

Wondering wandering wintering

As the light grows shorter and colder, we warm ourselves to memories.

Collections.

Shells, pebbles, sticks....

Secrets, smells, thoughts....

We collect evidence of where we were.

Sorting and dividing them in wonder and getting lost.

"If we winter this one out,

we can summer anywhere."

(Seamus Heaney)

In the small art deco villa in Westende, 5 artists share a number of collections. They translate their harvest into paintings, sculptures, installations and videos.

Participating artists:

Koen Broucke

Babs Decruyenaere

Adelheid De Witte

Sofhie Mavroudis

Isabel Miquel Arques

Curators Els Wuyts and Mieke Dobbels

In this exhibition, Els Wuyts (Beaufort 2024) and Mieke Dobbels (Westfront, Nieuwpoort) showcase their shared passion for contemporary art at Villa Les Zéphyr in Westende with a personal, idiosyncratic selection.

Adelheid De Witte

Ground floor - hallway + living room

Adelheid De Witte is a philosopher by training and self-taught in painting. In her works she collects layers of light and dark, lines and figures in paint, pastel, charcoal or crayon. She applies them, then rubs or scratches them away. Objects appear and disappear during the process.

In the hallway and living room, she displays 5 drawings she made on paper that belonged to her grandfather and great-grandfather.

"This paper came from notebooks, cashbooks, order books and folders from the building materials company that has existed for three generations. All the paper and cardboard that appealed to me by texture, color, handwriting and little notes, I kept. That is my collection, my own supply of drawing paper. Not an infinite collection, when the paper runs out, it's nowhere to be found."

It's a metaphor for her way of working: taking her time and letting time work. Looking - changing - looking - keeping off - painting over - looking.

Sofhie Mavroudis

Ground floor - First room on the right

Tears are fascinating. They are the liquid emotion, the water that beads, flows or gushes from our eyes. Joy, fear, grief, mourning or melancholy, essentially fleeting or elusive, are transformed before and through our eyes into a tangible, visible reality.

At the same time, the question arises as to the place of emotion in the creative process of the artist. The latter translates an experience into a gesture, an image or a sound. Then the spectator can empathize, give his own interpretation. Sofhie Mavroudis reverses this artistic process. She transforms the audience's emotions into a work of art, which in turn evokes emotions.

By collecting the tears in small bottles, the emotion is made visible and preserved. Volunteers recorded the source of the tears. The installation of bottles of tears and fragments of testimonies are paired with a video projected on an umbrella.

Babs Decruyenaere

First floor - first room on the right

Weather or no weather, Babs Decruyenaere collects small objects during long walks and rambles, along beaches and inhospitable places. She observes, selects and picks up stones, bones, leaves, shells and sticks, using them to create her own universe. She assembles ingenious installations, such as hanging mobiles, stacked assemblages or assembled compositions.

"As a child, I was very asthmatic and was in boarding school at the seaside. Every Friday night my mom would find sand and shells, sticks and pebbles in the pockets of my clothes. Beach combing, I did it since I was a kid."

Babs Decruyenaere possesses a harmonious modesty with which she gives new images their beauty, collecting them, bringing them together by the coincidence of a glance.

The collected finds are meticulously photographed and cataloged. Then her photograms become minimalist studies of lines, patterns and structures. It appears abstract, but the natural elements remain recognizable.

Koen Broucke

First floor - second room on the right

Koen Broucke belongs to a tradition of rambling painters. Think of Caspar David Friedrich's work, 'Wanderer above the Sea of Fog'.

"Walking is a way of life, walking is an intoxication," he states in his painted diary 'The Memory of Snow', where he lets his thoughts run wild and collects new treasures for the Wunderkammer in his Villa des Roses. His home in Waulsort has since become a private museum with collections, art objects, exotica, traces of obsessions and expeditions, memorabilia of travels. It is the place where thought, reading, music, painting and living come together.

Koen Broucke shuttles between the south and the north of this country, between the hills and the sea. To drift, think and collect in both places. His finds later play a leading role on his canvases. As with the works in the 'little red room', which he himself chose "because the light spreads so beautifully filtered there". A little *en sourdine*. The works tell us that time passes, but that's not important. It is the moment that counts.

Isabel Miquel Arques

First floor - room on the left + maid's bedroom

Isabel Miquel Arques received her first camera (a Kodak Instamatic 25) from her father at the age of ten. She is self-taught and has had almost every photography technique pass through her hands, from classical photography to a pinhole camera. After a few jobs in London and Amsterdam, as an assistant for a gallery and photographer Ilan Wolff, an expert in camera obscura, she moved to Antwerp to make her own way, searching for the soul of the medium of photography.

Averse to technically accurate reproduction, she resolutely opts for the imperfection of experimentation, paying close attention to materiality, transparency, texture and tactility.

'Les Oreilles de la Mer' is an installation involving the sea, man and the concept of infinity. The number of *oreilles* can run to infinity, making this a work of art that is constantly in motion, like the sea itself. Each *oreille* also has a number that is accompanied by a short text, about people telling their own story.

Practical

#VillaLesZéphyr - Westende

Henri Jasparlaan 173, 8434 Westende

Exposition: wondering wandering wintering

Saturday 24/12/2022 - Sunday 16/04/2023

Villa Les Zephyrs in Westende is an authentically restored holiday villa, built in 1922 by the Ghent doctor couple Muyshondt-Conard and presents exhibitions of contemporary, visual art.

The works of art are placed in the villa in the original interior by art nouveau designer Henri Van de Velde, among others. The basement kitchen for the staff, the maid's bedroom and the bathroom

with sunken bathtub are also beautifully preserved parts and give a nice picture of the holiday culture by the sea in the 1920s-1940s.

Free entrance during opening hours of the villa.

Opening hours

Christmas holidays

Saturday 24/12: 9.30 a.m.-12.30 p.m.

Sunday 25/12: closed

Monday 26/12: 9.30 a.m. - 12.30 p.m. and 1.30 p.m. - 5 p.m.

Saturday 31/12: 9.30 a.m. - 12.30 p.m.

Sunday 1 January: closed

School vacations

Mon > Sat: 9.30 a.m. - 12.30 p.m. & 1.30 p.m. - 5 p.m.

Sun: 9.30 - 12.30 a.m.

Other periods

Sat: 9.30 - 12.30 & 13.30 - 17.00.

Sun: 9.30 a.m. - 12.30 p.m.

Guides

Guided tours cost 80 euros and can be requested via cultuur@middelkerke.be.

Info & contact

059 31 91 28 - toerisme@middelkerke.be