

NEW COLLECTION PRESENTATION AT M: *TAKE YOUR TIME*

Those who have not yet seen this collection presentation can still visit the rooms of M until April 23. Curators Lore Van Hees and Peter Carpreau are giving a sneak peek into the exhibition.



Lore: “In the past, M – like most museums – had a permanent display in which it exhibited the masterpieces from its collection. They were all neatly arranged by period or style. But a few years ago, we decided to move away from that classical presentation. We now bring different pieces from our collection together to make new, more thematic exhibitions, with works from different periods. For example, it is perfectly possible that we might present an abstract contemporary work beside a mediaeval triptych. ‘Madness’ and ‘Body Language’, which were on display at M a while ago, are examples of such collection presentations. ‘Take Your Time’ is the newest addition.”

Plenty of reactions

Peter: “We received a lot of feedback about ‘The power of images’: from visitors, colleagues, the museum staff... Much of it was positive, but there were also some critical voices. The approach was rather academic – I can say that because I made the exhibition (laughs). We took all of these reactions into account as we created ‘Take Your Time’.”

Lore: “As the name suggests, the theme is time, and how artists *and* audiences deal with it. Visual art appears to be static, but it does indeed have a temporal dimension. Some works tell a story. Others refer to the passing of time. Or they change when you take the time to look at them from a different angle.”

Peter: “The message to the visitor is: stop and reflect on how the artists use and depict time in their work. And take the time to look at it, to let all the details sink in. Ask yourself how long you look at an artwork and why.”

“[Take Your Time](#)’ also seeks to make a second point: enhancing the visual literacy of our visitors. We are all constantly inundated with images, but do we always know how to interpret them? A museum must help people to look better, I think. This makes people better equipped against fake news, manipulated images, advertising, propaganda... I see a profound need for this, when I look at the world today.”



Zaalzicht 'Neem je Tijd', M Leuven, foto: © Miles Fischler voor M Leuven



Zaalzicht 'Neem je Tijd', M Leuven, foto: © Miles Fischler voor M Leuven

Old and New

Lore: “We are showing ten works. Half are old and half are contemporary. The room appears emptier than it did before, but that’s the point. We want to stimulate people to take the time to look at each work, and you can’t do that if you overburden them.”

“The first work you will see is ‘Disque’ by Ann-Veronica Janssens. This is an aluminium disk that is one metre in diameter. As you approach the work, you see that there are extremely fine concentric circles chiselled into it, a little bit like an old vinyl record. In conjunction with the way the light falls, the disk’s appearance changes when you look at it from different angles.”

“Beside this work, we are showing the Calendar Dial, which currently hangs elsewhere in the museum. If you do not know this work, it is a circular year calendar that was made circa 1500, on which you see the progression of the seasons, among other things. There are five centuries between the two works, and yet they will dialogue with one another. You might almost say that ‘Disque’ is a contemporary interpretation of the Calendar Dial: they not only have the same shape, but they both express how artists deal with the idea of time.”



Zaalzicht 'Neem je Tijds', M Leuven, foto: © Miles Fischler voor M Leuven

Peter: “You see a different perspective in the 17th-century still-life by Gerrit van Stellingwerff. There is no plot or temporal arc here: you only see a collection of objects. But time is present symbolically. The work is a so-called *vanitas*, an allegory on the transience of life. It is a warning to the viewer: knowledge, wealth, fame, possessions... sooner or later, you will lose it all.”



Zaalzicht 'Neem je Tijd', M Leuven, foto: © Miles Fischler voor M Leuven

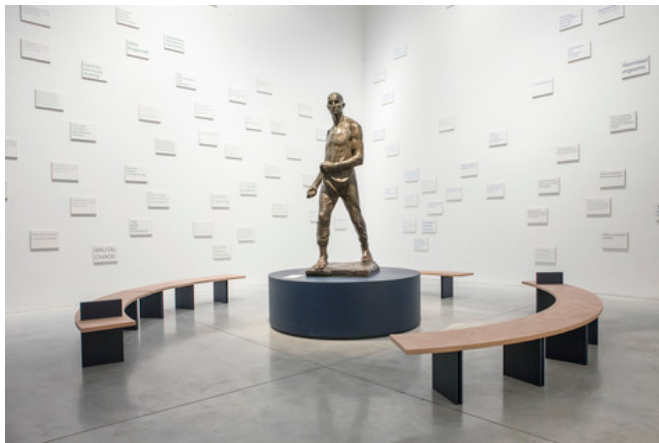
Lore: “On the other hand, we are also showing ‘Gardening’ by Hans Op de Beeck, a video of an illustrated landscape. It changes with the seasons – sometimes almost imperceptibly, but sometimes abruptly. It is a contemporary work, but it is not abstract at all. The video is set to choral music by Thomas Tallis, an English composer from the 16th century. The progression of the seasons reminds us of the Calendar Dial, and there are certainly also links with other works in the room, but we’ll leave it up to the visitor to identify them.”



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Inertia in Motion

Peter: “In the centre of the room, we are displaying ‘The Sower’, a life-size bronze statue by Constantin Meunier. Meunier captures one moment in a movement, like in a photograph. But the movement of sowing seeds takes longer than this one moment. And of course it is a three-dimensional work, and many visitors will want to walk all around it – and that takes time. We seek to draw the viewer’s attention to all these multivalent layers.”



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Lore: “Although we combine works from different periods, the point is not to question what is old and what is recent art. We primarily invite people to stop and look. And to try and find their own answers.”

'Take Your Time,' from 10.07.20 to 23.04.23 in M.

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