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by Schönfeld Gallery

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The cover of this first *Stories by Schönfeld* shows two works (right: *Rivierklever*, 2022. 125 x 100 cm, oil paint and talcum powder on canvas. Left: *Waas*, 2022, 28 x 37 cm, oil paint on canvas.) by Svelte Thys, who is now also represented by Schönfeld Gallery. We got to know this young artist thanks to

Caroline Pauwels, who included Svelte's work last year in her group exhibition at the gallery titled *Summertime and the living is easy* (June-July 2022). Together with Svelte, we honour Caroline this summer with the follow-up exhibition *You can not keep summer from coming back*. We are looking forward to introducing her work at numerous art fairs and in various projects both at home and abroad.

Svelte's abstract paintings are a memory of – or an allusion to – a close-up of a landscape. For Svelte, painting is a language to bond over. Through her paintings, she wants to convey a feeling, an abstract emotion. Like wanderings through matter, her paintings' subject is painting itself. They are an investigation into its properties and limits.



A lot of stories are being told and written about art. Front-page stories about great artists having dizzying sales figures. Stories about how pieces of art are being shielded away from the eyes of the public and traded for greater profit. Stories about nerve-racking auctions, art theft, replicas, waiting lists, intellectual property rights and exclusivity. These stories make our imagination run wild and make the art world seem more elusive.

Schönfeld Gallery wants to tell other stories. With our magazine we unveil how our gallery's artists feel and prepare in the run-up to an exhibition and what their sources of inspiration are. Our content will moreover explore the interactive flows of our gallery and its artists. Dialogue and cooperation with other artists and encounters with passionate architects, curators, magazines, and photographers, make our world more exciting and deserve to be written about.

Our public is an indispensable part of Schönfeld Gallery. What is the story behind the purchase of a work? Did someone buy a piece of art because it was love at first sight or did the purchaser patiently wait for the perfect piece at the right time? These intimate questions will be answered in this magazine.

Like everyone, we are confronted with an increasingly virtual environment. As we want to make our story tangible, we will provide a printed copy of our magazine twice a year. Besides the stories we bring, our magazine will inform you about our program, available pieces of art and up-coming art fairs.

I hope you enjoy our *Stories!*

Greet Umans  
Gallery director



# Kairos

## Jesse Willems & Jan Yoors

Throwback to late 2022, because at Schönfeld Gallery, we closed of the year with a special expo: *Kairos* (6 November–17 December), a dialogue between the Belgian-American photographer, author and tapestry artist Jan Yoors (1922–1977), and our very own Jesse Willems.

At first glance, the collages of Jesse Willems look like a melancholic echo of constructivism. But do not be mistaken. His visual language refers to the collage technique of the pre-war avant-garde and the development of abstract art, but Willems also reflects a contemporary zeitgeist. He collects, organises, and selects to control the chaos surrounding him as if he was lucid dreaming.

In a world where everything continuously has to be more and faster, the artist deploys his camera to catch his breath in search of

He zooms in on urban details, looking for light, reflection, shadow, and contrast until the abstract-figurative dichotomy no longer exists, and geometric figures become poetic, spherical images.

tranquillity. He zooms in on urban details, looking for light, reflection, shadow, and contrast until the abstract-figurative dichotomy no longer exists, and geometric figures become poetic, spherical images. In Ancient Greek there are two words for time: 'chronos' and 'kairos'. 'Chronos' refers to chronological or sequential time, and 'kairos' refers to a proper moment for action, an opportunity. Willems spontaneously photographs the latter during his urban quests for something to hold on to. The 'found compositions' are reworked in his studio, all the while challenging his urge for order and control by working on old 'found paper'. The story of texture and patina lend the work dimension. The scars are captivating and guide him intuitively.

You could say we're all collages of our interests, influences, experiences, and inspirations. History is constantly moving and changing. We live, collect, look at the world, and selectively try to compose who we are in this moment. For titles, Willems later adds fragments from magazines and song lyrics. The whole thing pinches. The artist is aware that being in control is an illusion. He refers to the Stoics: 'The world is divided into two categories: that which is in our power and that which is not.'









For the exhibition *Kairos*, Willems was inspired by Jan Yoors' photos of New York and hardscapes at the intersection of abstraction. These pictures invited Willems to explore the city in Yoors' footsteps. In the whirling and overwhelming city of New York, standing still is an act of rebellion. At the end of his life, Yoors was, ironically, literally forced to a standstill when he lost both legs due to diabetes.

The artist is aware that being in control is an illusion.

He focused on creating pure line drawings of his wife's silhouette. Both artists share a sensitivity for the rhythm of lines, which proves that, for those who look closely, abstraction arises everywhere from everyday life.

Willems is driven by the monumentality of what surrounds us figuratively, and refines it until the essence seduces us – nakedly, vulnerably, and powerfully – to a standstill. Within this overwhelming and rushed world, he is an unrelenting curator of what's small and essential.







Study and Cold Sweat, 2022. 93 x 133 cm, handcut collage.





Available works



Interview



# PLAYBOY



# Playboy

## Tina Berning

*Playboy Germany* celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in July 2022 with a large anniversary issue and an exclusive collector's edition of fifty covers, designed by equally as many international artists. Our very own Tina Berning was invited to take care of one of those covers.

'I thought it was a nice idea to create a cover for such an iconic magazine. *Playboy* has a long-standing tradition of working with artists. Tom Wesselmann, James Rosenquist, Andy Warhol, Brad Holland, LeRoy Neiman, Olivia De

Berardinis, and Patrick Nagel, among others, have preceded me. The image I've chosen for the cover conveys a respectful view of the female body in all its vulnerability. Through my expressive approach to the body, she loses all objectivity and regains her autonomy. It is a counterweight to the objectification of the women in the magazine,' the artist states.

Tina's work has been published in several magazines and newspapers, including *The New York Times*, Italian, German and Japanese *Vogue*, *Die Zeit*, and *Architectural Digest*. She illustrated the cover of Ian McEwan's latest novel *Lessons* (2022). These drawings contributed significantly to her unique approach to the human figure. Investigating the mediated female figure has become an essential part of her artistic work.



# Louis Vuitton

# Albert Pepermans

Throwback to the November issue (2021) of *L'Officiel Hommes* België where – in front of Olivier Desarte's camera and styled by Lieve Gerrits – Virgil Abloh's autumn collection for Louis Vuitton came to life. This shoot's backdrop consisted of paintings by our very own Albert Pepermans! For this collection, Abloh drew inspiration from rave and techno culture. The result was an explosion of colours, a mix of different styles, and a rebellious breaking of all kinds of codes and rules. A match made in heaven with Albert's work!

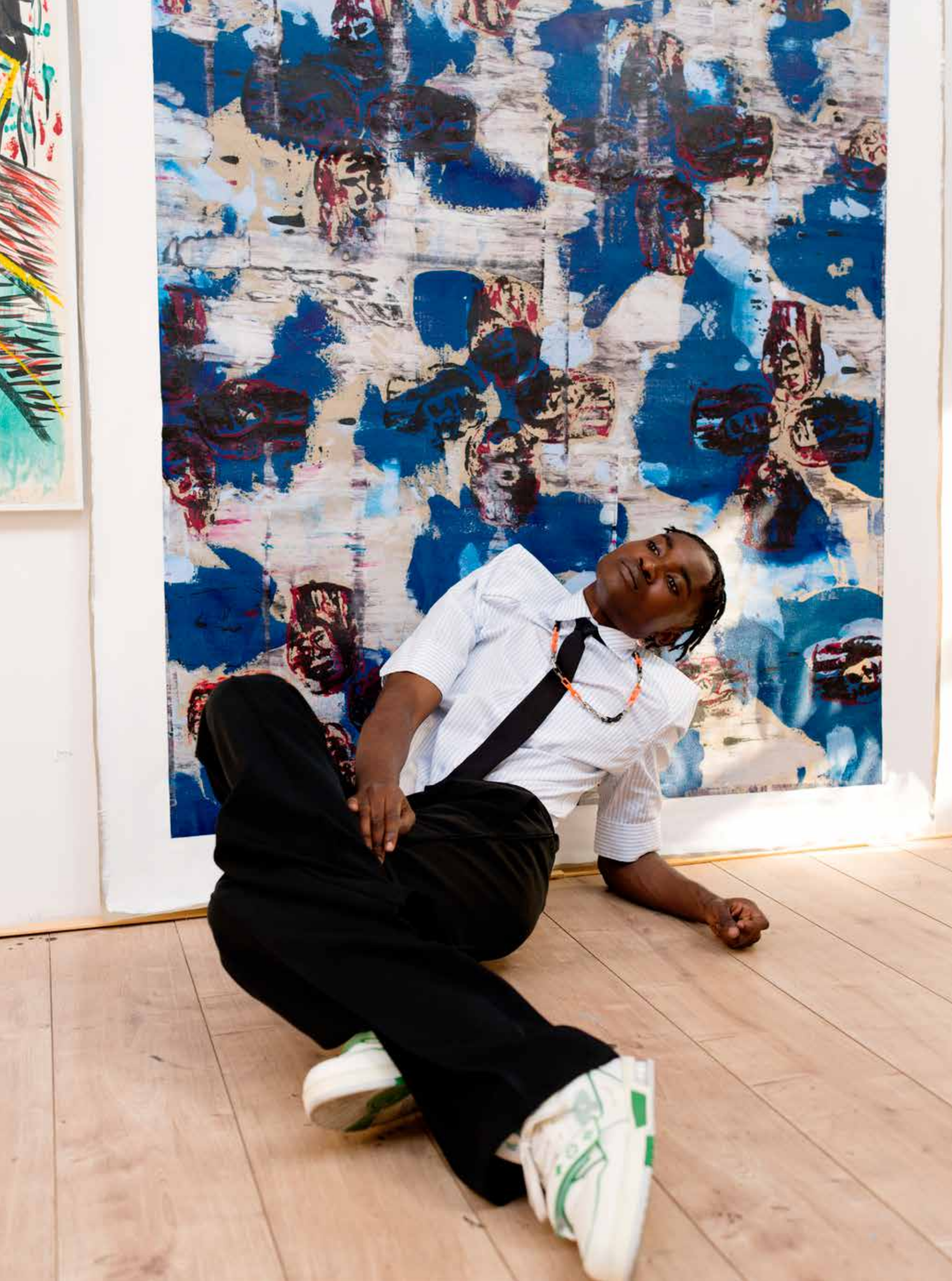






**louis  
vuitton**









# Blind Date

# Eliza Pepermans & Hilde Borgermans

Eliza Pepermans, °1988, lives and works in Antwerp (B)

Hilde **Can you tell me about your background?**

Eliza I studied illustration at LUCA School of Arts in Brussels. After doing applied work for a while, I started to miss experimental drawing. I wanted to have more time again for more investigative work. When working on commission, there is rarely time to go deep – which keeps you at surface level. And so, I sat myself down at the kitchen table to sketch. I drew minimal objects – the carafes in front of me on the table – from observation. And

that is how still lifes crossed my path. It turned out to be the ideal playing field to master the technical side of painting. Images I came across on Instagram and in magazines also found their way into my sketchbooks.

Hilde **So you do preliminary studies?**

Eliza Yes, my sketchbooks are a collection of different motives. I bring some of them together in a frame in search of a composition. In order to achieve a rhythmic balance, I alternate perspective and form; I, for example, put a factual water jug in contrast with an abstract, insignificant shape. Using a grid, I translate these 'final' sketches into drawings with charcoal and pencil on paper. At the same time, I also make small drawings in colour – colour studies, as it were. Then, I again use a grid to convert the drawings into paintings. Once the lines are in place, I can start colouring it in.'

On a sunny Tuesday, Eliza Pepermans welcomes curator and artist Hilde Borgermans at her apartment in Antwerp. It's a blind date, since these two have never seen each other before, and Hilde is also introduced to Eliza's work for the first time. 'I am a curator at art space Emergent in Veurne, but I am first and foremost a sculptor and painter. So we are basically among colleagues,' Hilde smiles. And with that the ice was broken immediately. With that and with their shared love for fox terriers (one is sleeping on the windowsill in the sun), the mood is set.





*'I work horizontally, with the canvas flat on a table, it helps me to let go of a realistic representation of perspective and form.'*





Hilde **Who or what inspires you?**

Eliza I am mainly fascinated by all possible forms of painting, all the more so because I've never had any formal training in painting. I'm actually an illustrator, but I've always wanted to work with oils!

Hilde I think it is interesting that you didn't study painting. Your background as an illustrator makes your work so refreshing! And yet, there are references to traditional painting via that great theme called still life. By the way, the process you go through in order to establish your works – observational drawing, preparatory sketching, colour research – is similar to the journey every painting student goes through in art school.

Eliza Still, I would have loved for someone to have taught me that whole process (*laughs*). For example, I haven't been working on canvas for very long yet. Before, the fact that a canvas moves was a stumbling block for me. Now, I work horizontally, with the canvas flat on a table. It may have something to do with my background, but I like it when I can rotate the canvas easily.

Hilde **Do you think this affects your painterly approach to perspective?**

Eliza Yes, it helps me to let go of a realistic representation of perspective and form, and introduces a playful element to my work.

Hilde **Your work is definitely playful!** There's something going on in the picture plane. In fact, your paintings are not that graphic. In reproductions, it sometimes seems as if you've kept some white negative space on the canvas, while in reality there are many greys and yellows in your use of 'white'. And your painterly surface is not flat at all, it has a certain texture. Your paintings sizzle!

Eliza I indeed try to achieve more depth on the surface through a variation of colours. I build my image using different layers of colour. Each painting is a search for colour and its behaviour. I have a box full of colour studies that I reach for time and time again. Pale

yellow is the basis for every colour in my paintings. It connects everything, and offers a softness to the southern atmosphere that is so characteristic of my work.

Hilde **What are you currently working on?**

Eliza A series of roses. Roses have something positive about them, something hopeful. But in the series they gain something oppressive due to

the pronounced black contour lines. I also play out the contrast between the lightness of the roses and the heaviness of black vases – like a mirror for these dark times, an unknown future. This symbolism is certainly not a point of departure for my work, but it slips in there spontaneously.

Hilde **Yes, of course, symbolism creeps in because you subscribe to the tradition of painting and its vanitas paintings. Because, make no mistake, more than an illustrator, you are, above all, a painter!**

*'Symbolism creeps in because you subscribe to the tradition of painting and its vanitas paintings.'*



# Collectors Talk

# Wouter Bouvijn & Eva Vanhengel

Art, all well and good, but who's buying it?

*Wouter Bouvijn is the director of acclaimed series such as De Twaalf and Red Light. In January–February 2023 you could see his eight-part series 1985 on the TV channel één. Eva Vanhengel is a spokesperson for Sven Gatz, Minister of Finance, Budget, Civil Service and Multilingualism in the government of the Brussels–Capital*

*Region. Wouter and Eva fell in love with the work 'Pyramid of Cherries' (2022) by Eliza Pepermans. It now adorns their colourful home in Ghent.*

**How did you get to know Eliza's work?**

Eva I was introduced to Schönfeld Gallery and Eliza's work thanks to former VUB rector

Caroline Pauwels. I was Caroline's student, and I worked under her when she was the director of SMIT, a VUB research centre, before we became good friends. Caroline often took me on the road; she more or less introduced me to the world of visual arts. She loved paintings with colours and flowers, and thus we crossed paths with Eliza Pepermans.

Wouter We have quite a few friends who are photographers, so we already had some pictures on our walls, but we had been wanting to add a painting to our 'collection' for a long time. Actually, we immediately fell in love with Eliza's work, but it took a while before we could also get our hands on a painting. Two years after our first acquaintance with Eliza's work, Greet sent us some available works by email while we were touring California with a campervan. By then, we had fallen so in love with her oeuvre that we chose a work based on that PDF!

**Why are you so attracted to her work?**

Wouter Because of the playfulness and the colours! The colours of the paintings are also mirrored in our armchair and lamps. Although we were not specifically searching for an artwork for this space, it feels as if the work was made for this corner of our interior. As if we were subconsciously sucked in by the colours. I can just keep on looking at the painting. There's so much going on, the image seems to be tilting constantly: are they windows or frames on the wall?

Eva Everyone who enters the room has positive things to say about the work. Its southern atmosphere also fits perfectly with our wild and colourful Provençal garden.

*'We had fallen so in love with her oeuvre that we chose a work based on that PDF!'*

Wouter Colour is completely Eva's thing. Before she moved in, the house was remarkably less colourful.

Eva And yet it is lately you who's often been opting for more colour! Maybe to compensate for the heaviness of your work?

Wouter Yes, I like the optimistic look. Cheerfulness and humour are important to me. Indeed, perhaps Eliza's colourful world is an antipode to my own oeuvre. Now, if we would have to live in the colours of 1985, that would be very sad. *(laughs)*



### Do you often buy art?

**Wouter** Yes, but mostly from artists we know. The emotional connection is important for us when purchasing a work of art. In general, we like to surround ourselves with young creators. It is fantastic to see them evolve.

### What other artworks do you have on your wishlist?

**Wouter** A painting by Jackson Pollock! *(laughs)*

**Eva** We recently discovered the work of the Belgian-Congolese artist Bahati Simoens through friends. Her colourful paintings feature African characters with tiny heads. But we also love the work of artists Shirley Villavicencio Pizango and Bieke Depoorter who both live in Ghent. We also hope to be able to add a small work by Dirk Braeckman to the collection one day, and we definitely want to buy something from Albert Pepermans.

**Wouter** I am really fond of *Et voilà le travail*, a series he made with Hugo Claus at the end of the nineties. But above all, we want to discover things by chance. And it really has to fit our home. I would hate to have to store work. Actually, we are not collectors at all.

### What role does art play in your life?

**Eva** I was a spokeswoman for Sven Gatz for five years when he was the Minister of Culture. I saw and learned a lot during that time, and art has gradually started to play an important role in my life. As a couple, Wouter and I always visit the local museum of contemporary art whenever we travel.

**Wouter** I make mood boards – let's say colour palettes – in search of the appropriate atmosphere for my series, for which I use reproductions of paintings instead of everyday

photographic material. For *De Twaalf* and *1985*, I was inspired by the colour palette of the Flemish Primitives. The series also owes its brownish colours to the work of Constant Permeke. And Gregory Crewdson's oeuvre has been pivotal for my predominantly green-brown-blue colour palette.

### Which exhibitions will you always remember?

**Wouter** Kris Martin's exhibition at S.M.A.K. in 2020, *EXIT*. I thought it was fantastic!

**Eva** I have fond memories of David Hockney's solo show *Sold Out* in Bozar in 2021-2022. I visited this one with Caroline. Wouter and I also think it is important to regularly visit exhibitions that may not be our cup of tea at first glance, but that end up convincing us all the more, as was the case with Hockney.



Elizabeth Iglesias

The Architect

Art is able to exist thanks to collectors, patrons, and ambassadors. Elizabeth Iglesias is one of them. The Argentinian architect fell in love with the work of Albert Pepermans, and recently incorporated his pieces into some of her exclusive projects. A one-on-one conversation tells us more about this passionate lady, her work, and her love for art.

Elizabeth, you have been an independent architect for some time now, and in 2022, you also founded your own office, Iglesias Architects. How would you describe yourself as an architect? I really consider 'being an architect' to be a craft you learn by doing. I also think it is important to say something through architecture. The visual communication between the building and the landscape surrounding it is important to me, as are authentic materials and techniques. For example, I love the brutal beauty of concrete floors. And yes, concrete cracks after a while, but it is precisely those cracks and stains that lend the floor a certain patina. Honestly, I like that! With the new agency, I want to focus even more on projects that take care of everything from A to Z. Iglesias Architects distinguishes itself by elaborately developing projects down to the last detail. I take it very far. People are often surprised that, as a CEO, I want to choose frames for the integrated artworks myself, or spend hours comparing cowhides to select the right ones for a wallcovering. I want to be on site often enough to give direction and motivate people, and I want to co-create with the local contractors.

**Where does this particular attention for authentic materials and tactility come from?**

I have always been involved with material and design. When I was an adolescent, I sewed my own clothes. I feel drawing patterns is similar to three-dimensional design. In both cases, it is about shaping something that serves a specific purpose. Through this creative endeavour, I gained spatial understanding at an early age. I also created ceramics for years when I was still living in Argentina. I loved wasting my time like that. Later, I also took a course in imitation marble, faux wood, and trompe l'oeil painting in Brussels.

**Has your architectural training nurtured your love for materials?**

Yes, in Argentina, the training to become an architect is more polytechnic. They focus heavily on an extensive knowledge of materials. Each material has a certain character and processing method you need to know about, in order to fully exploit its expressive possibilities and use it authentically. I don't like distortion of an image or 'cheating' with materials. That's not as interesting to me in architecture, it is too far-fetched. I like sincerity.



Elizabeth Iglesias' passion for Albert Pepermans' rock 'n' roll







One of your recent projects is the headquarters of H. Essers in Genk, Belgium. It's a project that is close to your heart. Can you tell us about it? Hilde Essers belongs to the third generation of this family business, and she is the very first woman to lead the company. Therefore, the head office could not be just any old building. Hilde wanted to show that she can hold her own as a woman in the still very macho corporate world, so she decisively opted for daring choices. We continued the branding of the company throughout the materials we chose for the building. Being a logistics company, Essers wants to be solid and reliable, so we opted for genuine and tough materials: sandblasted concrete for the structure, polished concrete for the floors, black wood for the wall panelling, and black-brown metal ceiling panels. The coal-like colours, the concrete finish, and the steel constructions refer to the region's mining past. We also used Maasland river stones for the floors. After all, as a family business in Limburg, Essers is largely anchored in the region.

Iglesias Architects was, aside from the architecture of H. Essers' headquarters, also responsible for the interior design – and you even picked the artworks?

Indeed! I consider my designs to be scenographies in the 'theatre of life'. Architects create a setting where people can develop their activities. It's nice to be able to extend ideas for the exterior to the interior as well. Hilde wanted to subtly incorporate the red from the Essers logo in the interior, so we introduced it through artworks by Albert Pepermans. I was immediately attracted by the expressionist character of Pepermans' art. It oozes rock 'n' roll and spontaneity. His oeuvre holds this raw beauty. Hilde was

immediately convinced of his work as well. She often decides using her gut feeling. The frankness of Pepermans' works corresponds with Hilde's quick decision-making.

**Which works by Albert Pepermans were ultimately chosen?**

In the canteen we inserted colour using four works from the series *Carnet de Voyage*, based on drawings Albert made during his many travels. They are enlarged sketches in black ink and acrylic. Another meeting space, a small salon, has two shadowy figures







that are characteristic of Albert's work. The oil on paper works are part of the series *Le rouge et le noir*. In the corridor on the floor where the management's offices are located, hangs a large painting with a dozen portraits inspired by depictions of Japanese baseball players. At Essers, they felt this was an appropriate nod to the 'characters' within the management. In Hilde's office, there's a prominent work from the 1990s in red and black oil sticks, based on an advertisement from a magazine. A tall, narrow male figure with an exaggerated large head and small body adorns the office of Gert Bervoets, CEO of H. Essers. Furthermore, a meeting room was given colour by means of a green and red diptych in ink, a monochrome jumble of Albert's typical figures. And elsewhere, there's a dreamer – holding a house and against a backdrop of stars, from a large series of works that Albert made in 1992 after his son's passing – who keeps our gaze aimed at the future!

### Is the integration of art important to Iglesias Architects?

Yes, we always suggest 'suitable' artworks in our interior designs, even to customers who did not ask for it. We might tempt them! Because art is unfortunately often still like haute couture: it is not for everyone. Also, the middle class with buying power usually opts for purely pragmatic things. They would rather not have a beautiful tree in the garden, because that tree will lose its leaves, and they don't have the time to clean them up. Few people are receptive to beauty, let alone that they'd have an eye for art! We try to educate our clients in this realm, and are happy when we succeed. I keep my eyes open at all times to discover works that'd match the buildings I'm designing. And, of course, I allow myself to be inspired by the exhibitions at Schönfeld Gallery!

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### Lease

Art on your company's walls? Schönfeld Gallery also offers lease-option agreements, a tax-efficient way to buy art through a monthly rent payment for an agreed upon period. An expense that would be a tax deductible for your company. For more information, please contact [info@schonfeldgallery.com](mailto:info@schonfeldgallery.com)

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*The I's Inside*  
Christina Zimpel



*'I have a library of images in my head'*

At the beginning of 2023, Australian artist Christina Zimpel temporarily exchanged her home in New York for the equally vibrant city of Brussels. In

view of her first solo exhibition at Schönfeld Gallery, *The I's Inside* (12 March–29 April), she was in residency

at the gallery for three months. Mid-February she received, somewhat hesitantly, a first visitor. Art consultant and curator Roxane Baeyens met her unique oeuvre that day.

Dotted around the room are several enigmatic female portraits. They are the results of various interests and inspirations. Zimpel's intense, non-realistic use of colour, and simplified, flat forms is reminiscent of the work of German Expressionists and Fauvists like Henri Matisse. The pink she

frequently uses is not a soft, feminine pink, but rather a subversive, fluorescent pink – like that of the punk of her youth. In turn, the hairstyles often worn in a bun, recall the seductive female figures of Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec. Finally, the shadowy silhouettes in black ink evoke the street photography of Vivian Maier.

they have something cinematic about them and, more importantly, exude a unique atmosphere. 'You can see that they are thinking about something. But what? Who are they really, these women, and what will they be doing when they go home?'

A parade of conspicuous women. Outcasts and outsiders, like in the black-and-white portraits of the American photographer Diane Arbus; portrayed without ridicule or criticism, but rather with admiration. They may not be the most beautiful women, they are far from perfect, 'but they give their best effort', says the artist. They play with their best assets, dressing up, taking care of their exuberant make-up, and crowning themselves with extraordinary hairstyles. Are they proud and confident, or are they hiding behind a facade? Either way, they aim to get our attention. 'I wish I was more like them, more visible', reveals the artist. In a way, they are alter-egos, perhaps self-portraits. 'The women have moods and thoughts that could also be mine', she says. Painted in acrylic

'I have a library of images in my head', Zimpel explains. She was the art director of Australian Vogue in a previous life, then worked alongside her husband Patric Shaw, a talented photographer. Editing his photographs, she focused mostly on details and quickly learned that an empty-eyed portrait is rarely worth looking at. 'It's the inner thoughts that make the difference between an ordinary portrait and an interesting one.' Zimpel's female figures, however, are neither real women nor stereotypes. Rather,









A PRO POT,  
Du Bois  
Zimpel  
Lezaire  
Zoete  
De Wilde  
Gelper  
D'hondt  
Blondeel  
Demoen  
Tweelinckx

I  
Arpaïs  
Christina  
Christophe  
Dirk  
Johan  
Johan  
Lieve  
Maria  
Nikolaas  
Roeland



and gouache, Zimpel often gives the portraits a coat of oil paint to lend them a deserved glow.

The works are not snapshots taken in an uncontrolled moment, as it is the case with street photography. No, the women pose willingly. The plain backgrounds of the paintings suggest a canvas in a studio, the sparse and sketchy props of a theatre. The women are represented at that precise moment, 'the decisive moment', as Henri Cartier-Bresson would have called it. 'The only moment they briefly

allow us to look inside their heads', the artist explains. Their pronounced eyes should help us do this, as they are windows to their souls. Somewhere underneath the thick layers of make-up and clothing lies their true identity. Because 'the I's inside', as Christina Zimpel knows.

Available  
works



Interview



Program

14.05-24.06

**Paper  
Whispers**

Jenny Watson <sup>AU</sup>

Rikako Kawauchi <sup>JP</sup>

Marta Barrenechea <sup>ES</sup>

Tina Berning <sup>DE</sup>

Terry Ekasala <sup>US</sup>

opening 14.05  
2-7 pm

02.07-05.08

**You can not  
keep summer from  
coming back**

Liza François

Klaartje Lambrechts

Benedicte Lobelle

Eliza Pepermans

Lidia Szykiewicz

Janine Vandebosch

opening 02.07  
2-7 pm

In line with Caroline Pauwels' legacy of celebrating every season, Schönfeld will add a colourful and feminine exhibition to what is set to be an unforgettable 2023 summer!

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Louis Vuitton  
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