

JUNE 18 → OCTOBER 2, 2022
OPENING JUNE 17TH, 6-9PM

BERLINDE DE BRUYCKERE

*The most ambitious exhibition of
Berlinde De Bruyckere in a French institution*



Portrait of Berlinde De Bruyckere
Photo credit: Mirjam Devriendt
Courtesy of the artist

“This is my most important solo exhibition in an institution in France. I am proud of this collaboration and to be able to show the public new works in exceptional exhibition spaces.”

Berlinde De Bruyckere

The solo exhibition of Berlinde De Bruyckere at MO.CO. is the most ambitious presentation of her work in France thus far. On the occasion, MO.CO. inaugurates a new chapter of its history, with a programme that, from now on, incorporates vast monographic exhibitions.

55 works including 6 new productions made for the MO.CO.

The one dedicated to Berlinde De Bruyckere, conceived in a tight-knit collaboration with the artist, puts together some fifty works made by her between 1999 and 2022. Exploring her preferred media (sculpture, installation, drawing, watercolour, and collage), she takes over all the spaces of Hôtel Montcalm. The selection includes six new works created specifically for this project in Montpellier.

The journey of the exhibition at MO.CO.

The exhibition opens with the monumental sculpture *After Crippelwood II, 2014*: a wax cast of a tree trunk mounted on top of metal structures. Its stretched position and flesh colour suggest a fragility similar to that of a recumbent statue, healed by the artist with strips of fabric. The exploration of metamorphoses towards humanity proceeds in the succession of rooms of this old building.

The first large plateau of the extension of MO.CO., voluntarily stripped of any temporary walls, receives an exceptional series of *Arcangelos* gathered and displayed in an entirely new way, many of them having been created especially for the occasion. The set is completed by large-format mural sculptures (from the series *Ploenen* and *It almost seemed a lily*) and was conceived to summarise the most recent research of the artist, witnessing the spiritual dimension that passes through her works.

The ground floor is articulated around the central sculpture *No Life Lost II, 2015*, with two blindfolded horses lying down on top of each other in a glass cabinet (all animals cast by the artist have deceased of natural causes); textile works of the *Courtyard Tales* series, composed of mural works made of weathered and tore blankets that lost their protective and comforting function; as well as a new work inspired by an old and worn out tree bearing the stigmata of its history.

The underground floor receives a new immersive installation, composed of superposed and wax cast of animal hides. Such imagery, connected with tannery and animal exploitation, evokes our society of consumption and its abuses.

Berlinde De Bruyckere's exhibition is accompanied by the publication of a richly illustrated catalogue for the occasion, in both French and English by Bernard Chauveau Edition, with graphic design entrusted to the design studio Atelier Tout va bien, fully illustrated by Mirjam Devriendt. It also comprises unpublished texts of the South African writer Antjie Krog and Numa Hambursin inspired by the series of works presented in the exhibition, as well as an interview with the artist made by the curators.

Biography of Berlinde De Bruyckere

Born in Ghent, Belgium, in 1964, where she currently lives and works, Berlinde De Bruyckere was deeply influenced by the Flemish Renaissance painting. Drawing from the legacy of great European masters, religious iconography, as well as ancient mythology and traditional culture, her work rests upon the dialectics experienced between images of current affairs and the breath of universal and timeless parables. By experimenting with malleable materials, like wax, fabric, or animal skin, Berlinde De Bruyckere built a unique body of work, simultaneously identifiable and moving, at times also unsettling, that translates into the flesh of sculptures the paradox of 'sublime weakness' posited by Lao-Tzu. Working both as a painter and a sculptor, her hybrid forms with human, animal, and plant features, bear an envelope, a diaphanous skin, or a bark under which quiver very dainty veins, a sap that ceaselessly flows and witnesses the hope contained in the miracle of each life.

The seeming economy of spectacular effects, recalling a starkness worthy of Zurbarán, leads to works of an intensity that summons our confusing relation with transcendence, a troubling fascination towards the spectacle of our own condition, of which we can no longer escape by making use of a Pascalian strategy of evasion. Although the exhibition at MO.CO. will have as crucial elements some well-known themes of Berlinde De Bruyckere's production like the martyr, redemption, and metamorphosis it will equally plunge on less often highlighted aspects of her work, such as eroticism or the relations and hybridizations between humans, plants, and animals, in addition to notions around work and exploitation.

The work of Berlinde De Bruyckere was the subject of exhibitions in important international institutions. In 2013, she represented Belgium in the 55th Venice Biennale, in a collaboration with Nobel Prize in Literature J. M. Coetzee.

General curatorship

Numa Hambursin, Chief Executive Officer

Curatorship

Vincent Honoré, exhibition director
Anna Kerekes, senior curator
Rahmouna Boutayeb, curator

MO.CO. MONTPELLIER CONTEMPORAIN



MO.CO.

MO.CO. Montpellier Contemporain is an arts ecosystem, ranging from arts training related activities to art collections.

The model is unique to Montpellier and encompasses two exhibition centres and an arts school

Programm 2022 - 2023

Spring 2022

TRANS(M)ISSIONS

With Lili Reynaud-Dewar, Jean-Luc Vilmouth, Mathilde Monnier
from March 19th to May 15th 2022, MO.CO.

Summer 2022

CONTRE-NATURE, contes et céramiques

from May 21st to September 4th 2022, MO.CO. Panacée

BERLINDE DE BRUYCKERE

from June 18th to October 2 2022
MO.CO.

À SUIVRE, À SURVEILLER

Exhibition of MO.CO. graduates Esba
Guest curator: Eva Barois De Caebel
From June 17 to July 3 2022
Chapelle et Pharmacie de la Miséricorde

Fall 2022

BIENNALE ARTPRESS DES JEUNES ARTISTES

from October 1st to January 8th 2023
MO.CO. Panacée

MUSEES EN EXIL

(Chili, Sarajevo, Palestine, Louvre, Fabre...)
from November 5th to February 12th 2023
MO.CO.

Spring 2023

IMMORTELLE

from March 11th to May 21st 2023
at MO.CO. (X generation: from 1970 to the beginning 80's) and at
MO.CO. Panacée. (Y generation: from the mid 80's).

Information

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Exhibition from June 18th to October 2, 2022

MO.CO. Montpellier Contemporain, 13 rue de la République,
34000 Montpellier

**Open Tuesday to Sunday, 11am to 7pm (June-September) and
from 11am to 6pm (October-May)**

Press visit : Thursday June 16th

Private opening : Friday June 17th, 2022, 6:00 pm

Photos and credits:

Visuals of the exhibition available online in the press area

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