



ART AT EP

Art Collection of the European Parliament

Hemicycle exhibition



European Parliament

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WELCOME

The European Parliament art collection comprises over 500 paintings, sculptures and other works of contemporary art from European Union countries, as well as some works from non-European Union countries.

The collection began in 1980 by the then president Simone Veil to promote art and diversity. The initial plan was to bring together artworks from the 10 countries represented in the European Parliament. It would give priority to young artists who had already achieved a certain level of recognition and prestige. The European Parliament has since acquired the collection through purchases and donations. It has become one of the most extensive and exciting contemporary art collections of the last 30 years.

The collection focuses on contemporary art. This is not an artistic style but refers to art produced in our lifetime. By definition, contemporary art evolves and challenges definitions of high and low art. In recent years contemporary art has added elements that are ironic, experimental, commercial and conceptual. New materials, media, activity, concepts and kitsch elements have also expanded the definition of the movement.

The collection is displayed in public and communal spaces in European Parliament buildings in Brussels, Luxembourg, Strasbourg and the European Parliament Liaison Offices around Europe.

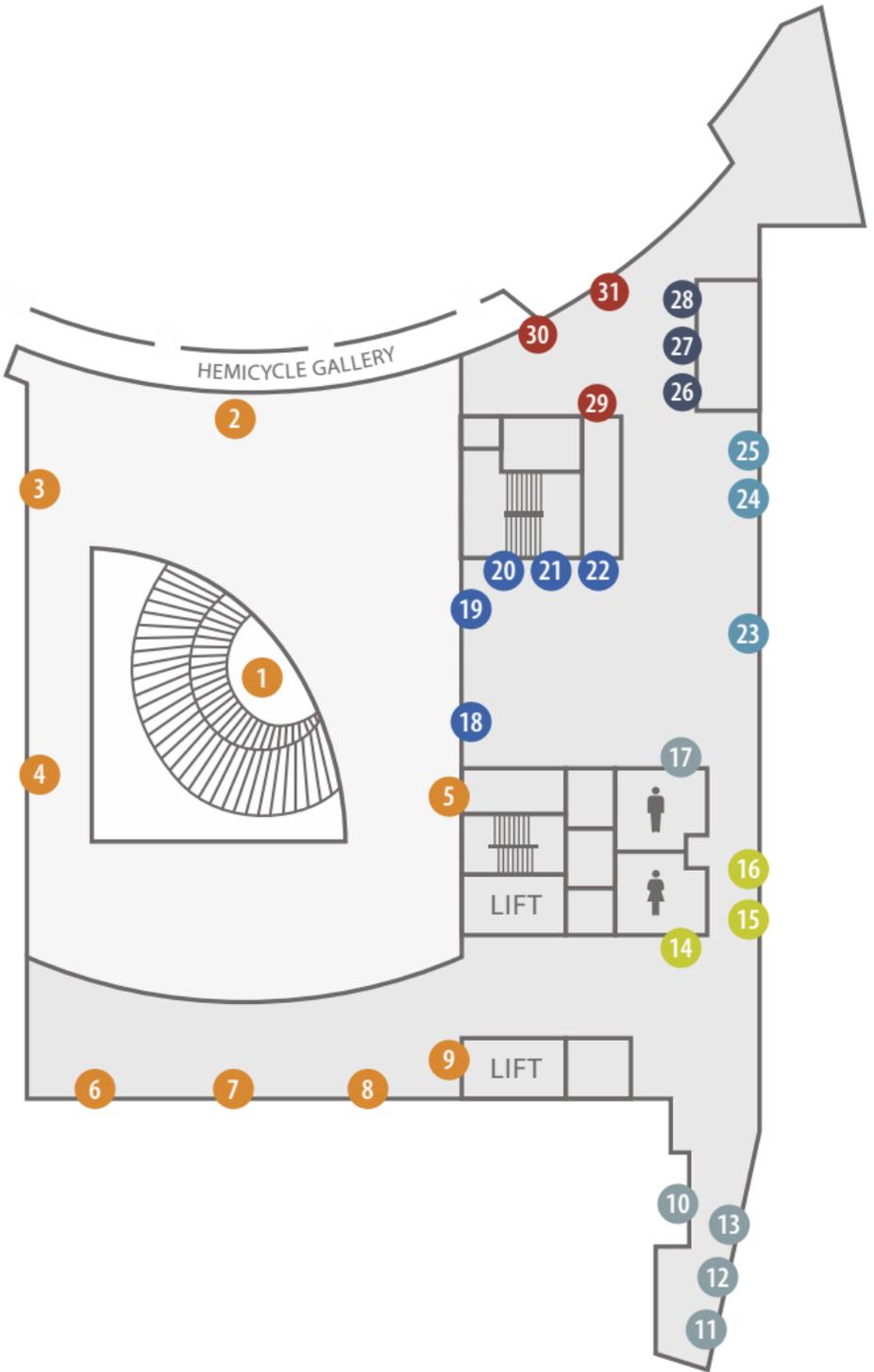
The art collection reflects some of the European Parliament's core values of promoting culture, intercultural dialogue and respect for cultural diversity. The collection's diversity of styles, dates, artists and countries highlights the cultural wealth and diversity of the European Union. The variety that emerges strongly mirrors the European Union motto **'United in diversity'; like people – like art.**

The Hemicycle exhibition presents collection artworks from current and former European Union countries. The artworks are thematically curated to make it easy to observe and compare the cultural richness of the European Union.

We hope you enjoy the exhibition. If you have further questions, please contact us at art@ep.europa.eu

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CENTRAL STAIRCASE AND BALCONY

Contemporary art comprises many forms, styles and sizes.



Olivier STREBELLE
(1927 - 2017)

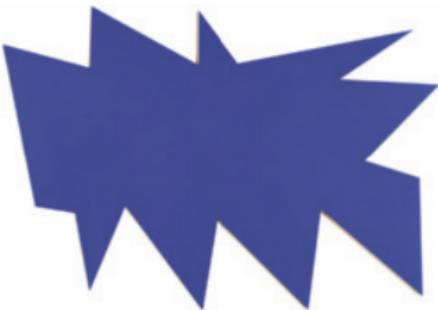
Confluences

1992

Polished stainless steel
12 x 7 m
Belgium

'When I saw the staircase, I imagined one in the centre.'

Olivier Strebelle's style is characterised by large and monumentally scaled sculptures. His creative process and choice of material mainly defined his works' ultimate shape. He often created sculptures in the context of specific architecture or urban spaces. With their linear and slender design, his sculptures play with the movement of the eyes as they observe his work.



Imi KNOEBEL
(b.1940)

Canapé Blau

1989

Oil on wood
140 x 220 cm
Germany

'Yves Klein has painted his canvas blue, Lucio Fontana has cut slashes into his. What's left? If you want to do something, to stay alive, you have to think of something at least as radical.'

Knoebel emerged during a period where the very definition of painting was being challenged and its boundaries constantly being pushed. Like many of his contemporaries, the German artist explored painting and sculpture simultaneously, interchanging the rules associated with each medium to seek inspiration and novelty. This led him to 'carve' paintings using the 'Messerschnitt' or 'knife cuts' technique, while reverting to fundamentals regarding his use of colour. Knoebel mainly uses the primary trinity: red, yellow and blue. Embracing the industrial turn of his generation, he adopted the use of an anti-corrosion paint used in steel construction which inspired an entire group of works: the 'Mennigebilder'. Similar industrial materials were used in the Capanés series (1987-1991) of which Canapé Blau is a prime example.



Peter DOIG
(b.1959)

Stealth House
1992

Oil on canvas
199 x 250 cm
United Kingdom

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'I always wanted to make paintings that told stories and suggested things.'

Peter Doig's work is inspired by photos or film but never based on real life environment or experience. His imagery is recognisable and often relates to personal memories. His paintings are timeless stills of the real world transferred into a fantastic, distant and disorientating world of reflections.



ONA B.
(b.1957)

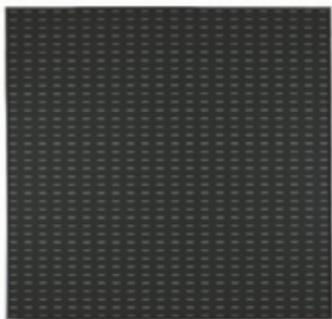
Zero Space
1997

Oil on canvas
200 x 180 cm
Austria

'The colour red gave me such a good feeling... a feeling at home in my painting. It is power and energy and joy. Like the sun and blood... but in a positive way. I never felt aggressive with this colour.'

Femininity and sensuality are brought to mind by the central role of the colour red in ONA B.'s works. To her, red has altogether positive associations, with motivation, strength, joy and well-being. Her work encompasses a variety of media, including paintings, installations, performance, photography and music.

ONA B. takes an interest in transcendental elements such as meta-communication, meditation, dreams and Zen, while also tackling socio-political issues. Fear of the unknown and a longing for infinity are her driving force.



**Michael
CRAIG-MARTIN
(b.1941)**

Dark Green Painting
1991

Acrylic and gesso on canvas
213,5 x 213,5 cm
United Kingdom

© SABAM Belgium 2018

'We often look for the special in special objects or special events but actually, if we understood the quality of ordinary things, we are closer to the substance of life.'

During the 1990s Michael Craig-Martin's focus shifted decisively to painting, with boldly outlined motifs and luridly vivid colour schemes. The artist creates situations in which the prejudices that the viewer might apply to abstract or representational surfaces are in constant transformation or inversion. In 1991, he made a series of paintings based on grids, such as *Dark Green Painting*, where it is possible to speak of the gridded surface both in terms of figure, ground and depth.



**Vilmantas
MARCINKEVIČIUS
(b.1969)**

Tired Man
1998

Acrylic and oil on canvas
174 x 209 cm
Lithuania

'The severe and sometimes contrasting colours in my paintings come largely from the reflection of today's world. I use awkward and non-traditional colour harmony - colours that dare to speak boldly and clearly.'

One of the most notable figures of contemporary expressionism in Lithuania, Vilmantas Marcinkevičius investigates the self through all present-day avenues of identity and identification. The figure constitutes the crux of his production, approached in a spontaneous and loose manner. Through this tried and tested motif, the artist sometimes raises uncomfortable questions about past and present, the individual and the society he (mis)fits in, or political and economical perspective and how they impact the individual's story.



Viorel MARGINEAN
(b.1933)

Paysage rythmé

2002

Acrylic on canvas
200 x 350 cm
Romania

'... all the time I've seen things from above, wide and comprehensive.'

Marginean carefully observes nature and its changes, weaving its fragments into large scale compositions. He transfers landscapes into stylised and dynamic arrangements creating his own imaginary visions. His work is rooted in his childhood home region, Transylvania.



Erik ŠILLE
(b.1978)

*Slowly I damage
your home*

2008

Oil on canvas
220 x 180 cm
Slovakia

'Can we brainwash our heads in such a way that they can become clean?'

Erik Šille uses the imagery of the electronic media or 'consumerist culture' for his paradoxical storytelling. In a constructed surrealist or even utopian world we are confronted with realistic human issues we have to face. Here, he juxtaposes the sweetness of these funny, toy-like creatures with the brutality and rawness of the scene. With almost infantile naivety he depicts a cruel, destructive and, as the title suggests, calculated act of burning down a home.



Petr MALINA
(b.1976)

Chakta u jezírka I

2005

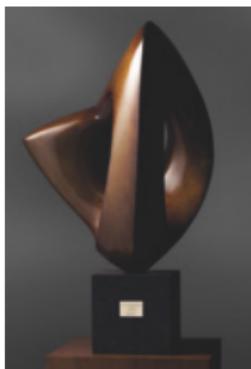
Oil on canvas
45 x 60 cm
Czech Republic

'The long-term immersion into the topic.'

Petr Malina injects his artistic production with a sense of idealism manifest both in his themes and aesthetic. As a result, his paintings convey an aura of peaceful simplicity that surprisingly anticipated, and now mirror, our idealised documentation of everyday life via social media. Mundane but inerasably graphic and polished, his paintings function like a travel diary of perfect uneventfulness, of the theatrically quotidian, of the choreographed coincidence. Both time-specific and timeless, Malina's art advertises an idyllic yet relatable routine.

ABSTRACT ART VS. FIGURATIVE ART

The contrast of artistic expression, either radically reduced to essential elements or represented by symbols and recognisable objects, can demonstrate the diversity of contemporary art.



Lucien WERCOLLIER
(1908 - 2002)

La transpercée

1959

Patinated bronze
64 x 50 x 45 cm
Luxembourg

© SABAM Belgium 2018

'Pure volumes and a very clear order had the highest degree of importance for me.'

Initially inspired by Mallol, Brancusi and Arp, Lucien Wercollier's sculptures turned more to an abstract form language putting the pure sculptural elements into the focus. Stone, alabaster, marble, glass, but mainly bronze were his media to find stylised, organic forms with a subtle interplay of light and shadow. Gently polished, his works achieve a profound harmony clearly favouring curves over straight lines.



Włodzimierz PAWLAK
(b.1957)

Rękawica ochronna

1987

Oil on canvas
130 x 150 cm
Poland

'Step by step I get away from the traditional concept of painting. I reject ornamentation, I paint modestly in the simplest way.'

As member of the art group 'Gruppa', Włodzimierz Pawlak was part of the 1980s independent art movement. He is a painter, performance artist, poet and educator, and his art is always based on theoretical considerations. His works can be symbolic transformations or concrete metaphors that reflect and comment on the social and political situation of Martial Law, as well as contemporary issues. Humour and irony are part of his visual expression.



Ger SWEENEY
(b.1959)

Into the wind

1994

Acrylic on canvas
153 x 138 cm
Ireland

'These core elements of linear rhythms, colour, gesture and incident, and an overall sense of movement were synthesized as I approach the surface for what it is - a flat or shallow field of visual activity - to which I apply strategies that deal with colour and composition.'

Ger Sweeney's relationship to landscape has evolved according to intimate feeling and memory. Once the transition from photo-realism to abstract expressionism was complete, Sweeney began to work solely from memory, from a digested feeling or impression, translated into abstract form. It is difficult to precisely identify what 'Into the wind' refers to but that is beside the point. The composition, dictated primarily by the vaporous strokes, offers a distorted sense of spatiality. It is as if the physical integrity of the depicted elements was unstable, to the point where the painter could only capture a blurry snapshot of chemical mayhem. Much like, in the end, the memory he uses to produces intimate and wondrous paintings.



Vítor POMAR
(b.1949)

Sem titulo

1983

Acrylic on canvas
193 x 195 cm
Portugal

'At some point, there is nothing else to do, nowhere to go, and then I like to do something so I paint.'

Vítor Pomar's early work is dominated by a black and white palette, before he turned to the use of colours. Influenced by Zen Buddhism he follows his expressionist abstract style, strongly believing that the creative process is deeply rooted in the human psyche. He combines spirituality with experimentalism and overlaps different artistic techniques such as painting, drawing, video, film, photography and sculpture.



Marlene DUMAS
(b.1953)

Bid voor mij

2004

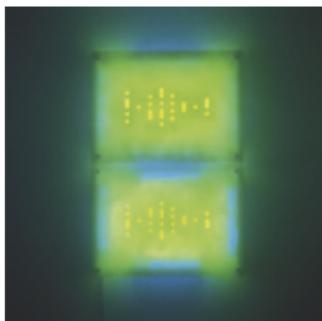
Watercolour on paper
(6 sheets)
130 x 73 cm
The Netherlands

'Modern art is by its very nature a non-traditional activity. Or rather it aims to expand our notions of the traditional and the normal. Art is there to help us to see more and not less.'

Marlene Dumas' figurative work is inspired by photographs, newspaper and magazine cuttings as well as personal memories. Her particular techniques of using oil on canvas, or ink and water colour on paper, gives her typical washed out figures contorted and haunting features. Her recurring themes are race, eroticism and pornography, violence and tenderness, guilt and innocence. Her psychologically charged images present a disturbing intimacy, creating an intense tension and confronting the viewer with his own preconceptions and fears. Marlene Dumas is one of the most renowned artists today and her works are full of life in all its complexity.

LIGHT IN ART

Technological developments allow contemporary art to play with light in different ways: with transparent material, bright colours or as a light source itself.



Brigitte KOWANZ
(b.1957)

Leuchten Leuchten
1997

Acrylic, steel, wood and
fluorescent lights
120 x 180 x 19 cm
Austria

'Light is what you see.'

Kowanz' work manifests itself by constructed spaces and spatial interactions. She precisely structures her objects and installations, in which the interior and exterior seem to permeate each other. Light, language and mirrors intertwine and their limitless flow in perception is poetically charged and brings new observational perspectives.



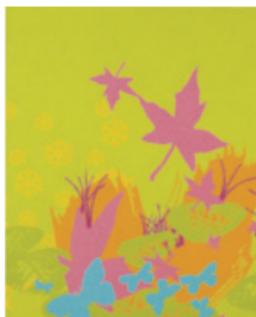
Rea AFANDITOU
(b.1960)

Είμαι εδώ
2005

Acrylic on plexiglass
100 x 86 x 9 cm
Cyprus

This painting was created for the exhibition *I am here* held at the Gallery Argo in Nicosia in 2005.

Cypriot artist Rea Afanditou's 'I Am Here' offers a depiction of what could be interpreted as the dominant sensorial experiences of his island. The warmth of the colours and the heat of the stone appear to be in conflict with the refreshing properties of the local greenery, which often serves as a welcome refuge. This painting functions as a perceptive postcard or summary of sorts.



Arjan PREGL
(b.1973)

Narava

2004

Oil on canvas
131 x 111 cm
Slovenia

© SABAM Belgium 2018

'I am most satisfied when my work combines three key elements at the same time: relation to the history of art, humour and political engagement.'

In primarily thematic cycles Arjan Pregl considers his role in society: he critically reflects and links his surrounding world filtering it in his visual output. He refers to historic painting styles and tries to find a humorous approach. In this painting the realistic elements become stylised natural phenomena, reduced to their basic formal features by the use of computer programs.

PORTRAITS

Diverse human stories and roles in society are told through portraits: individual, hero or anonymous figurine?



Madeleine GERA
(b.1960)

Ritratt ta 'Alexi b'tazza

2001

Oil on canvas
89 x 79 cm
Malta

© SABAM Belgium 2018

'Becoming an artist is another matter and infinitely more subtle than learning how to paint academically.'

This portrait expresses the artist's immense interest in the Old Master school. She clearly continues a style of portraiture in the naturalistic tradition inspired by her studies in Florence. This may not be inventive but she highlights elements that might get lost in contemporary art: the observation of the little details as well as the mastery of painting techniques.



Valerio ADAMI
(b.1935)

Personaggio

1983

Acrylic on wood
74,5 x 56,5 cm
Italy

'In drawing nature, things, the "figure", the object of the drawing changes and our intuition becomes the subject. Perhaps this is the ecstasy of ART.'

Valerio Adami is related to the Italian Pop Art Movement. His objects are fragmented, filled with bright non-depicting colours, flat without perspective, bordered with black contours, which incorporates a distant world resembling commercial pictures. This stylised and symbolic imagery expresses his interest in politics and examines our modern, Western society.



Andrey DANIEL
(b.1952)

*Бреговете на Европа или
Марко Поло и Еразъм*

2004

Oil on canvas
140 x 140 cm
Bulgaria

© SABAM Belgium 2018

'We are the chroniclers of the times, and if we cannot change things, we can at least see them as they are.'

Andrey Daniel has a long-lasting interest in Erasmus and the concept of humanism, both are recurring themes in his paintings. '... my reality is full of witnesses, perpetrators, prosecutors and defendants, and mainly "related persons". Furthermore, painting, accumulating truths, half-truths, lies, fictions, grotesques and apotheoses provides ample documentary material.'



Maria BLOMBÄRG
(b.1945)

Hjälte

1998

Textiles and pins collage
108 x 77 cm
Sweden

'When I work with fabric, the colours are already given. You can say that I paint with textiles.'

Maria Blombärg applies small cut pieces of used textiles on pre-drawn canvasses like pixels to build up a whole image. This technique automatically limits the visual expression and implies a more abstract and naive, simple style reminding of the impressionist's brush strokes. It is the viewer's eye that mixes the fragmented fabrics to patterns and shapes from a certain distance.



Yannis GAITIS
(1923 - 1984)

Η παρέλαση

1983

Oil on wood
(a relief painting)
160 x 115 cm
Greece

'Anthropakia', these human-like, blank-faced and carbon copy figurines are Yannis Gaitis' trademark. He was one of the earliest modernist post-war painters in Greece with surrealist, cubist and abstract beginnings. The myriad of identical little men later dominated his paintings in different variations. They are his comments on the uniformity, isolation and sterility of mass living bread by urban, modern life. With their lack of individuality, they are just part of a crowd that builds up to a repetitive visual pattern of a big picture.

BIRDS

Freedom is often associated with birds, which is supported by the European Parliament as a founding value of the European Union.



Boris BUCAN
(b.1947)

*Diptih: 1. Smrznuta ptica;
2. Trznica i golubovi*

2013

Acrylic on canvas
140 x 140 cm each
Croatia

© SABAM Belgium 2018

'All my life, I have been trying to create something new and good. You tell me if it is important.'

Bucan put his trademark on poster design. His large format 'poster-paintings' with a dominant artistic character grab the audience's attention and bring new concepts to graphic design. Creating ambient art for urban settings he references mass culture, everyday life as well as historical art styles. In the 90s he turned to painting, retaining his distinctive graphic design style.



Jörg IMMENDORFF
(1945 - 2007)

Wähle!

1979

Gouache on paper
28 x 20,5 cm
Germany

© SABAM Belgium 2018

'Whether or not the artist can fulfil a social function is a question that remains unanswered.'

Immendorff's work is characterised by his social-political criticism, often related to autobiographic reflections. In his *Cafe Deutschland* series of the 1970s he explored German division. He co-operated with the East-German abstract painter E.A. Penck. Immendorff was a member of the 'Neue Wilde', a German Neo-expressionist movement. His figurative style is often spiked with symbolism as well as irony.



Margrethe AGGER
(b.1943)

To gæs

1983

Tapestry
87 x 68 cm
Denmark

'Tapestry weavers have different possibilities to painters. We paint with our yarns.'

Margrethe Agger finds her motifs in nature. She draws elements such as the sky, the sea, animals, plants and stones and then transforms them into tapestries. Her bright colours either refer to the concrete object or are used as imaginative artistic idioms. Mexico and many Northern countries, including her local countryside, have inspired her work.

PRINTMAKING

Different materials and processes can be used and applied in printmaking, such as etching, lithography, wood engraving and screen printing. Digitalisation has brought new elements the medium.



Péter SZARKA
(b.1964)

Titkos társaság

edition 2/3

2007

Durst Lambda print

100 x 150 cm

Hungary

Initially a student of painting and member of the progressive contemporary Újlak art group of the post-regime art scene in Hungary, Peter Szarka turned to digital imaging. Using 3D design software he digitally manipulates photographs to create dreamlike figurative virtual visions, while keeping a painterly perspective. The Durst Lambda printing technology creates brilliantly clear and detailed prints. Following these new technical developments his works question technological advances on our visual culture.



Eeva-Liisa ISOMAA
(b.1953)

Maailman synty

edition 7/30

1998

Polymer engraving print

97 x 140 cm

Finland

'I want to mix timelines, break causality and create an imaginary space.'

Landscapes have always been the base of her works, but Isomaa goes beyond reality and tries to catch the interior state of mind in her images. She creates an imaginary space with a hazy quality that the viewer can interpret either as peace or danger. Often engraving on polymer her works are mainly printed on linen paper she produces herself.



Dominique SOSOLIC
(b.1950)

La mémoire du temps

1981

Engraving
70 x 60 cm
France

'A small etching can take you on a beautiful journey.'

Dominique Sosolic is a passionate engraver who mainly uses copper, the material used by historic artists, such as Dürer. It allows a delicacy and precision in style, focussing on the little details with fine lines. Apart from surrealist elements and poetic illustrations his work is figurative, often mystic, slowing down in time - the opposite of our today's society.

URBAN SPACES

The spaces created by humanity are places of lively co-existence. Artworks can offer different snapshots of city life.



Vineta KAULAČA
(b.1971)

Visual Memory

2004

Oil on canvas
13 x 10,5 cm each
(16 parts)
Latvia

'My intention is to explore the issue of perception, [...] my work is developed through careful scrutiny of photographic sources. Every photograph contains information of "that-which-has-been".'

Kaulača's work explores an awareness of reality in multiple paintings resembling photographic snapshots. They are like memories of a seen space at a certain moment, varying in distance and perspective, and trying to catch movement at different levels. She mirrors reality in such visual combinations and confronts us with our perception of the flow of time and space.



Jaan ELKEN
(b.1954)

*Knock, knock knocking
on Heaven's Door*

2007

Acrylic on canvas
160 x 200 cm
Estonia

'Painting has spread to a very broad territory and its boundaries are blurring with other media.'

Jaan Elken calls himself a "stylistic nomad". Starting from hyper-realism he has become one of the most recognised abstract artists in Estonia. A trained architect his subject matters often depict urban themes with a textural quality created by thick layers of paint, reduced in tonality and often with text elements. This work is part of a series related to autobiographical pop-music experiences. It is named after Bob Dylan's song and soundtrack of the 1973 film *Pat Garrett & Billy the Kid*.



Antoni CLAVÉ
(1913 - 2005)

New York II
1989

Mixed media
162 x 130 cm
Spain

© SABAM Belgium 2018

'We are made of the material of dreams.'

From a baroque, ornamental style Antoni Clavé progressed to a minimalistic and finally completely abstract aesthetic. He worked as painter, printmaker, sculptor, illustrator of children's books, and was known as a stage and costume designer. Inspired by artists such as Picasso, he explored the potential of collage by experimenting with a variety of materials. *New York II* is part of a series about urban living inspired by his visits in 1972 and 1989.

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