

# The Little Catalogue of the S.M.A.K. Collection The Exhibition 'Part 1'

*A selection of works of art on view  
in the halls, in alphabetical order.*

Source texts: Little Catalogue  
of the S.M.A.K. Collection,  
for sale @bookshop.

## 1. FRANCYS ALÿS

°1959, Antwerp, Belgium

*Without an Ending There is no  
Beginning, 2014–2017,*  
film, photos, drawings,  
variable dimensions

FRANCIS ALÿS WAS BORN AS  
FRANCIS DE SMEDT, BUT  
CHOSE HIS MOTHER'S MAIDEN  
NAME AS HIS ARTIST NAME.

Francis Alÿs' first work of art

consisted of pushing a large block of ice through the streets of Mexico City until it had completely melted. When the artist and his brother were young, they shared a 1981 Lada Riva. They wanted to escape ordinary life by driving to Russia, to freedom. On the way there, the car broke down and they went their separate ways. Thirty years later, Francis Alÿs invited his brother to drive to Russia again, this time in a 1977 Lada Kopeika. Upon arrival, they collided with a tree in the courtyard of the St Petersburg Winter Palace. Along with the car, all the dreams of their youth came crashing down.

## 2. HAROLD ANCART

°1980, Brussels, Belgium, lives and works in New York, United States

*Untitled*, 2017,  
oil crayon and pencil on canvas,  
h. 213,5 cm × w. 266.5 cm

# HAROLD ANCART BEHOLDS THE WORLD AROUND HIM AND TRANSFORMS IT INTO HIS COLOURS.

You can just about make out a landscape in this work of art. The jet black, the striking colours and the rough paint surface create an exciting work that looks nothing like the many landscape paintings in traditional art museums. At the top, dark clouds drift by in a mint-green sky above a grey-black sea. At the bottom, we see a red band with geometric shapes and a plant-like shape. The work is abstract and leaves room for your imagination. Perhaps it is a reminder of a walk on the beach of which the artist only remembers fragments: a bushy plant, a ship, an incident.

## 3. GASTON BERTRAND

°1910, Wonck, Belgium,

†1994, Ukkel, Belgium

*Composition ('L'escalier jaune')*, 1946,  
oil on canvas,  
h. 80 cm × w. 64 cm

THE PAINTINGS BY GASTON  
BERTRAND ARE THE OLDEST  
WORKS IN THE S.M.A.K.  
COLLECTION

During his military service in 1932, Gaston Bertrand contracted a bad pneumonia and had to undergo surgery for his chest. While he was convalescing in the hospitals of Liège and Brussels, he was highly impressed by these buildings, both on the inside and on the outside. This architecture inspired him to do this painting. *Composition ('L'escalier jaune')* means *Composition with a yellow staircase*. You see a dreamlike interior with many perspective lines, planes and a square in shades of white and grey. The ochre banister stands out.

The work has rhythm. The staircase can be read as a scale along which the notes climb up or down.

#### 4. GUILLAUME BIJL

°1946, Antwerp, Belgium

*Sorry*, 1987,  
billiard balls, bird's nest,  
h. 8 cm × Ø 15 cm, not dated

#### SORRY FOR SAYING SORRY

This is the first artwork from the *Sorry* series by Guillaume Bijl. It consists of a bird's nest with three billiard balls instead of eggs, but you don't notice this until you come closer. You feel hoodwinked by the artist. Moreover, it looks rather grand on a marble base under a glass bell. At the same time, it is quite comical. That is why Guillaume Bijl says sorry. Sorry for making such art. Sorry you have to see this. Sorry

for saying sorry. Bijl thinks we all say we are sorry too often and finishes off by saying 'Sorry' once again.

## 5. DARA BIRNBAUM

°1946, New York, United States

*Technology/Transformation:*

*Wonder Woman, 1978,*

DigiBeta transferred to DVD

(colour and sound), 7 min, not dated

**AN AVERAGE FAMILY WATCHES  
2 HOURS AND 56 MINUTES OF  
TELEVISION PER DAY.**

Dara Birnbaum was one of the first artists to make videos. This is one of her most famous works. Do you know Wonder Woman? She is a female superhero who was popular on television in the 1970s. By spinning around, the character Diana, dressed in a fancy suit, turns into the powerful Wonder Woman. Video artist Dara Birnbaum cuts

and pastes together images from the TV series. If you blink for too long, you see the same bit over and over again. The disco beats that accompany the video make the whole thing an unforgettable experience.

## 6. CHUCK CLOSE

°1940, Monroe, United States,  
lives and works in New York,  
United States

*Keith*, ed. 4/10, 1972,  
gravure printing on paper,  
h. 113 cm × w. 89.5 cm

**ONLY A HUMAN BEING CAN SEE  
ANOTHER HUMAN BEING, A  
CAMERA CANNOT DO THIS.**

Chuck Close's portraits look like photographs, except they are not. He uses an old 17th-century graphic technique, the mezzotint. The mezzotint is also known as black

art. Here you see a portrait of his good friend Keith. The size of Keith's portrait was so large that a special printing press had to be made.

Close and the printer worked on the portrait for three months, just a tad longer than a camera click, wouldn't you agree?

## 7. THIERRY DE CORDIER

°1954, Oudenaarde, lives and works in Alpujarras, Spain

*A.S. (Lijdensvanger) Study*, 1988,  
charcoal, chalk, gouache, ink and  
pencil on paper,  
h. 45.5 cm × w. 34 cm

RTTY

De Cordier signs his work with RTTY instead of Thierry. A friend with dyslexia addressed him in this way in a letter. That was an accident and to underline his own 'accident'-ness in the world, it became his signature.



See this one on the top left? De Cordier's work is about escape from the world and loneliness. He mainly uses dark colours like blues, greys and blacks. You can make out a stooped figure carrying a heavy load. This drawing is a design or study for *De Vogel*, a sculpture from the S.M.A.K. collection.

## 8. RAOUL DE KEYSER

°1930, Deinze, Belgium,  
†2012, Deinze, Belgium.

*Kalklijnen-hoek*, 1970,  
acrylic paint on canvas,  
h. 252.5 cm × w. 190 cm

RAOUL DE KEYSER WAS NOT  
ONLY A PAINTER, BUT ALSO A  
SPORTS JOURNALIST.

For De Keyser, looking is at the heart of his painting. In his works you can catch a glimpse of his everyday surroundings: a tap with a garden

hose, a tent in summer, a monkey puzzle tree in his garden, a cloud, barbed wire or an empty football goal. When Raoul De Keyser looked out the window of his studio, he saw the football pitch of SK Deinze. He liked to watch when they painted the boundary lines white. *Kalklijnenhoek* shows a fragment of a football pitch: the corner line plus the corner flag. Essentially, you see a large green painted surface with white acrylic paint lines.

## 9. WIM DELVOYE

°1965, Wervik, Belgium

*Panem et Circenses I*, 1990,  
stained glass, lacquer on metal,  
h. 210 cm × w. 305 cm × d. 94 cm

WIM DELVOYE CLAIMS THAT,  
FROM HIS BASE IN GHENT,  
HE CAN CREATE QUITE A SHIT  
STORM IN NEW YORK.

The work *Panem et Circenses I* consists of a football goal filled with stained-glass. Wim Delvoye mixes different worlds with each other. That's how an everyday object becomes a comical work of art. This is exactly what happened with this goal. It is exciting to mix these two materials. The fragility of the glass is at odds with the power of a kicked ball. Fortunately, you are not allowed to touch the works of art in the museum, let alone kick a football into them. This composition of eleven stained-glass windows is reminiscent of the line-up of a football team. The bakery scenes on the windows are a direct nod to the title *Bread and Games for the People*.

## 10. ROBERT DEVRIENDT

°1955, Bruges, Belgium

*Afgesloten kanaalarm*  
(*Closed-off canal branch*), 1996,

oil on canvas,  
h. 11.5 cm × w. 13 cm

**A LANDSCAPE, BEAUTIFULLY  
EXECUTED, IS ALL YOU NEED.**

In the 1970s and 1980s, Robert Devriendt made large paintings in a sweeping and expressive style. In the mid-1990s, he started to paint on very small canvases while destroying the bulk of his old work. With these small works, which you have to stand very close to in order to appreciate properly, he wants to attract your attention. When you walk around in the museum, you are at first surprised by the funny little work against the high white wall. When you take a closer look at the painting, you are taken in by the beautiful rendering of this natural landscape and Devriendt's masterful painting technique.

**11. LUCIO FONTANA**

°1899, Roasrio, Argentina,  
†1968, Varese, Italy

*Concetto spaziale*, 1966,  
acrylic paint on canvas and  
enamel paint on wood,  
h. 146 cm × w. 164 cm × d. 6 cm

LUCIO FONTANA WAS BORN  
IN THE 19TH CENTURY AS  
THE SON OF SCULPTOR LUIGI  
FONTANA.

Painting is one of the oldest forms of the visual arts. Fontana gives painting a new dimension by creating openings in his works. In *Concetto spaziale*, he made 32 holes with a drill. Around the red-painted canvas is a wooden frame in which three large round shapes have been cut out. This work is part of Fontana's series *Teatrini* or small theatres. You could see the cut-out shapes as the heads of people sitting in front of you in the auditorium. Together, you are

looking at the deep red curtain that is about to go up.

## 12. BERNARD FRIZE

°1954, Saint-Mandé, France

*Théon*, 2001,  
acrylic paint and resin on canvas,  
h. 180 cm × w. 160 cm

THE ARTIST HAS HIS ASSISTANTS MAKE UP THE TITLES; THÉON IS TAKEN FROM THE FIRST NAME OF A CHARACTER IN GAME OF THRONES, THEON GREYJOY.

For Bernard Frize, the artist is not a heroic figure but a worker. To him, painting simply means applying paint and colours to a surface. Frize wants, above all, to make the act or the labour of painting visible. When he made *Théon*, the artist held different brushes in both hands, each with one colour on them. With

his two hands at the same time, the artist starts a dance in the top left-hand corner with the brushes on a grey background. The movement swings four times between the top and bottom edge of the canvas and then dies out in the top-right corner.

### 13. ROBERT GOBER

°1954, Meriden, United Kingdom

*Drain*, ed. 4/8, 1989,  
tin, Ø 10.5 cm × d. 7.5 cm

AS A STUDENT, ROBERT GOBER  
WORKED FOR THE SEWERAGE  
AUTHORITIES.

As a child, Robert Gober watched his father install a sink in the basement. His father rebuilt the entire house himself. Almost thirty years later, Gober is modelling sinks and drains. *Drain* is not in the floor, but protrudes into the wall of the museum. Funnily enough, this

makes the drain look more like an ear. When you whisper a secret in someone's ear, you never know exactly how the other person will hear the message. Just as you don't know where the dirty water goes when it's flushed down the drain.

## 14. MARY HEILMANN

°1940, San Francisco, United States

*Black Cracky*, 1990,  
oil on canvas,  
h. 99 cm × w. 73.5 cm

ACCORDING TO MARY HEILMANN  
NOTHING IS PERMANENT,  
NOTHING IS FINISHED AND  
NOTHING IS PERFECT.

Mary Heilmann, who makes small colourful abstract paintings, draws inspiration from everyday life for the bright colours she uses. Nail polish, neon light and even *The Simpsons* inspire her for a new work of art.



She deliberately applies the paint thinly and messily. The splashes of paint and sloppy brushstrokes are not accidental or incompetent. They are 'mistakes' that make something interesting. These are the fingerprints by which you can recognise the maker.

## 15. LOUISE LAWLER

°1947, New York, United States

*Storage*, 1986,  
mixed media,  
h. 64.5 cm × w. 97 cm

IS A WORK OF ART ONLY  
VALUABLE WHEN IT IS ON  
DISPLAY IN A MUSEUM?

When S.M.A.K. wants to show this work of art, a salmon-pink rectangle must first be painted on the white wall. In the rectangle there will be a picture of a work of art in a warehouse or storage. Next to this

picture is a label with a red dot. The label explains that the red dot represents the amount of explosives used during World War II. The pink rectangle represents how many nuclear weapons there are in the whole world today.

## 16. SOL LEWITT

°1928, Hartford, United States,  
†2007, New York, United States.

*Incomplete Open Cube 7/25, 1974,*  
enamel on aluminium,  
h. 105 cm × w. 105 cm × d. 105 cm

FOR A WHILE, SOL LEWITT  
HAD BEEN A NIGHT SECURITY  
GUARD AT THE MOMA, THE  
MUSEUM OF MODERN ART IN  
NEW YORK, BEFORE HE HAD AN  
EXHIBITION THERE HIMSELF  
YEARS LATER.

“In conceptual art, the idea or the  
concept is the most important

part of the work. The execution is secondary”, says Sol Lewitt. With a minimum of lines, the artist wants to evoke the idea of a cube in your head.

## 17. EDWARD LIPSKI

°1966, London, United Kingdom

*Bird*, 1996,  
glass fibre, feathers and rope,  
h. 154 cm × w. 110 cm × d. 70 cm

“MY WORKS OF ART ARE  
MISTAKES”, SAYS EDWARD  
LIPSKI.

A large bird without wings, eyes or legs is suspended from a thick black rope. This black volume absorbs your gaze completely. The work raises more questions than answers. Edward Lipski does not like to give clues. He leaves us to our own devices with this heavy, dramatic image. You are free to make up

your own story. Animals are more common in Edward Lipski's art. He puts or hangs his animals in strange poses, which makes for a strange experience when you look at them.

## 18. BERND LOHAUS

°1940, Düsseldorf, Germany,  
†2010, Antwerp, Belgium

*ICH-DU*, 1979,

concrete,

h. 300 cm × w. 147 cm × d. 31 cm

THIS WORK OF ART WAS  
SPECIALLY DESIGNED FOR  
THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS IN  
GHENT. WHEN IT MOVED TO  
S.M.A.K., THE BUILDING WAS  
ADAPTED TO ACCOMMODATE THE  
WORK OF ART.

The three stacked concrete blocks almost block the passage between two rooms. You have just enough room to squeeze past them. On the

convex side of the sculpture, Lohaus wrote DU (You) in the concrete, on the concave side ICH (I). Here, sculptor Bernd Lohaus alludes to how people can be together, but can never become completely one.

## 19. NAVIN RAWANCHAIKUL

°1971, Chiang Mai (Thailand)

*Fly with me to another world, ed. 3/3,*  
2001, mixed media,  
variable dimensions

NAVIN RAWANCHAIKUL MADE A  
TRACELLING EXHIBITION IN  
AN OLD TAXI THAT YOU CAN  
STILL TAKE TO THE AIRPORT.

Navin Rawanchaikul's parents were British-Indian refugees from Pakistan. Rawanchaikul was born in Thailand and married a Japanese woman. Travelling is in his blood. Today, he lives alternately in Japan and Thailand. *Fly with me to another*

*world* tells the story of Thai artist Inson Wongsam. With his scooter, he rode through India, Pakistan, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Turkey and Greece to Europe, the arts centre. On the way, he paid with works of art. Years later, Navin Rawanchaikul followed the same road to tell this story. You can see a replica of the scooter here, along with photos and images from this fantastic journey. Where would you like to fly to and who gets to ride on the back of the scooter?

## 20. MICHAEL ROSS

°1954, Buffalo, New York,  
United States

*The Smallest Type Of Architecture For The Body Containing The Dust From My Bedroom, My Studio, My Living Room, My Kitchen And My Bathroom, 1991, dust, metal, h. 2.3 cm × w. 2 cm × d. 2 cm*

THIS WORK OF ART IS THE

# SMALLEST SCULPTURE IN THE S.M.A.K. COLLECTION

In 1991, Michael Ross filled a thimble with dust collected from his flat and called it *The Smallest Type Of Architecture For The Body Containing The Dust From My Bedroom, My Studio, My Living Room, My Kitchen And My Bathroom*. This is a very long title for a small sculpture. This miniature work of art, attached to the white museum wall like a painting, surprises many visitors.

## 21. THOMAS RUFF

°1958, Zell am Harmersbach,  
Germany

*P. Lappat*, ed. 3/4, 1988,  
photo on acrylic glass,  
h. 205.6 cm × w. 160.6 cm

THOMAS RUFF FIRST WANTED  
TO STUDY ASTRONOMY,

## BUT EVENTUALLY CHOSE PHOTOGRAPHY

This portrait is part of the early series of *Porträts* that Ruff has been making since 1981. He photographs friends and acquaintances. *P.*

*Lappat* is a typical portrait photo: you see a woman's head, shoulders and part of her upper body against a white background. It is exactly like a passport photo, but much larger. Hung high in a museum room, this woman seems to be looking at us instead of us looking at her.

## 22. WILHELM SASNAL

°1972, Tarnów, Poland

*Me and Rafał*, 2000–2006,  
oil on canvas,  
h. 190 cm × w. 189 cm

WILHELM SASNAL IS SO  
POPULAR THAT YOUR NAME  
GOES ON A WAITING LIST IF



YOU WANT TO BUY ONE OF HIS  
ARTWORKS.

Besides being a painter, Wilhelm Sasnal is also a film maker and cartoonist. *Me and Rafał* shows two men, each lying on a bed in a room. The title suggests that one of them is the artist. Sasnal always starts from his own life. His style is simple, cool and detached.

## 23. ANTE TIMMERMANS

°1976, Ninove, Belgium

*No Title*, 2006,  
pencil on paper,  
h. 240 cm × w. 382 cm

ANTE TIMMERMANS STARTS  
WITH A PENCIL LINE AND  
ENDS WITH AN IMAGE OF A  
CITY OF THE FUTURE.

The city is the central theme in this artist's work. His drawings are

mind maps of some kind. Drawing seems simple, but many people are afraid of the blank page. It takes Timmermans about three months to finish a large drawing. He shades, circles, designs, counts and connects. You see an imagined city with high-rise buildings.

## 24. KOEN VAN DEN BROEK

°1973, Bree, Belgium

*From here to the West and back*, 2008,  
oil on canvas, h. 115 cm × w. 88 cm

WHEN ASKED WHAT OCCUPIES MOST OF HIS TIME, KOEN VAN DEN BROEK REPLIES: “PAINT ON CANVAS.”

Koen van den Broek travels around the world and uses his camera as a sketchbook. His paintings show vast landscapes and urban details. For this work, the artist used the painting *Porte-fenêtre à Collioure*

by Henri Matisse as a basis. This French artist painted what he saw from his window at night, a black expanse. Van den Broek adopts the form, but with a white surface. He is interested in what you can still add to art history.

## 25. WILLY VANDERSTEEN

(Willebrord Vandersteen)  
°1913, Antwerp, Belgium,  
†1990, Edegem, Belgium

*Druïde uit Lambiorix*, 1950,  
collage and India ink on paper,  
h. 42 cm × w. 30 cm

SUSKE EN WISKE IS ONE OF THE LONGEST-RUNNING AND MOST POPULAR COMIC STRIPS IN EUROPE. LAMBIK IS A MAIN CHARACTER WITH WHOM WILLY VANDERSTEEN IDENTIFIED.

In 1987, the Museum of

Contemporary Art held an exhibition on comic strips. This comes as no surprise if you consider that Jan Hoet, the first director of S.M.A.K., was a comic book collector as well as an art historian, with the nickname “Pope of the Art”. In fact, together with a childhood friend, he once used to make his own comics.

## 26. RINUS VAN DE VELDE

°1983, Leuven, Belgium

*Deep in the jungle of our fiction, ...*,  
2016, charcoal on canvas,  
h. 300 cm × w. 600 cm

THE STORIES BY RINUS VAN  
DE VELDE ARE A MIXTURE OF  
FANTASY AND REALITY.

If you look closely, you can see that *Deep in the jungle of our fiction* does not take place in a real jungle. On the right, someone is painting the leaves of the set. It is a film set

for the fictional town of Donogoo Tonka. The larger-than-life charcoal drawing is part of a series of nine works. Rinus Van de Velde bases his drawings on photographs that feature him or his friends.

## 27. HERMAN VAN INGELGEM

°1968, Blankenberge, Belgium

*Karate Kid*, 2010,  
hair, elastic band, h. 1 cm × w. 12 cm

THIS IS THE PORTRAIT OF A  
YOUNG WOMAN WHO HERMAN VAN  
INGELGEM MET BY CHANCE.

*Karate Kid* was created after an unexpected meeting with a young woman who loved karate films. After the woman had haunted his mind for days, Van Ingelgem asked for her hair band. He stretches this elastic band between two hooks in the corner of a museum room. The tension refers to the karate stroke

that a chance encounter can inflict.

## 28. ANNE-MIE VAN KERCKHOVEN

(also known as AMVK),  
°1951, Antwerp, Belgium

*Heimweer (Treasures from the West 4: Crisis on the public's apparent surplus value (versus the artist's fury))*, 1993, mixed media,  
h. 65 cm × w. 96 cm × d. 7 cm

THE ARTIST CHOOSES TO SIGN  
HER ARTWORK WITH AMVK.  
THIS WAY YOU DO NOT KNOW  
WHETHER IT IS A MAN OR A  
WOMAN.

This work by AMVK consists of two parts. On the left, we see a space with a chair and a black surface; on the right, a woman in a provocative pose. Just like this work of art, your brain is made up of two halves, a left and a right half, each with its own task. The artist leaves it up to you to

see, and come up with, connections in the work of art.

## 29. PHILIPPE VAN SNICK

°1946, Ghent, Belgium,  
†2019, Brussels, Belgium

*Monochrome destabilisé-ré*, 1980,  
acrylic on canvas on cardboard,  
variable measurements

PHILIPPE VAN SNICK ALWAYS  
WORKS WITH THE SAME TEN  
COLOURS: RED, YELLOW, BLUE,  
ORANGE, PURPLE, GREEN,  
WHITE, BLACK, GOLD AND  
SILVER.

Van Snick used to make  
*Polychromes déstabilisés*. These  
were assorted shapes in cardboard.  
Each piece of cardboard was  
painted in one of the ten colours of  
Van Snick's colour palette. From  
1980, he made a new series entitled  
*Monochromes déstabilisés*. Once

again, the wall of the museum room features assorted cardboard shapes, but this time all in one colour, in this case red.

### 30. JAN VERCRUYSSE

°1948, Ostend, Belgium,  
†2018, Bruges, Belgium

*Portret van de kunstenaar door hemzelf (XIII) (Self-portrait), 1984, offset print on paper, h. 60 cm × w. 42 cm*

JAN VERCRUYSSE EXAMINES  
THE ROLE THAT ART AND  
ARTISTS CAN PLAY IN OUR  
SOCIETY.

This self-portrait is a black-and-white photograph of the artist wearing a mask. You cannot see Vercruysse, but the artist can see you through the holes in the cardboard. The artist's hand gesture and the shapes in the background



make for a special atmosphere. You mainly see an artistic environment and not the artist.

## 31. ANDY WARHOL

(Andrew Warhola)

°1928, Pittsburgh, United States,  
†1987, New York, United States

*Marilyn Monroe*, ed. of 250 copies,  
1967, screen-print on paper,  
(10 ×) h. 91.5 cm × w. 91.5 cm

ANDY WARHOL PREDICTED THAT  
IN THE FUTURE EVERYBODY  
WOULD BE FAMOUS FOR  
FIFTEEN MINUTES.

The glitz and glamour of Hollywood fascinated the young and timid Andrew Warhola. He deliberately drew a veil over his exact date and place of birth and reinvented himself as Andy Warhol the pop art artist. In his silver Factory, Warhol mass-produced screen prints.

The portraits of world star Marilyn Monroe, who ultimately committed suicide because of the pressure of fame, are special because the background was painted by hand. In his Marilyn series, three important themes come together: fame, beauty and death.