

S.M.A.K.

Flemish government purchases artworks for the Flemish Community Collection



In 2021, the Flemish government released an exceptionally large acquisition budget of 3.98 million euros for art purchases for the Collection of the Flemish Community. With this, they bought 281 works of art from 180 artists. The purchases are intended to offer the arts sector a future during the coronary crisis.

With these art purchases, the Flemish government gives a major boost to the visual arts sector, which directly benefits both the artists and the galleries involved. Of the total budget, 3.75 million euro comes from relaunch funds and 235,000 euro from recurrent funds. By way of comparison: in 2020, a total budget of €150,000 was available for acquisitions.

A committee of both independent curators and experts from the six Flemish contemporary art museums guaranteed a high-quality selection. The works are now part of the Flemish Community Collection and these museums will take care of them. In this way, the works become part of the museum collections and can be shown to the general public.



Minister of Culture Jan Jambon: *"Many visual artists were not entitled to support measures such as the cultural activity premium because they did not have a company number. With these purchases, we want to support them during this coronary crisis."*

The Flemish Community Collection consists of more than 18,000 works. It should provide a complete and accurate picture of high-quality and internationally relevant (contemporary) Flemish art. Ever since 1860 works of art have been acquired for it and deposited in public institutions and museums. In addition to contemporary art, the Flemish Community has also acquired old arts and various types of heritage.

281 works in numerous disciplines



A total of 281 works of art were purchased from 180 artists in various stages of their careers. For many artists it is the first time their work has been purchased by the Flemish government. The works give a representative picture of contemporary art practice with a wide variety of techniques and disciplines. They include 54 works of photography, 54 installations, 44 paintings, 43 sculptures, 31 drawings, 30 works of video art, 19 works in mixed media, 4 textile works and 2 prints. Because of the exceptionally high budget, the Flemish government also purchased some more expensive works by renowned artists. The 6 national museums with a collection profile of contemporary art, M HKA, S.M.A.K., Mu.ZEE, M Leuven, Middelheimmuseum and Fotomuseum Antwerpen, will now take custody of the works.



Purchases reveal trends in contemporary art practice

The selection of works confirms and reinforces a number of trends in art practice and art acquisition policy in recent years. For example, attention is being paid to social and political themes, identity, ecology, ethnic-cultural diversity, an increasing presence of female artists and a revaluation of traditional processes, such as textile processing or historical photographic techniques. It is noteworthy that many works have been acquired that can be exhibited in the open air, more specifically in the Middelheim Museum in Antwerp.



The installation 'Red and Blue Barricade' (2017) by Luc Deleu (°1944) was purchased for storage in S.M.A.K.

A recent work by Deleu was missing from the Flemish Community Collection, so this fills a gap. As a conceptual artist, architect and urban planner, Luc Deleu has occupied a prominent place in the Belgian arts scene for decades. Deleu's visionary thinking is highly topical in the world we live in today. In addition to the installation 'Red and Blue Barricade' (2017), two 'digital born' prints will be acquired: 'Barricade' (2016) and 'Terminology' (2016). This ensemble of three works aptly summarises his associative thinking and imagining around visual art, architecture, urban fabric, sociological and social visioning. The works are being preserved by S.M.A.K., which also has 'The Last Stone of Belgium' (1979) by this key artist in its collection.

The works of art by Fred Bervoets, Elke Andreas Boon, Polien Boons, Dries Boutsen, Ricardo Brey, Luc Deleu, Stefaan Dheedene, Nico Dockx, Manu Engelen, Mekhitar Garabedian, Alexis Gautier, P lagie Gbaguidi, Hamza Halloubi, Joke Hansen, Wannes Lecompte, Emilio Lopez-Menchero, William Ludwig Lutgens, Peter Morrens, Mathias Prenen, Kurt Ryslav, Elly Strik, Narcisse Tordoir, Ana Torfs, Guy Van Bossche, Koen van den Broek, Patrick Vanden Eynde, Luca Vanello, Filip Van Dingenen, Gert Verhoeven and Liliane Vertessen are kept in S.M.A.K.