

MIMA

MUSEUM

39-41 Quai du Hainaut 1080 Molenbeek Brussels Belgium

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ART IS COMING



23 / 06 - 31 / 12

**BRECHT EVENS
BRECHT VANDENBROUCKE
HUSKMITNAVN**

**JEAN JULLIEN
JOAN CORNELLÀ
MON COLONEL & SPIT**



PRESS RELEASE

June 2017

What is viral, funny, and good for your health? “Art Is Comic,” a light response to the terrorist attacks in Brussels

The MIMA's third exhibition brings together Brecht Vandenbroucke, Mon Colonel & Spit, Brecht Evens, HuskMitNavn, Jean Jullien and Joan Cornellà.

They champion a cosmopolitan idea of society by depicting human comedy through figurative works. Their influence across all brands of social media is at times colossal. On show from 23 June to 31 December 2017.

Art Is Comic

The MIMA opened on the day after the terrorist attacks in Brussels, a time of sadness and uncertainty. That is when the idea for this exhibition originated. How to respond to rampant anxiety and escalating sectarianism? Humour!

Let us continue to laugh without allowing ourselves to get trapped in a moralising straitjacket. "Soyons désinvoltes, n'ayons l'air de rien" [let's be flippant, carefree] said a song from the 1990s. This is the state of mind that inspired the exhibition's curators' artist selection. Each artist is unique, coming from very varied backgrounds but all of them use humour (in very different ways) in their work.

Dark humour, forced humour, satirical humour... this emotion, peculiar to man, has physical and social virtues. As education or as a call to action, it is capable of strengthening or breaking the social order. At the same time it is now even a direct target for the detractors of our cosmopolitan society. As such, it has become an effective barometer of our degree of freedom.

On the fringe of museums and galleries, social networks have become the world's biggest exhibition spaces. They are redefining our tastes and culture. When popularity rhymes with talent on the social networks, young artists have an impact on our society never attained in the past. For instance, Jean Jullien has a community on Instagram three times larger than Jeff Koons, a world star of museums and art collections. With 4,500,000 followers on Facebook, Joan Cornellà has a greater following than the Louvre and the MoMA combined. The effect of these artists' work on a globalised world reveal the evolution of our cultural references.

The choice of artists reflects the cross-sectioning approach towards culture favoured by the MIMA. Gathered in one venue, the aesthetics and the statements shared by the artists involved overstep the boundaries of their various disparate artistic fields, amongst which feature comic art, fine art and illustration.

At a time when artists share their work on social networks, different creative fields now operate on a far more level playing field.

Brecht Vandenbroucke for example did not have to choose between the status of illustrator and visual artist: he is both at once. His work remains coherent when creating an illustration for the New York Times or a painting for the MIMA.

If the humour of “Art Is Comic” hits home with you, you will feel an antidepressant effect immediately. If moreover you laugh during the visit, your abdominal muscles will be strengthened. You can then conclude that the exhibition is excellent for your health, and we would be delighted.

THE ARTISTS

Brecht Vandembroucke (BE)



Born in 1986, he lives in Antwerp.

The gigantic “foosball” player facing a throng of small players is a work that illustrates inequalities between people. The visitor is free to imagine which inequality is at issue, but also to choose with which team he would play.

His satirical work denounces the shortcomings of the current hyper-connected society and the conformity it entails and champions the idea of a cosmopolitan society with multiple identities. His work spans illustrations for the press (NY Times, Le Monde, etc.), exhibitions, books, publications on the social networks and collaborations.

“I don’t try to express myself through my work, it’s not about me. It’s about the world we live in and the tensions between people..... it’s more about playing with certain codes and pushing back the limits. At the moment I’m really having fun making jokes about big companies like Apple and Vevo, for example. I want to do a progressive work and do it thoroughly ... and this is essential because I just don’t like how big corporations invade our privacy and treat people like numbers. I don’t care if people think it’s pretentious ... you know, if I don’t do it, maybe nobody else will.”

Mon Colonel & Spit (BE)



Mon Colonel (Eric Basseleer, 1974), and Spit (Thomas Stiernon, 1977) live in Liège. Through their drawings, sculptures, ceramics and other objects, the artistic duo keeps a 40-year long chronological inventory of memories and influences from all along their artistic career. In doing so, they reassemble the scattered images of a past tinged by pop culture to the rhythm of music and celebration. Reading between the lines of their nonchalant and self-deprecating self-portrait reveals their true impression of society.

"I write what I do not say, what thought forbids me from saying, or what goes through my mind, such as the names of artists, of musicians, song tunes... It makes me think of the scribbles you find on school benches, prison walls, toilet doors or the notes jotted down at the bottom of a notebook ... Just like the Internet stream that carries moods and mass thinking, I collect these snapshots in my drawings, writing and even in my comics."

Brecht Evens (BE)



Born in 1986, he lives in Paris.

He has published a dozen books and has been awarded international prizes such as the audacity prize at the Angoulême festival 2011 for “The Wrong Place”.

For “Art Is Comic”, Brecht Evens gives us a look into the intimate side of creation of his latest graphic novel “The City of Belgium”. Beside a panoramic photo of his apartment he reveals the original artwork and his collection of notes, rough ideas, as well as his as yet unfinished book.

The design in each of his graphical novels is meticulous, as each image is pictorial. The mix of different techniques based on watercolour paint dilutes the light and creates vibrant images. The colour plays a narrative role. A fauna of nonchalant characters wander through a dream universe. Subtly, the story is rendered unpredictable.

"You can imagine an adventure, then create the characters until they come alive, and then, when you get back to the plot think, " Nah, that won't cut it", and end up keeping the character rather than the story."

HuskMitNavn (DK)



Born in 1975, HuskMitNavn lives in Copenhagen.

His pseudonym "HuskMitNavn" means "Remember my Name." A multi-disciplinary artist, he draws comic characters that resemble us in familiar situations.

The flying saucer descending on earth painted for this exhibition is a surrealistic object that is atypical for him. It is a metaphor for the behaviour of the individual in response to the upheaval of our world.

The "clear line" of the drawing, like that of the comic strip Lucky Luke or the artist Keith Haring, has been easily adapted to the different media he is fond of, such as graffiti in public spaces, exhibitions in a gallery or museums, and Instagram.

"I want to do things that people can understand, where they can recognise the situation and identify with it, which is why I stay away from abstract paintings and things like that."

Jean Jullien (FR)



Born in 1983, he lives in London.

A versatile artist – simultaneously a visual artist, graphic designer and illustrator – he stands out in particular for his drawings and videos created specifically for his Instagram account which has almost twice as many followers as the Centre Pompidou.

His work describes with empathy the 21st Century Western Man going about his day-to-day routine. The style of his drawings is playful and minimalist, which allows him to quickly communicate the comical aspect of a situation, character or gesture.

For the MIMA, Jean Jullien creates a series of characters who invite us to look in a mirror with them and share the emotions they express.

"You can be practical without being serious. Even better, you can actively participate in people's lives by bringing a little art into their daily environment."

Joan Cornellà (ES)



Born in 1981, he lives in Barcelona.

With the quite unbelievable statistic of 4,500,000 followers on Facebook (the equivalent of the working population in Belgium), and 1,500,000 on Instagram, Joan Cornellà is today at the top of the list of the most followed plastic artists on social networks.

The dark humour of his work challenges the taboos and the morality of society. In a soft and pastel like atmosphere, he creates a comical effect by contrasting the commercial faces of his characters with hyper-violent situations. The videos and paintings encourage people to revel in perversity, to positively enjoy situations which would/should otherwise be reviled .

"I agree with the quote from Bill Hicks: 'I believe that there is an equality to all humanity. We all suck.' In my comics, my paintings, the characters look artificial and always have a big smile on their face even though horrible things happen to them all the time. Everything is exaggerated, although a certain behaviour has a ring of truth to it."

THE MIMA

Unique in its kind in Europe, the MIMA, Millennium Iconoclast Museum of Arts, is a cutting-edge museum that takes the public through the history of culture 2.0, which dawned worldwide with the millennium. The creative works it exhibits freely combine musical (punk-rock, electro, hip hop, folk), graphical (graphic design, illustration, design), sporting (skateboarding, surfing, extreme sports), artistic (film, visual art, performance, comic, tattoo, fashion design) and urban (graffiti, street art) cultures. The MIMA writes a collective narrative of a culture that brings together eclectic works in an accessible and direct language.

MIMA occupies an emblematic place at the heart of Brussels: the former Bellevue breweries, on the edge of the canal, in Molenbeek.

The MIMA was launched by Michel and Florence de Launoit, Alice van den Abeele and Raphaël Cruyt.

Since 2005, Alice van den Abeele and Raphael Cruyt have been running the ALICE gallery, championing a political and contextual vision of art. They work with international artists who share an aesthetic that combines the codes of contemporary art with those of the subcultures.

Michel and Florence de Launoit, lovers of contemporary art, dedicate their professional lives to artistic production in various forms (television clips, films, documentaries, theatrical and musical) through the companies TourneSol Production and Akamusic SA. Their contribution to the birth of the MIMA is completely in tune with their commitment to an inclusive rather than exclusive culture that reaches out to a broad audience, reflecting the world of today and paving the way for the world of tomorrow.

Opened in April 2016, the MIMA has already welcomed more than 60,000 visitors with its first two exhibitions.

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

Exhibition: Art Is Comic from June 23 to December 31

Curators Alice van den Abeele and Raphaël Cruyt in collaboration with Brecht Vandenbroucke

Scenography Alice van den Abeele and Raphaël Cruyt in collaboration with Antoine Bouillot for Maison Renard

Address: 39-41 Quai du Hainaut, 1080 Brussels, Belgium

Museum opening times: open from Wednesday to Sunday from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Closed on Monday, Tuesday and in January

Late night opening: the first Thursday of the month until 10 p.m.

Public price: € 9.5 – Discount: € 7.5 - Schools: € 5; free for children under 12

Duo Ticket : 10€ for a combined entrance Art is Comic at the Mima and Yo Brussels Hip Hop Generations at Bozar (from June 28 to September 17, 2017)

Restaurant opening times: open from Wednesday to Sunday from 10 a.m. to 6.30 p.m.

Late night opening: the first Thursday of the month until 10 p.m.

Closed on Mondays and Tuesdays.

Guided tour: Saturday morning at 11 a.m. (in Dutch or French, alternately every other week)

Guided tour: info@arkadia.be

www.mimamuseum.eu

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