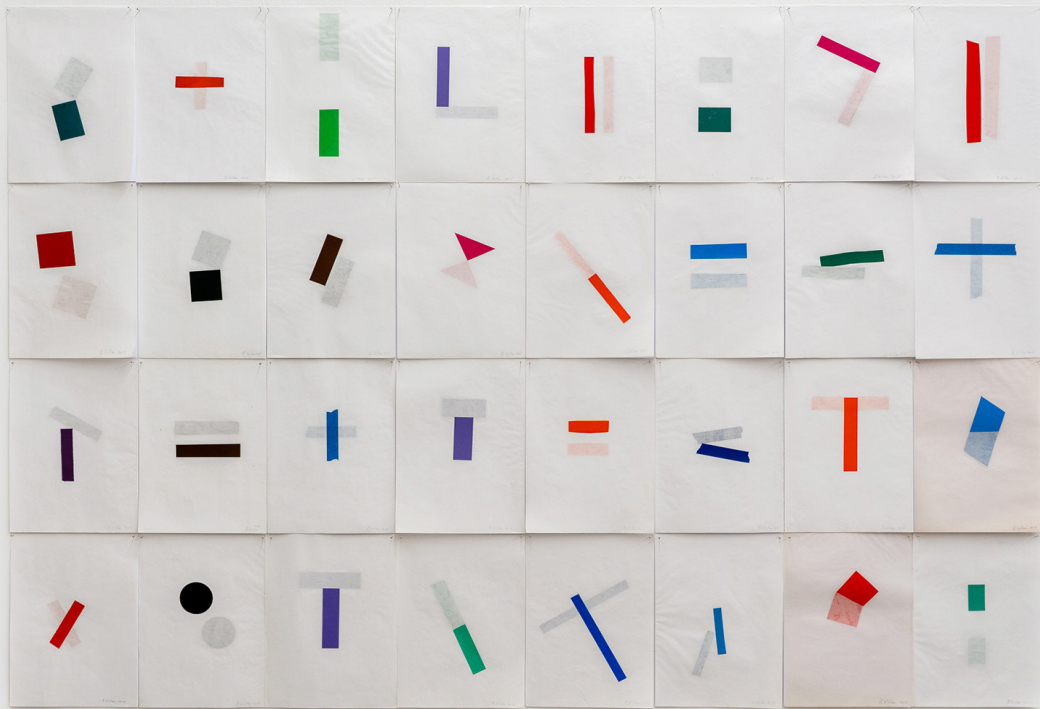


Collage, décollage, recollage

BERNARD VILLERS

OPENING 13.11.25
14.11.25 > 20.12.25



Bernard Villers, installation view at the Verbeke Foundation, Kemzeke (BE), 2025 (© Tineke Schuurmans)

Collage, décollage, recollage

A PROJECT BY MARIE VERBOVEN FOR THE VERBEKE FOUNDATION

« I adhere to a certain logic, but it is the surprises that give the work its poetic dimension. »

Bernard Villers has been a key figure in the Belgian art scene since the 1960s.

A 'joyful minimalist' (as Jacques Lizène would call him), a conceptual artist who, however, escapes the usual definition of this term. For Villers, «the concept, if there is a concept, is not prior to the work, it is constructed at the same time as the work is constructed.»

Villers views art as an open field of investigation, a playground in which he acknowledges an element of chance. The works do not arise from pure randomness, but there is no complete determination. And it is in this space between chance and determination - a space rarely claimed by artists - that the true freedom of Bernard Villers lies.

The works presented here span a period from the 1970s to 2025. It is striking how, despite a gap of more than forty years, these works respond to each other and follow the same logic. It is as if the artist, after many years, returns to play a game that had been set aside for a while. There is the series *Retournements*, works where «the back is as valuable as the front.» We cannot see what is before our eyes without inevitably thinking of what is hidden from us. In the *Recto/Verso* series, the artist plays with the transparency of paper. The color applied on one side appears transformed on the other, both close and distant.

In Bernard Villers' work, there is no mystery in the process. The rules of the game are not hidden, and seeing all the tricks doesn't spoil anything. The front and the back, a color and its memory. Things do not need to be in the foreground to exist, things leave traces. It is, and it was. Presence and absence. And always, lightness.

- Marie Verboven



IRÈNE LAUB



IRÈNE LAUB









A non-u-mental history M HKA Part 1: fondation Gordon Matta-Clarck, MuHKA, Antwerp (BE), 2021

Born in 1939 in Brussels (BE)
Lives and works in Brussels (BE)

Bernard Villers' practice questions the relationship between surface, light and colour, creating never-ending combinations and unexpected effects through the interaction between those essential elements. His gestures, brought by a decades-long process of experimentation in the studio, are simple and clearly visible, everything is shown with complete openness. The Belgian painter seeks his inspiration in banal, marginal and imperceptible aspects of everyday experience to create chromatic interventions often inspired by language, poetry or literature. His sensitive and sometimes mischievous approach to painting produced several seminal series that are at the same time linked to the contemporaneous Support/Surfaces research and precursor to future experimentations.

Born in 1939 in Brussels, Bernard Villers is a major figure of Belgian abstraction. He studied monumental painting at La Cambre with Paul Delvaux and Jo Delahaut, then silkscreen printing at l'Ecole des Arts et Métiers in Brussels, before becoming a teacher himself at La Cambre. His presence in the Belgian art scene since the seventies has been very influential and he developed a cohesive, thought-provoking and playful body of work. He created his own publishing house in 1975, Edition du Remorqueur, through which he publishes his artist's books.

His artworks are present in the collections of FRAC Bretagne, Rennes (FR), Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris (FR), Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts, Brussels (BE), Centre de la Gravure, La Louvière (BE), Fondation Gordon Matta-Clark, Antwerp (BE), Collection FWB, Brussels (BE), Musée d'Ixelles, Brussels (BE), Musée royal de Mariemont, Morlanwelz (BE), Serralves, Porto (PT), Werserburg Museum, Bremen (DE), among others.

SHOWS (SELECTED)

- 2025 *Collage, recollage, décollage*, Verbeke Foundation (BE)
- 2024 *Anni and Josef Albers : Iconic couple of modernism*, Boghossian Foundation, Brussels (BE)
Ah...l'amour! L'Orangerie, Bastogne (BE)
- 2023 *L'art de rien*, Centrale for Contemporary Art, Brussels (BE)
Points, Société Libre d'Emulation, Liège (BE)
Private views, La Boverie, Liège (BE)
Paysages synonymes, Huet-Repolt Artist Residency, Brussels (BE)
- 2022 *Emergent invites*, Emergent, Veurne (BE)
INVERSION INTENTION, Spanish Embassy, Brussels (BE)
A Taste of Abstraction, La Patinoire Royale, Brussels (BE)
CHIEN JAUNE, Phoebus, Rotterdam (NL)
- 2021 *A non-u-mental history M HKA Part 1: fondation Gordon Matta-Clarck*, MuHKA, Antwerp (BE)
The intimate consciousness of time, Irène Laub Gallery, Brussels (BE)
Le Remorqueur 75 – 21, Florence Loewy, Paris (FR)
- 2020 *THROUGH*, Irène Laub Gallery, Brussels (BE)
Bernard Villers, Espace 157, Verviers (BE)
- 2019 *Achrome*, Irène Laub Gallery, Brussels (BE)
- 2018 *La couleur manifeste*, Botanique, Brussels (BE)
En de wind van achter: Vitrine, Sint-Lukas, Brussels (BE)
Livres et dessins à l'emporte-pièce, le Comptoir, Liège (BE)
A et B, Anne Leloup et Bernard Villers, Académie des B.A., Tamines (BE)
- 2017 *Vitrine : Le Nouveau Remorqueur*, Bibliothèque Royale, Brussels (BE)
- 2016 *Le Grand Large*, Quai 4, Liège (BE)
100 artistes, Musée Juif de Belgique, Brussels (BE)
Mise en pli, FRAC PACA, Marseille (FR)
- 2015 *Lieu(x) Commun(s)*, Maison des Arts, Schaerbeek (BE)
Jo Delahaut - Hors Limite, Botanique, Brussels (BE)
Du plomb dans la tête, Maison de l'imprimerie, Thuin (BE)
Le livre dans le livre, Les abattoirs, Toulouse (FR)
- 2014 *Trouées*, Froidart, Liège (BE)
Icietoulà, 34 6, Linkebeek (BE)
It is not new, it is a book, Museo Nacional Reina Sofia, Madrid (SP)
- 2013 *Répliques*, Musée de Mariemont, Mariemont (BE)
Solo made in Belgium, Tableau d'une position, librairie Hors-série, Brussels (BE)
- 2012 *Le bel horizon : Les éditions du Remorqueur*, Les abattoirs, Toulouse (FR)
Kaolin, Centre Des Livres d'Artistes, Saint-Yrieix (FR)
Anonymouslyours, cur. E. Lambion Maison Grégoire, Brussels (BE)
- 2011 *Inuit*, Experimental Intermedia, Ei-Huis, Gent (BE)
Non, pas ce soir, *La Trame à 10 ans*, Musée d'Ixelles, Brussels (BE)

BERNARD VILLERS

- 2010 *Half en half*, Maison de la Culture, Namur (BE)
- 2009 *La vue en Rose*, *La carte de Tendre*, Cabinet du Livre d'Artiste, Rennes (FR)
- 2008 *Mickey, talvez*, Musée Serrralves, Porto (PT)
- 2007 *Le Nouveau Remorqueur*, Iselp, Brussels (BE)
- 2006 *La conjuration des couleurs : 10 ans de peintures*, Musée d'Ixelles, Brussels (BE)



Bernard Villers, *Something*, 2022, Ink and tape on paper, 86,7 x 66,8 cm

COLLECTIONS

FRAC Bretagne, Rennes (FR)
Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris (FR)
Museu de Arte Contemporânea de Serralves (PT)
Weserburg Museum, Bremen (DE)
Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts, Brussels (BE)
Centre de la Gravure, La Louvière (BE)
Musée d'Ixelles, Brussels (BE)
Musée des Beaux-Art de Mariemont (BE)
Fédération
Walonie-Brussels (BE)
Fondation Gordon Matta-Clark, Antwerpen (BE)
Banque Nationale de Belgique, Brussels (BE)

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