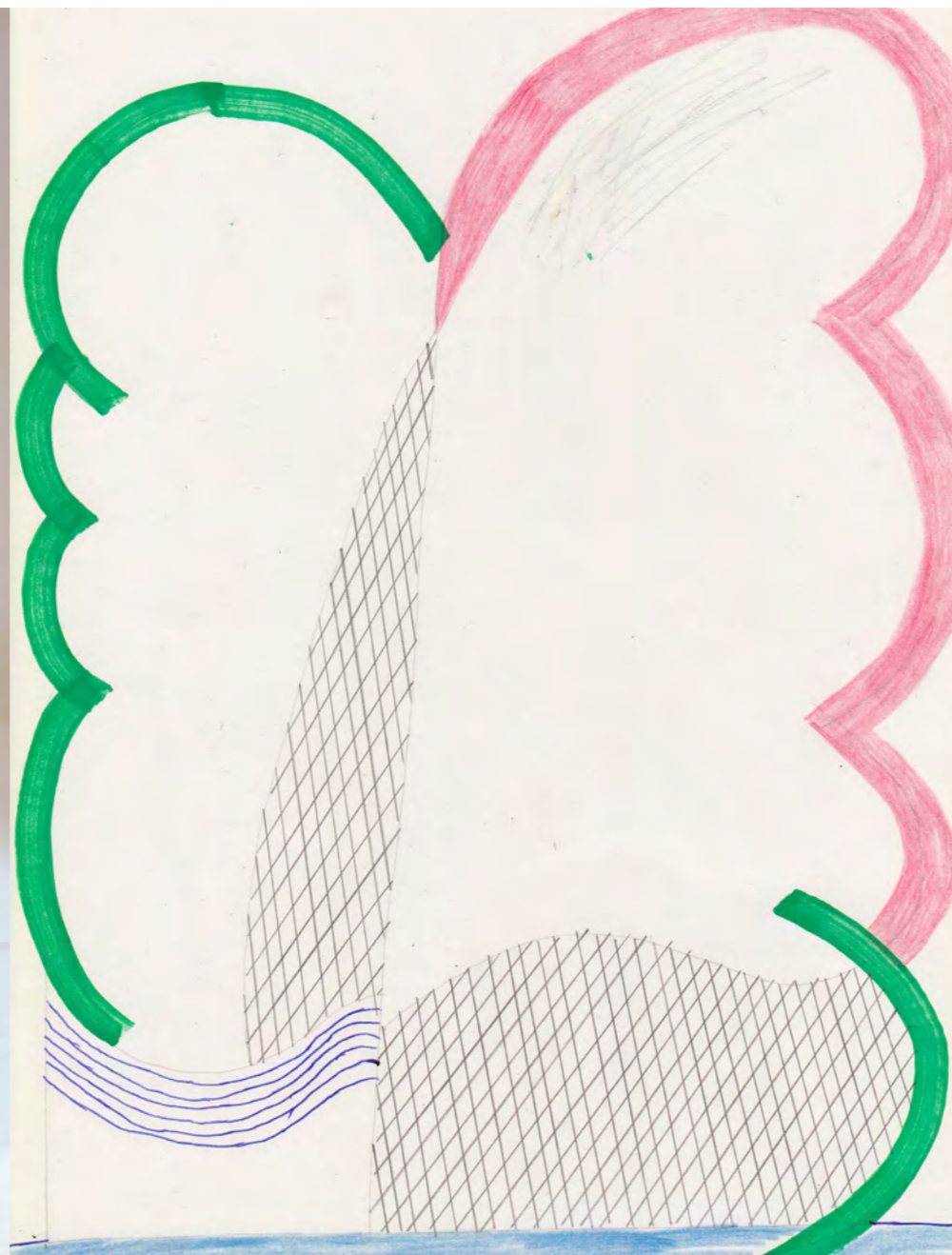
Peppered Silkscreen VII, 2023, 42 x 60 cm, acrylic on paper

Wilder x Eliza Pepermans

For the second edition of *Stories* by Schönfeld, Eliza Pepermans had a conversation with Marijke Boesmans and Mayken Craenen van Wilder. In their store and studio in Antwerp, you'll discover bouquets and floral arrangements featuring seasonal and organic flowers sourced from local farmers, alongside a curated selection of vintage objects. This passionate duo also provides a platform for other artists who serve as a source of inspiration to them.



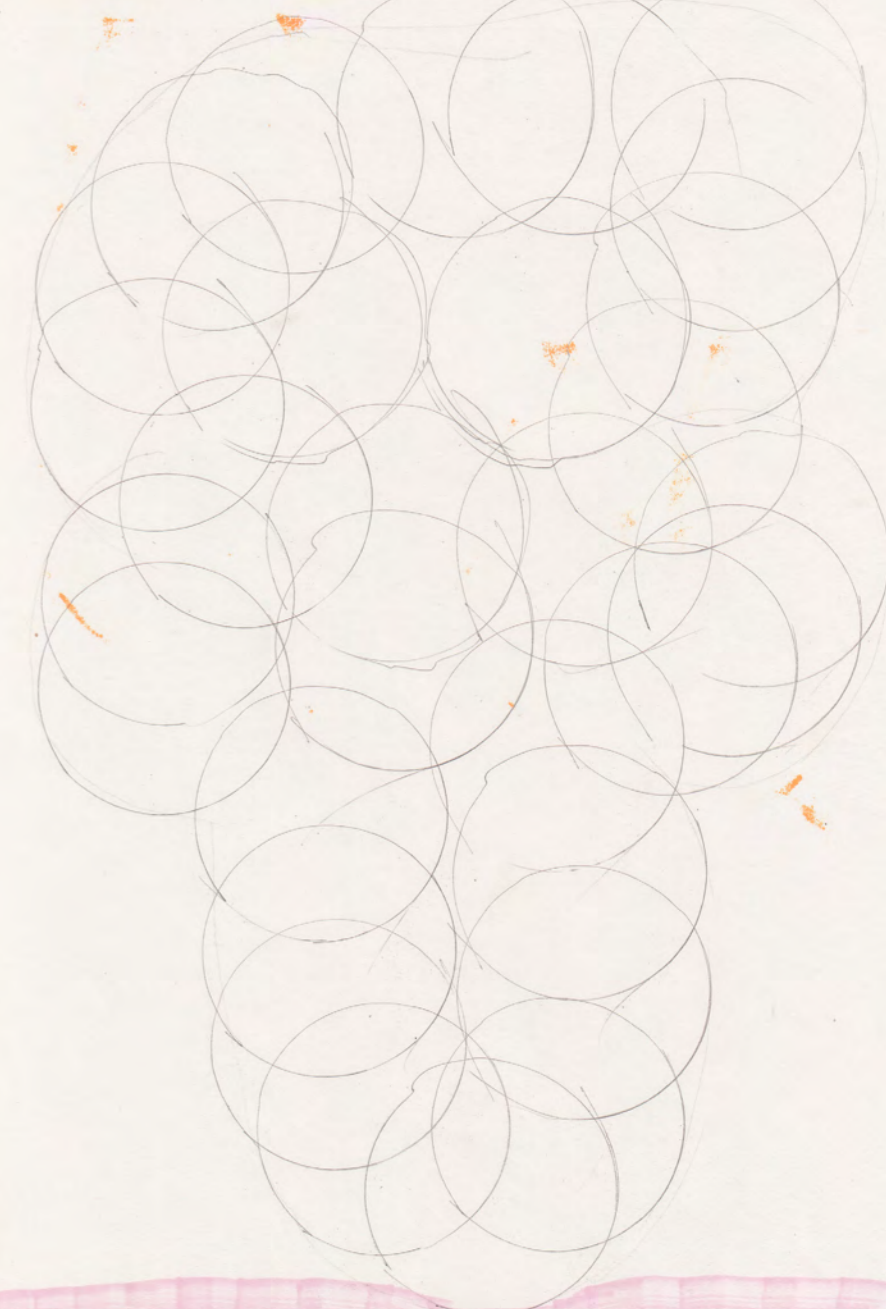
wilderwilder.be



Inspired by a series of drawings created by Eliza in 2022 after attending the Art on Paper fair, Marijke and Mayken started working with objects and flowers.

'These drawings lie somewhere between the initial sketches and the eventual paintings. The objects portrayed are based on observation, but the graphic elements take precedence, along with a sense of freedom, swiftness, and expressiveness', Eliza explains. 'For me, drawings are inherently less constrained. They serve as a playground for my exploration of form and lines', she further elaborates.

'We were truly captivated by the simplicity that Eliza skillfully conveyed in her drawings. We used the white sheet of paper as a backdrop for our compositions, which lent a sense of simplification, allowing the selected flowers to shine more vividly', Mayken comments. 'Eliza's exploration of colours, shapes, and harmony is something that deeply engages us as well. Inspired by her minimalist compositions, we embarked on experimentation, sketching, and playful arrangements using leftover flowers and objects. As we were freestyling, we tried to translate the drawings' graphic elements', she adds.



How is... Svelte Thys

In January 2023, on the occasion of Svelte Thys' first solo exhibition at Schönfeld Gallery, curator Roxane Baeyens met Svelte for the very first time. With a duo presentation at Art Antwerp on the horizon, Roxane visited Svelte's studio again in the autumn of 2023 for an update. How is the artist doing?



Roxane A duo presentation with Jesse Willems at Art Antwerp is scheduled for December 2023. As the curator of that presentation, I challenged you to create large work. How's that process going for you?

Svelte Well, you could definitely call it a challenge (laughs). Smaller pieces are more concentrated; I can focus on them more easily. Making large work always implies stepping out of my comfort zone a bit, which can be quite intimidating. However, it's an essential journey for me as both an artist and a person. When I was studying, teachers and the jury often questioned why I stuck to creating smaller pieces. Well, because it's where I feel most at ease! I often find larger pieces to be weighty in terms of content, and I'm occasionally taken aback by the kind of imagery they

generate. But I always learn a great deal from them! The visual solutions I discover are entirely different from those in my smaller works. Earlier this year, I visited the joint exhibition of Claude Monet and Joan Mitchell at the Fondation Louis Vuitton in Paris. Mitchell's work left me utterly speechless. It was both monumental and incredibly sincere. Fascinating! In the studio, I frequently flip through her catalogue when working on a larger scale feels difficult.

Roxane We intended to juxtapose Jesse's rather understated, white paper collages with your vibrant paintings, rich in subject matter. Will they all be paintings, or are we bringing drawings to the exhibition?

Svelte I did indeed opt for creating paintings. However, now that I'm facing these expansive canvases, I find myself frequently starting with drawings. There are just too many ideas racing through my mind simultaneously. It's a bit like the piece *Verlegen wolkje* ('Shy Cloud'), with various layers stacked on top of each other. It's easier for me, then, to think while I'm drawing. This is largely due to the swiftness of drawing. Consequently, in the studio, to capture my creative process, I display multiple drawings and sheets of paper with scribbled words above, below, and alongside my paintings.

Roxane Your drawings possess a disarming beauty and a moving sincerity. They resonate strongly with the viewer.

Svelte Drawings are undeniably more direct and pure. The speed with which they are created, among other things, leaves no room for a filter. In contrast, paintings entail a certain sense of waiting, which creates a degree of distance. And the multitude of layers superimposed upon each other results in a somewhat filtered image.

Roxane During our first encounter, your works not only represented a refreshing exploration of painting, its visual language, and its boundaries, but also zoomed in on the landscapes of your childhood. More precisely, the pristine natural surroundings along the Grote Nete in your hometown of Itegem (a sub-municipality of Heist-op-den-Berg). Later, you moved to a studio in the heart of Antwerp, and a noticeable evolution became apparent in your work. Your usually abstract paintings were cut by a vibrating play of lines. Was this a response to processing the multitude of sensory stimuli you encountered in the city?

Svelte Yes. In the countryside, with its unhurried rhythm, time is abundant. There's time to exist in and with time. There is time, but also space to think. In Itegem, I was often sitting along the chickens, seeking understanding. In the city, there's no room for 'understanding'. Every space is occupied, and everything is pre-digested. Consequently, my work in the city became less 'thought-through', and more an intuitive understanding of the environment I was living in. The vibrating lines are like the echoes of urban sounds.

Roxane We're talking about vibrations and sounds. Can we say that you incorporate synesthesia into your paintings?



Kastanjeboom, 2022, 29,5 x 38,5 cm, mixed media on paper



Landschappers, 2022, 29,5 x 38,5 cm, mixed media on paper



Amerikageur, 2023, 37 x 27 cm, oil paint on canvas



Svelte Yes, synesthesia is a term that's often used by people when describing my work. This summer, I reacquainted myself with the works of the Swedish composer Hans Appelqvist (*Tänk att himlens alla stjärnor*). In his music, he blends singing with various little sounds, as if they suddenly breezed in. It triggered me to attempt to visually represent music, resulting in *Pluisbloemen*. That painting perfectly visualises my summertime sensation with its twinkling sounds (laughs). When I think of sound and music, I also think of colour, motion, and structure. I see my works as orchestras comprising double basses, violins, and tubas.

Roxane Your work is highly context-specific, influenced by the countryside, the city, the seasons...

Svelte Yes, my use of colour naturally adapts to the seasons, almost without my conscious intention. I tend to use colours mixed with white in the spring, and plenty of yellow and pink during the summer. In autumn, khaki green takes the stage, and in the winter there are more intense hues. Summer brings more light and people dance, causing my paintings to light up and capture a lot of movement. In autumn, the mist rises, and darkness looms in the wintertime. It was around this time last year, in October 2022, when I created a large, black painting for the first time.

Roxane Engaging directly with life, with what you observe, experience, and feel. In our earlier conversation, you mentioned your approach to conveying emotions – not in a concrete manner, but rather as suggestions or echoes. You referred to them as “abstract emotions”, inspired by Canadian-American abstract painter Agnes Martin, inexpressible emotions that often emerge when you're observing nature.

Svelte In general, it often takes me some time to articulate or represent things, let alone for my work to become a precise depiction of something concrete. My paintings are always a sort of ‘journey towards’, a quest for something that I can't immediately grasp, something I can almost see, though simultaneously it seems distant and blurry. This is reflected in multiple layers of thick matter. At the moment even more so, because I'm currently in some kind of transitional phase. I'm set to return to the countryside in December. My boyfriend and I bought a house, again in Heist-op-den-Berg, but on the other side. I now find myself somewhere in between: no longer in the urban studio, yet not quite at the countryside. It's like I'm in a dream, with my gaze fixed on the weeping willow, the birds, and the chickens waiting for me in Heist-op-den-Berg. But at the same time, it feels like I'm in a dense fog or a swimming pool where you have to try real hard to push aside the heavy water. This creates a surprising confusion in my work, and casts a kind of haze, like a curtain, over the ‘actual’ image.

Roxane But will the landscape of your childhood, the Grote Nete and ‘the meadow’, soon emerge again from that mist?

Svelte Yes, it is only a twenty-minute bike ride from our new house to the Grote Nete, and I also have an outdoor studio there. In that sense, I am returning to my starting point as a painter, and that feels very nice. Just like my parents, we also have a weeping willow in the garden. I look at it from my studio. When a weeping willow loses its leaves in autumn, it is not bald but its branches appear to have little hairs. When the sun shines on it, that lush head of hair takes on a golden glow. I'm looking forward to discovering how that translates into my work!



Ongeboren warmte (eitjes eendje)



Koala (camouflage), 2022, 29,5 x 38,5 cm, mixed media on paper.



Michiel Veireman

Gems of artworks deserve to be preserved and showcased with meticulous care. This is why Schönfeld Gallery has been working with Michiel Veireman for several years already – a dedicated and passionate frame maker. We had the opportunity to visit him in his studio.

The artist behind soulful frames



Michiel, how did you come to be a frame maker?

It happened quite organically. In my previous job working for the government, I quickly realised it wasn't the right fit for me. I wanted to be able to create something, learn a craft, and so I ventured into woodworking. My maternal grandfather, Remi, was a sculptor at a furniture manufacturer. When my brother and I used to go on holidays with our grandparents, we'd always go into his studio. I believe my interest in this craft started there. I initially worked for a carpenter in Wieze, until a photographer friend approached me to craft frames for his artwork. That's when I immersed myself in the art of frame making. I started with just one workbench

in my grandmother's living room. Eventually I became a full-time frame maker in 2018. I truly began from scratch, and had to gradually learn about the industry's requirements, standards, and trends.

What sets you apart from your peers?

I might be one of the few idiots (laughs) who are dedicated to handling every step of the process. This entails everything from sawing and milling to creating splines and applying varnishes, and ultimately framing the artwork. While many of my colleagues opt for pre-made frames, I have a background in woodworking, so why should I limit myself to prefab frames?

Furthermore, by overseeing each step of the process, I can maintain better control over the final product's quality.

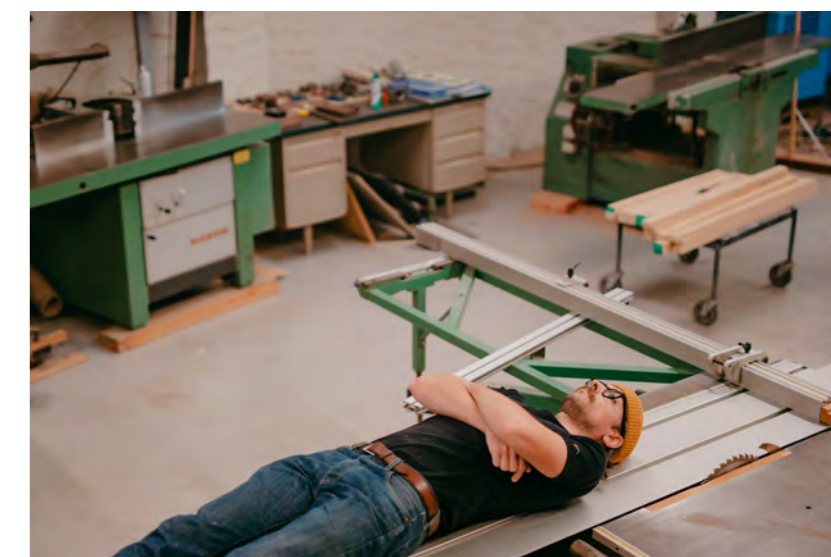
What do you like so much about collaborating with artists?

Artists are like filters. They incorporate what they hear and see into their art, whether that is social, cultural or personal. Beautiful, right? And that leads to so many interesting conversations. Though I sometimes like to lock myself in the sawmill, I really need that creative input. I like working for people who know very well what they want, and I enjoy working with them to find the perfect solution. You will get the best results if you can feel the work. I always start

with the artist's story. How can I translate that, and how can the frame support the work without being too overpowering?

Because framing artworks isn't as straightforward as it might seem?

Indeed, at times, it can be quite challenging to strike the right balance between preservation and presentation. Finding a non-invasive presentation is not always easy. Additionally, artists today use a wide variety of materials, and not all of them are equally as easy to preserve. This is why it's crucial to keep researching, conducting experiments, and continually updating my knowledge of materials. For instance, I once



decided to test the durability of my frames, as everyone prefers the slimmest possible profile. I framed a weight of ten kilos as part of the test, and that weight has been sitting there since 2017. I'd say "mission accomplished" (laughs).

For Schönfeld Gallery, you work with, among others, Jesse Willems.

I've known Jesse for quite some time, back when he was a photographer. Suddenly, he transitioned to creating three-dimensional collages, which posed a framing challenge. On top of that, they are also very fragile. We embarked on a journey of experimentation to find the best solutions. Working with Jesse has been the most instructive for me. He has consistently pushed me to deepen my understanding of materials. Jesse created a series of works with a connection to Africa, and we decided to frame them using wenge wood. Wenge is a dark brown tropical hardwood native to West and Central Africa, set apart by its distinctive lighter stripes and flame-like patterns. The scent of freshly cut wenge wood evokes Africa. Wonderful!

What have been the highlights of your career so far?

My work has often led to pleasant moments. It is always nice to visit exhibitions where there is work framed by me. When I was invited to a wedding at the Verbeke Foundation a few years ago, Jesse's work was also hanging there. It was fantastic to be able to party surrounded by my frames! And thanks to the artists, I also started travelling. I never really travelled before. I didn't really feel like it. But when Jesse had an exhibition in Vienna in 2021, I went to take a look at the end result. When I saw my frames hanging in the M HKA in 2018, I had my first 'wow' moment. I have also had the opportunity to frame work by big names, such as Raoul De Keyser. I always find it very special that people trust me with their work. In 2022, I was allowed to frame a series of works by Andy Warhol for a private collection. Because these were on loan to S.M.A.K., I had the opportunity to work at the restoration studio there. The collaboration with paper restorer Rebecca Heremans was very inspiring to me.

Does only art end up on your workbench?

No, I have also framed other things, such as a feather from a bird-of-paradise, for example, or butterflies and insects from Congo, and an old parka from an Eskimo. Sometimes the objects are less spectacular, such as maps or light boxes for companies. Though they often present me with technical challenges. And I treat them with the same amount of respect and love.

All those works that have passed through your studio over the years, have they ever triggered you to start collecting yourself?

Yes, I've started a small 'collection' over the years. It often includes works by artist friends from the region. As a small business owner, I believe in the importance of being circular. In addition to Jesse's work, I also have a sculpture by Antwerp artist Jef Meyer, a neon piece by Filip Collin, and a painting by Romanian artist Adrian Iurco, who now lives in Antwerp, hangs above my bed. I also have a depiction of Christ that always hung at my grandparents'. This sombre figure made a lasting impression on me as a child. From my paternal grandfather, Pierre, I inherited many works by Johan Daemen, who was his life partner later in life. In general, I enjoy surrounding myself with items that have a soul, things with a story to tell. It doesn't necessarily have to be considered art. For instance, there are some framed skateboards in the living room – my twin brother has always been into skateboarding – and a wooden rose sculpted by my grandfather Remi.

What does the future bring?

Today, I'm still working by myself, but I hope to expand my business and bring in more staff. Recently, my family and I bought the showroom of the furniture workshop where I used to work. We are currently converting it into my own sawmill and showroom, complete with workbenches. I'm very happy to be able to work in this context, in the space where I was allowed to experiment so many years ago, and where three generations of furniture makers were working before me. That history is very important to me. Having my own sawmill, equipped with all the necessary machines and solely dedicated to my work, represents ultimate freedom to me.

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I always
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Collectors Talk ¹

Art is all well and good, but who buys it? Who are these collectors? What are they purchasing and why? We had the pleasure of looking into some collectors' homes, friends of Schönfeld Gallery. Allow us to introduce you to collectors Jesse Willems, Caroline Fiers, Jean Philip De Tender & Filip Notteboom and Elie Schönfeld.

Jesse Willems is an Antwerp-based artist represented by Schönfeld Gallery. He resides with his wife, Jolijn, and their two-year-old son, Paolo, in a lovely co-housing project on the outskirts of Antwerp, along with seven other families.

Jesse, what's in your collection?

My collection doesn't adhere to a specific perspective. In the past, I primarily acquired artwork from the interwar period, with a focus on female artists. For instance, I own a painting by Marthe Donas, one of the early female pioneers of abstract painting in Belgium. However, it's predominantly an eclectic collection, featuring ancient African art, Roman and Etruscan pottery, as well as paintings and drawings by artists like Edgard Tytgat and Rik Wouters. There's also a relief by Bram Bogart, sculptural pieces by Babs Decruyenaere, and even the paw print of a Velociraptor, along with other fossils. Of course, I also buy quite some photography. There's a portrait by Stephan Vanfleteren in the living room, a photo by Bruno V. Roels from Ghent in our bedroom, and a black-and-white photo by the American photographer Saul Leiter in another part of the house. To showcase my photography collection, I asked frame maker Michiel Veireman to create four changeable frames, allowing me to rotate and display these pieces.

Jesse Willems

What is the first artwork you've ever bought?

A charcoal drawing by Rinus Van de Velde. In 2008, I photographed Rinus for the KMSKA, and I found him to be a fascinating figure. I was quickly convinced and bought one of his works. Which, by the way, was during the week when we were buying our previous house. My wife also didn't think it was the best timing, but I've always been a collector, even as a child, collecting things like skulls and fossils.

When I look around, I see that the collection has grown considerably since then.

Yes, I now have around 100 pieces in the collection. It has become quite extensive, I must say. I had custom cabinets made with 1.5-meter-deep drawers to store artwork, and they are already quite full! Yet, I don't want to keep a real 'stock', because art languishes in storage. If I can't live with it myself, I'd prefer someone else to own the work. So, I do sell regularly. In the community room of our cohousing, I showcase a different work from my collection every season.

Is it accurate to say it's an addiction?

Yes, absolutely! But I'm quite prone to addiction. I've been on a collecting spree for more than ten years. I used to spend three to four hours every week browsing Invaluable.com, scouring all the auctions worldwide. However, since becoming a father, I've bought very little. The most recent piece I acquired was two years ago, a drawing by Jan Yoors, a silhouette of a woman. This work was featured in the joint exhibition of his and my work that took place in the autumn of 2022 at Schönfeld Gallery. Oh, and recently, I bought

a collection of pottery from Ukraine that's over 100 years old on Etsy. The sellers were deeply moved by my purchase because, during a time of war, they could use every penny. The package also came with an emotional letter and an extra piece of pottery intended for Axel Vervoordt. As it turns out, when they Googled me, they discovered that my house is not far from Vervoordt's gallery space. Currently, my main focus is collecting football shirts from the nineties. I've managed to reacquire almost all the shirts my brother and I used to wear during that time.

What does your habit of collecting say about your personality?

For me, collecting represents an active quest, and that search has always been an intrinsic part of me. When we're at the seaside with the family, you'll never find me lounging on the beach; instead, I'm combing the shore in search of treasures. Paolo and I also make it a point to visit the flea market every weekend. I'm just obsessed by history, and find immense joy in surrounding myself with inspiring objects. I've always regarded our home as an empty vessel, a place where all these objects can come to life. Consequently, our interior is arranged very efficiently, and we don't require an abundance of furniture. We also maintain a rather frugal lifestyle. I'm not inclined to splurge on clothing or eating out, for instance. This, of course, leaves room for art (laughs).





In the event of a house fire, which piece from your collection would you save? Or, to put it differently, which is your favourite?

I would rescue the nineteenth-century walrus skull. It's an incredibly striking object that exudes so much. Although, to be honest, I'm not particularly attached to my collection.

Does your son Paolo have a favourite artwork?

Yes, he loves the black-and-white photo in the corridor by the Malian photographer Malick Sidibé. It depicts two young men just before they head out, and showcases how well-dressed they are as part of the middle class shortly after independence. Every night, before he goes to bed, Paolo looks at it. He's also fascinated by the female bust created by Oscar Jaspers, and he recognises his grandfather in the drawing by Rinus Van de Velde (laughs). I even taught Paolo the names of body parts by using Vanfleteren's portrait.

What does art represent to you as a collector?

It's like finding a balance between coming home and embarking on a journey.



Jesse Willems, *The denial of death*, 2023



Rinus Van de Velde

Collectors Talk ²

Caroline Fiers

Caroline Fiers is a design consultant and the former CEO of the Biennale Interieur Kortrijk. She lives in a beautiful townhouse in Ixelles with her husband and three children.

Caroline, how did you first become acquainted with Schönfeld Gallery?

Thanks to Albert Pepermans' work. One evening, while visiting friends, I was struck by a large artwork of his in their living room. I had already heard about Albert, but to me, it's important to see art in person. That particular piece left a profound impression on me. At the time, I was on the lookout for a sizable, vibrant painting. We live in a classic townhouse with high ceilings and large walls, so I felt our mostly quiet, white interior could benefit from a splash of colour.

So you delved into Pepermans' body of work?

Yes, I initially did some research on my own, and later, we had the opportunity to visit his studio, which was a truly enjoyable experience. Greet (Umans, the gallery director) and Albert also visited our home to offer personalised recommendations. I could have easily selected ten different works, but for our living room, I ultimately decided on *Cones* (1994), a diptych featuring a vase and flowers.

And was your husband equally convinced from the start?

Absolutely! My husband was instantly enamoured of Albert's work too! It became evident that the diptych was a perfect choice when I returned from a three-day trip to Barcelona, and found that he had rearranged half the living room to accommodate the artwork (laughs). It's amazing!

However, it did take some time before we made the purchase. About two years ago, I bought a small piece by Albert for my husband's birthday, for his office. *Airport* (2005) followed a bit later – it's a very personal piece to us, given our frequent professional and private travels.

What else is part of your art collection?

My husband is Danish, so we have a significant amount of Scandinavian design in our home, as the Danes tend to be quite nationalistic (laughs). We also possess a collection of Cobra drawings and paintings, including works by Pierre Alechinsky and the Danish artist Asger Jorn, among others. Within the Cobra style, there's a delightful fusion of our two nationalities, which we find quite charming. From Schönfeld Gallery, we've also acquired a stunning piece by Svelte Thys, and

a playful work by the Japanese artist Takeshi Matsugami.

Has art always been a part of your life?

I've always had a fondness for surrounding myself with beautiful things. I owe my appreciation for beauty to my mother; she was constantly engaged with beautiful materials, fabrics, and colours. My husband developed an early penchant for design. However, buying art hasn't always been a priority in our lives. When you have three young children, art isn't the biggest necessity. Yet, with the onset of COVID, the importance of our living space has become more essential. Welcoming guests and returning to a warm, inviting environment is important to me. Art plays a pivotal role in achieving this. I hope that our children will later remember our home as a warm and cosy nest, and associate the artworks with it.



Albert Pepermans, *Bunker*, 2017





How do you approach the process of buying art?

Acquiring art is very personal to me. I'll never just invest in art. Art has to evoke emotions, it either touches you or it doesn't. It's a very visceral experience for me. I love visiting studios. They make things more tangible, and heighten the emotional connection. I do carry out online research, but I need to see the works in person. Those online viewing rooms during the lockdown were not really my cup of tea. I regularly attend exhibitions, coming back with numerous photos that I share with my husband. Together, we decide whether or not to make a purchase.

Which exhibitions or artworks have made a lasting impression on you recently?

I won't soon forget my recent trip to the Joan Miró Foundation in Barcelona. I'm highly fascinated by the versatility of artists like Miró, who engage in various artistic disciplines. Last summer, during a visit to the Maeght Foundation in Saint-Paul-de-Vence with some friends, I was particularly drawn to the black-and-white works by Pierre Soulages. For me, the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art in Humlebaek, Denmark, still stands out as the most exquisite destination for contemporary art in Europe.

Top left: Takeshi Matsugami, *Edamame (I)*, 2022 / Top right: Albert Pepermans *Bang, bang*, 2021
 Bottom left: Cobra collection / Bottom right: Albert Pepermans, *Airport*, 2005
 Previous spread: Albert Pepermans, *Cones*, 1994

Svelte Thys, Waas, 2022

Collectors Talk ³

Jean Philip De Tender & Filip Notteboom

And the one purchase led to the next?

Jean Philip Well, yes, kind of (laughs). We recently acquired a work by Albert Pepermans when we visited his studio. We deliberately chose an older work from 1995, because we can still buy newer works from Albert later on.

Filip We were planning on buying something from Albert for a while already. When we purchased Janine's piece, we came across Albert's impressive book at the gallery. While flipping through it, we quickly stumbled upon *Torso Red*, and its monumental presence immediately captured our attention. Even though we saw many other beautiful works in the studio afterwards, we stuck with our initial coup de foudre. By the way, the painting was hidden behind a little wall in the studio. 'Wait, let me get it out of the corner', Albert said (laughs).

Jean Philip It's part of a triptych, and we're somewhat guilty of separating it. However, we intend to reunite them sooner or later.

Filip During Christina Zimpel's solo exhibition at the gallery last spring, we also acquired one of her paintings, a small portrait. We were instantly in love with the playful nature of Christina's body of work, but found it incredibly challenging to pick just one piece. In the end, we went with the most extravagant one.

Jean Philip I always think of Meryl Streep when I see that artwork. I have no idea why (laughs).

What else is included in your collection?

Jean Philip Our collection is quite diverse, featuring both figurative and abstract works, all from the twentieth century.

Filip We used to primarily collect prints. When I was still living in Ghent and Jan Hoet was the director of S.M.A.K., I bought some editions from the Friends of S.M.A.K. Later on, we also purchased prints by Nathalie Du Pasquier at Galerie Greta Meert, and we own two screen prints by Luc Tuymans, *Orchid* and *Der Diagnostische Blick*. The biggest name in our collection is probably Damien Hirst. We have two editions from his series *The Empresses*, where he used glitter for the first time. Nowadays, we tend to gravitate towards unique works, such as the oil paintings by one of my former teachers, Marc Van Cauwenbergh. His abstract works are reminiscent of Western traditions and Eastern aesthetics. It's nice to have work by someone who has had a significant impact on your life.

Jean Philip Last year, we acquired the monumental painting *Amalfi Coast* by Israeli artist Navot Miller from Yossi Milo Gallery in New York. The title of the exhibition, *Eurovision*, was quite fitting. In the series with the same name, Miller captures the delightful memories he collected during his travels across Europe.

Filip Our most recent purchase was at Gallery Sofie Van de Velde, titled *Jongen aan de kust* ('Boy on the Coast') (2022), an oil on canvas work by Antwerp artist Jesse Tomballe.



Christina Zimpel, *Pink Collar*, 2023

Next spread left: Albert Pepermans, *Torso Red*, 1992 / right: Ronan Bouroullec, *RB12*, 2021



How do you typically go about making art purchases?

^{Filip} We are always driven by our instincts. When it came to Janine's work, there wasn't a moment of hesitation; we knew it immediately.

^{Jean Philip} And, remarkably, we rarely find ourselves in disagreement when it comes to buying art. Maybe our tastes have evolved together over the years? Sometimes, a coup de foudre requires a bit of time to settle in; we need to see if our love for the piece endures. There are so many beautiful works out there! For a long while, we bought smaller pieces, but now that we have a home with larger walls, we've opted for more substantial works.

And such investments do require more contemplation.

^{Filip} We don't always have an immediate plan for where we'll hang new buys. Initially, we hang them somewhere close by. But I'm constantly rehangng pieces.

What does art mean to you, and how does it fit into your lives?

^{Filip} Being an art historian, art has always played a central role in my life. It's an important part of who I am.

^{Jean Philip} Art has been a constant presence in our lives together. Exploring contemporary art is something we do together. Having worked in the media throughout my career, it's the storytelling

aspect of art that resonates with me the most. Art has the power to genuinely move me.

^{Filip} For me, the significance of art lies in its ability to amaze. It keeps one feeling fresh and youthful at heart. Art opens up an entire world, helping you realise how often we tend to have blinders on.

^{Jean Philip} Above all, art embodies beauty. We've devoted considerable time to decorating our home, and now art is a significant part of our living space.

^{Filip} We actively go out to admire art. One of our recurring engagements is the Venice Biennale – it's a place where there is so much to be discovered!

What is still on your art wish list?

^{Filip} I've consistently found Raveel's body of work to be inspiring. His language is incredibly distinctive: it's simultaneously Flemish and international. His work ranks high on our wish list, although you need to be lucky. I'm also profoundly impressed by the remarkable technical prowess and storytelling of Ben Sledsens. His first series at Tim Van Laere Gallery blew me away.

^{Jean Philip} And if the sky truly is the limit, a piece by Picasso, Rothko, or Hockney!



Left: Jesse Tomballe, *Boy on the Coast*, 2022
Right: Luc Tuymans, *Orchid*, 2013



Collectors Talk ⁴

Elie Schönfeld



Elie Schönfeld, art patron and founder of Schönfeld Gallery, began his ceramics collection at the age of nineteen. Eager to learn more about the inception of his collection and his upcoming plans for a ceramics exhibition at the gallery, we met up with him in his hometown of Antwerp.

Elie, you're what they call a passionate collector. Could you share how you first encountered art, and what sparked your interest in collecting?

In high school, I had a French teacher who encouraged me to read and to explore culture, so I began attending art exhibitions at the age of fifteen. This greatly influenced my taste over the years. But more importantly: I used to visit my uncle's home regularly for Shabbat dinners with my parents. He had a Karel Appel painting in his living room, and artworks in his collection by notable artists, including the Belgian surrealist Gaston Bogaert. When I later joined my father's company, I used my first paycheck to purchase a painting by Gaston Bogaert at the Sablon in Brussels. That purchase marked the beginning of my exploration. At an art fair in Ghent, I stumbled upon Matteo Pugliese's patinated bronze wall sculptures of male torsos. A few years later, I acquired a series of photographs by Erwin Olaf.

What type of work are you currently looking for?

Right now, I've grown somewhat weary of photography. I mainly buy pieces from young artists. I find it important to think long-term, and to evolve alongside my artists. Already established works are less interesting to me. As a collector, my role in that regard has ended. A collector has to invest in young talent, and offer them the opportunities they need. I'm constantly scouring the internet and platforms like Instagram in search of personal coup de foudres. Last year, I stumbled upon South African art from the Guns and Rain gallery in Johannesburg through an online art fair. They represent, among others, the young Zimbabwean artist Raymond Fuyana. I was immediately in love with his work, and ended up acquiring around ten of his paintings.

Did your collection also serve as the foundation for your own gallery?

Yes, while renovating a building here in Antwerp in 2013 to house my collection, I suddenly felt the urge to start a gallery. Two years later, our first gallery project came to be, called Artelli. It was a vibrant blend of styles and materials, very different to what the gallery has become today. Schönfeld Gallery, situated in the Rivoli building in Brussels, marks its fifth anniversary today. One of our inaugural exhibitions featured photographs from my collection by Erwin Olaf, complemented by pieces on loan from a Parisian gallery. 'The Collectors' Selection' aptly served as the exhibition's subtitle.

Today, you are curating a group exhibition on ceramics, entitled: '... Ceramics'. Was that your first passion?

Yes, when my mother was living in Paris, she was gifted two vases from Boch La Louviere. I was captivated by their art deco aesthetics and vibrant, fluorescent green and yellow colours. They felt incredibly modern at the time! Now, I have amassed around 300 such vases – I didn't let go of that passion easily (laughs). My affection for ceramics was rekindled when I crossed paths with Thomas Ghaye seven years ago at the Affordable Art Fair in Brussels. The following year, Thomas opened La peau de l'ours, a gallery (like Schönfeld, situated in the Rivoli building) primarily specialised in ceramics.

What can we expect from the group exhibition?

I've seen a lot of ceramics in recent years, especially since I became a partner at La peau de l'ours two years ago. However, the ceramic paintings by American artist Bari Ziperstein truly stood out as groundbreaking to me. I had never before seen ceramics as a painting in such a unique manner. With over twenty years of experience in ceramics, Ziperstein has achieved an unprecedented level of mastery in this medium. Her work is not only groundbreaking, it also carries an immense technical and ideological complexity, as she is renowned for her exploration of Soviet-era textile designs and patterns. This artist's innovative approach has inspired me to curate an exhibition with ceramics where painting takes over the object. I'm negotiating with her galleries, as we speak, to include Ziperstein's work in the exhibition, and I hope to make that a reality.



Tina Berning, Plates, 2022.



Top: Daphne Cristofrou, *Weightlifting Vase*
 Bottom: Rémi Bracquemond, *Gourde aux baies*



Whose works will we have the opportunity to discover in the exhibition?

Artists like Daphne Christofrou, among others. She's an artist and illustrator from Cyprus, deeply intrigued by ancient Oriental art. Her ceramic creations bring Hindu image motifs, Tibetan iconography, and elements from Indian miniature paintings in a contemporary manner. French artist Thibaut Renoulet specialises in portraiture. Besides his drawings, he crafts masks, busts, and medallions in ceramics. His work stands out for its naive visual language and the raw, unrefined approach to design. The portraits collectively form his 'tribe', meant to represent a primitive, clan-based, and highly hierarchical society. American artist Emily Counts combines ceramics with electricity, lighting, and various translucent materials in her sculptures. It introduces a

futuristic twist to the traditional craft of ceramics. What makes her creations so fascinating is their foundation in personal memories, yet they remain open to the narratives of all. I also find it essential to include a Belgian artist in my selection. Ellen Meers crafts exquisite ceramic tiles adorned with an array of colourful, enigmatic symbols. When arranged together, these symbols weave a narrative, a bit like the hieroglyphs of ancient Egypt.

What do you hope to accomplish with this exhibition?

As both a collector and curator, my approach always begins with a feeling. If an artwork has emotion added to it, if it has touched me, I consider it a good piece of art. My hope is to first and foremost evoke emotions in the exhibition's visitors, and bring a smile to their faces.

The Resident

La Brea Artist Residency

Christina Zimpel

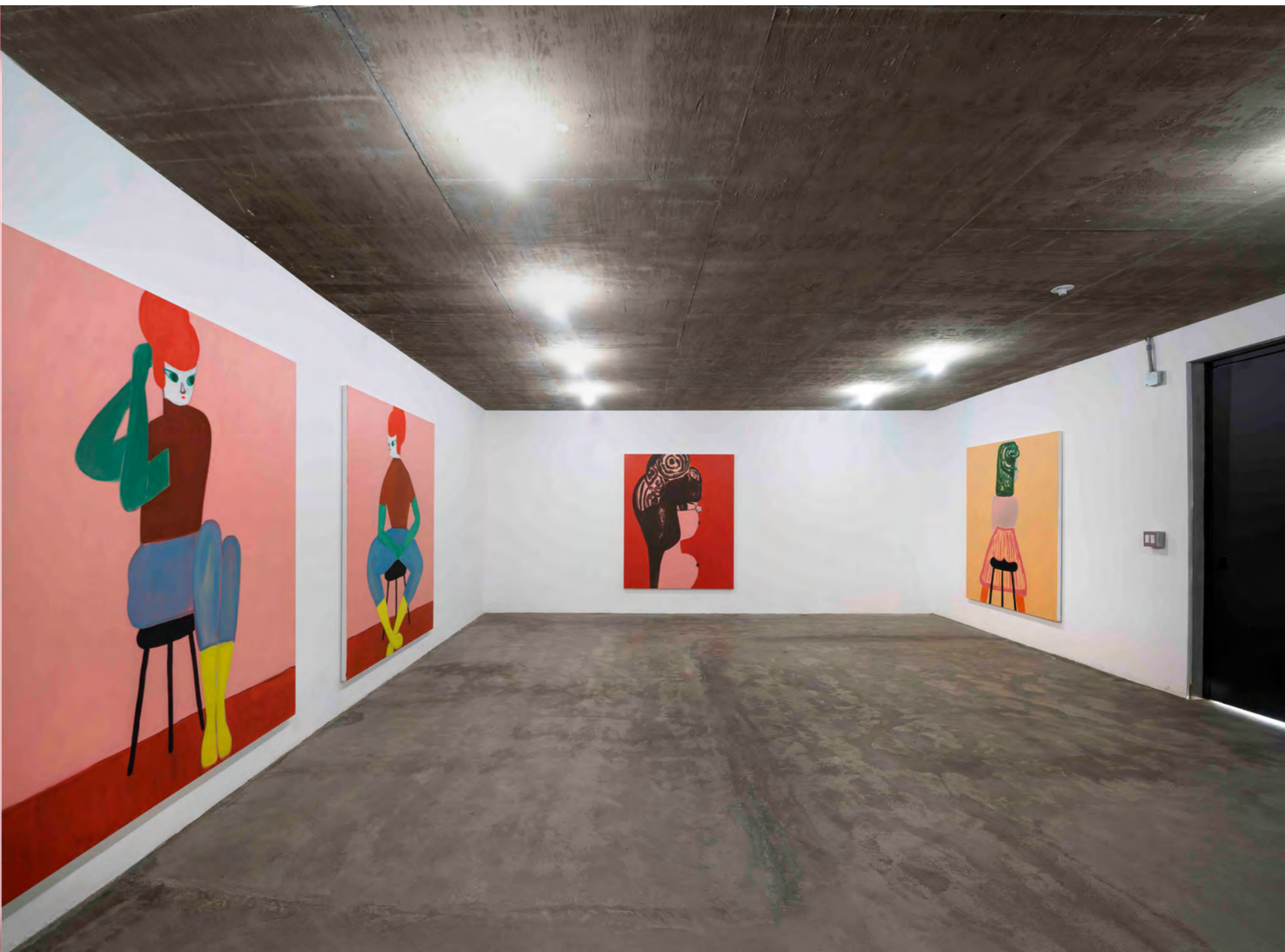
I was fortunate to spend the month of June 2023 in Los Angeles at the La Brea Artist Residency. This prestigious and intense program is run by artist and collector Danny First. Many of the alumni say his program has changed their lives and propelled them into successful careers.

Every year, Danny selects twelve artists to create large-scale works in his studio space. The garage/studio provides artists with complete freedom of expression, all while knowing they have the support of a genuinely interested mentor. My month of work culminated in a solo show, titled *Body Language*, which was on display at The Cabin and The Bunker in July. These unique galleries are both situated in his amazing backyard.

Working in full immersion every day in such a monastic environment transported me far from my everyday life in an unfamiliar city. I was able to create a body of work that really pushed me forward. Taking all of my vernacular and scaling up the work was a new challenge that felt remarkably natural, and I enjoyed the deep concentration required for layering colors and bringing my women to life.



Studio view
Pages 52-54: Exhibition views





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