

21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa

PRESS RELEASE

2020.9.17



MICHAËL BORREMANS MARK MANDERS **Double Silence**

2020.9.19 (Sat) -
2021.2.28 (Sun)

Exhibition Title	MICHAËL BORREMANS MARK MANDERS: Double Silence
Period	Saturday, September 19, 2020 – Sunday, February 28, 2021
Hours	10:00-18:00 (until 20:00 on Fridays and Saturdays, until 17:00 January 2 and 3) *Ticket sold until 30 minutes before closing time.
Venue	21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa Galleries 7-12, 14
Closed	Mondays (except September 21, November 23, January 11), September 23, November 24, December 29–January 1, January 12
Admission	Adults ¥1,200(¥1,000) / Students ¥800(¥600) 18 and under ¥400(¥300) / 65 and over ¥1,000(¥1,000) *Prices in parentheses for groups of 20 people or more and advance sale tickets *Price includes same-day admission to the collection exhibition being held concurrently (October 17, 2020–Sunday, February 28, 2021)
Entry to the exhibition will be for a designated date only. See page 9 for details.	
Advance ticket	Advance ticket are available on our website (www.kanazawa21.jp). Designated date tickets may be purchased until 23:59 on the day prior to the designated viewing date.
Organized by	21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa (Kanazawa Art Promotion and Development Foundation)
Grant from	Flemish Authorities, Mondriaan Fonds 
Supported by	Konishi Brewing Co., Ltd. 
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About the Exhibition

Both Michaël Borremans and Mark Manders are known to the world for unique and unconventional expression grounded in the proud traditions of European art. The 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa is now delighted to present “Double Silence,” an exhibition that will see the works of these two artists occupying the same space for the first time.

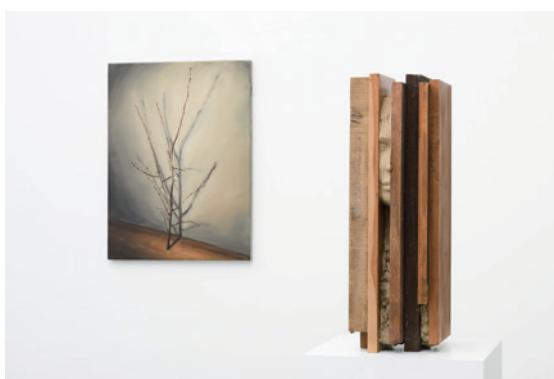
The wave of globalization that gathered momentum from the end of the 20th century began in the west, and proceeded to wash up in various parts of the world, making an impact wherever it broke and simultaneously sucking up myriad things, material and otherwise, as well as people, to form a heaving swell that now covers the entire globe. What we refer to as “contemporary art” shares the same trajectory as this mighty torrent of people, things and ideas. Ever since the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the subsequent multipolarization of art, the degree to which art possesses the unique qualities of particular regional cultures and histories has been in question. Thirty years on, the art world – caught between globalization and multipolarization – is beginning to reflect less on the importance of cultural differences grounded in locality, than on what our universal human values might actually be. There are a number of possible reasons for this shift, but it could simply be that in the modern world, where the dissemination of information at lightning speed has engendered a kind of global simultaneity, we are now noticing that exploration of universal values is not confined to any specific region. Moreover, COVID-19 has made introspection in the arts a global phenomenon.

Following in the footsteps of a European art tradition that has explored universal human values over many centuries, Michaël Borremans and Mark Manders share their own such reflections with those of us inhabiting the same times. The paintings of Borremans, who mines Baroque tradition to portray the dark recesses of the human soul, and sculptures of Manders, with their striking pieces of bodies, created in accordance with the artist’s concept of “self-portrait as a building,” may employ different media, but both delve deeply into complex psychological states and relationships.

In “Double Silence,” Borremans and Manders invite the viewer into a space and time in which the artists themselves engage in a dialogue through their works, as the title suggests, amid calm or silence. The word “double” means to be twice as much, twofold, but also has several other meanings, such as two together, distinctly different aspects (eg “dual personality”), and forming a pair. All of which makes the title of this exhibition eminently suitable for a show by two artists who are themselves far from straightforward.

We hope you will take the opportunity to visit this exhibition of over eighty sympathetically curated works by two of the top artists in Europe today.

Kurosawa Hiromi (Chief curator)



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[Reference image]

Left: Michael Borremans, *The Branch*, 2003

Right: Mark Manders, *Composition with Verticals*, 2011–16

Photo: Peter Cox

Courtesy: Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp; Gallery Koyanagi, Tokyo, David Zwirner, and Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York/Los Angeles

About the artist**Michaël Borremans**

Photo: Alex Salinas

Born 1963 in Geraardsbergen, Belgium; lives and works in Ghent, Belgium. Fascinated by the techniques and themes of western painting tradition as seen in the work of artists like Velasquez and Manet, Borremans perceives painting as a universal language serving as a window on imaginary worlds. The influence of conceptual art, which rejects concrete meaning and narrative, is very much evident in his works, which possess a singular aura that conveys the disquiet and danger lurking in the everyday, via subjects rich in anomalies and ambiguities. In recent years Borremans has also expanded his practice to include painting-derived works on video. He has had solo exhibitions at Galerie Rudolfinum (2020, Prague, Czech Republic), Hara Museum of Contemporary Art, Tokyo (2014, Tokyo), and S.M.A.K., Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst, Ghent (2005, Ghent, Belgium), among others; has been invited to participate in international exhibitions including the Biennale of Sydney (2018, Australia), Yokohama Triennale (2011, Japan), Berlin Biennale (2006, Germany), and Manifesta 5 (2004, San Sebastian, Spain); and in 2010 produced a series of commissioned works for the Monarchy of Belgium exhibited at the Royal Palace in Brussels.

Mark Manders

Photo: Cedric Verhelst

Born 1968 in Volkel, the Netherlands; lives and works in Ronse, Belgium. Since Manders adopted the concept of "Self-Portrait as Building" in 1986, all his works have constituted part of a single, mammoth, self-portrait. Although his drawings and sculptures could be described as complete in themselves, they are partially interchangeable, and evolve continuously and organically according to how they are combined in his "imaginary rooms." Manders' installations are imbued with an imperishable, universal quality, as if frozen in a certain moment in time, and evoke in the viewer feelings of calm, and absence. Manders participated in the São Paulo Biennale (1998, Brazil) and represented the Netherlands at the Dutch Pavilion at the 55th Venice Biennale (2013, Italy). Recent solo outings include a large-scale exhibition at the Bonnefantenmuseum (2020, Maastricht, Netherlands) and monumental outdoor sculptures for the Public Art Fund (2019, Central Park, New York, USA) and the Rokin Square (2017, Amsterdam, the Netherlands).

Exhibition highlights**First-ever museum pairing of the internationally renowned Michaël Borremans and Mark Manders**

“Double Silence” will be the first-ever joint exhibition at a museum by Belgian artist Michaël Borremans and Mark Manders of the Netherlands. Both artists are known worldwide for working within European art tradition and its exploration of universal human values, while simultaneously offering up singular expression that encourages us, as members of contemporary society, to reflect ourselves on the nature of such values. The pair have a great deal else in common, being born in the 1960s, in adjacent countries, and now based in Belgium. Don’t miss this opportunity to view, at the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, the unforgettably powerful creations of this European painter and sculptor steeped in European art tradition.



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[Reference image]
Left: Mark Manders, *Dry Figure on Chair*, 2011–15
Right: Michaël Borremans, *Automat (I)*, 2008
Photo: Peter Cox
Courtesy: Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp, Gallery Koyanagi, Tokyo, Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York/Los Angeles & David Zwirner

Depicting the dark sides of humanity, hinting at mysterious stories: The paintings of Michaël Borremans

Prior to painting, Michaël Borremans was predominantly a draughtsman and etcher, also working as a teacher in those disciplines. In his thirties, Borremans decided to move fully into painting. Fascinated by the techniques and themes of western painting tradition as seen in the work of artists such as Velasquez and Manet, Borremans perceives painting as a universal language serving as a window on imaginary worlds. Works that express the disquiet and danger lurking in the everyday, via subjects rich in anomalies and ambiguities, and seem to probe the darker aspects of the human condition, hint at peaceful interludes and mysterious stories. The influence of conceptual art, with its rejection of concrete meaning and narrative, is very much evident in Borremans’ atmospheric paintings.



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Michaël Borremans, *Red Hand, Green Hand*, 2010
Private collection
Photo: Peter Cox
Courtesy: Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp

Feelings of calm and absence in striking body fragments: The sculptures of Mark Manders

At the age of eighteen, Mark Manders was struck by the revelation of a “self-portrait as building” in writing materials arranged on the floor like an architectural sketch, and since then, every one of his works has been part of a single, mammoth, self-portrait. Manders’ spaces – in which sculptures with an unfinished air, modeled on body parts, and drawings reminiscent of scenes from stories, evolve continuously and organically according to how they are combined in his “imaginary rooms” to form installations – are imbued with an imperishable, universal quality, as if frozen in a particular moment in time, and evoke in the viewer feelings of calm and absence.



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Mark Manders, *Dry Clay Head*, 2015–16
Photo: Peter Cox
Courtesy: Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp

Works by Borremans and Manders combine to tell new stories

Michaël Borremans and Mark Manders worked with each other and the curator to refine the concept for “Double Silence” through exhaustive dialogue. This dialogue included choosing each other’s works, and assembling the exhibition to suit the space. The title “Double Silence” was also decided in conversation between the pair. Borremans’ paintings and videos, and Manders’ sculptures, will speak eloquently amid that silence, to enthralling effect.

The nature of the conversation between the works by Borremans and Manders, and the architecture of the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa, designed by the team of Sejima Kazuyo + Nishizawa Ryue/SANAA, will be another highlight of this exhibition of over eighty works embodying the very essence of European art.

Major works in the exhibition

Michaël Borremans

The House of Opportunity (The Chance of Lifetime)

2003
31.5 x 35 cm
Mixed media on cardboard
Collection: S.M.A.K., Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst, Ghent

From 2002 to 2007, houses with Dutch-style roofs and innumerable windows were a favorite motif for Borremans in his drawings and oil paintings. The figures in the picture, their size, and the connection between figures and house are all very much an enigma. Yet were you to imagine something real while looking at the work, for you this would be a muddying of imagination and reality, and one could only say you had been hooked by Borremans' seductive take on free association. Though *House of Opportunity* forms a theatrical painterly space of sorts, it is uncertain whether the light and shadow here reflect any specific meaning or subjectiveness.



Michaël Borremans, *The House of Opportunity (The Chance of Lifetime)*, 2003
Collection: S.M.A.K., Stedelijk Museum voor Actuele Kunst, Ghent
Photo: Peter Cox
Courtesy: Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp

Automat (I)

2008
80 x 60 cm
Oil on canvas

Automat (I) depicts a girl with a plait, hands clasped lightly behind her back, but on closer inspection we see that the lower limbs one would expect to find under her skirt are missing, making it appear that she has been cut in half and just her upper body placed on a stand. What's more, the hint of shadow beneath the hem of her skirt gives her an unnatural air of hovering in space. Borremans' original concept was for a sculpture of just a skirt rotating automatically, and he did subsequently also present *Skirt Sculpture* (2014). He developed the concept over a number of years into a series of variations, including drawings, as well the oil painting *The Skirt*, and the 35mm film *Weight*. With its traversing of different media, for example the presence even in a painted work of sculptural elements – the emphasis on a monumental quality and material volume – *Automat (I)* displays the distinguishing features of Borremans' oeuvre to superb effect.



Michaël Borremans, *Automat (I)*, 2008
Photo: Peter Cox
Courtesy: Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp

The Angel

2013
300 x 200 cm
Oil on canvas

Deviating considerably from the common vision of an angel, with its black face and superhuman scale there is something incongruous about Borremans' creation. In a human, the muscular arms protruding from sleeves, large hands, wide shoulders and short hair would likely belong to a male, but in its entirety, the gender of Borremans' angel is less clear. The model for this work, which has been called Borremans' "Mona Lisa," was Belgian top model Hannelore Knuts. Her listless standing pose, with eyes downcast, is calm and quiescent, all bubbling human emotion and sensation lost, and radiates a sense of isolation too. Characteristics featuring frequently in figures by Borremans are very much in evidence in this leading example of his work.



Michaël Borremans, *The Angel*, 2013
Photo: Peter Cox
Courtesy: Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp

Mark Manders**Fox / Mouse / Belt (fragment from Self-portrait as a building)**

1992-93
15 x 120 x 40 cm
Painted bronze, belt

The earliest work in "Double Silence," this is an important piece that incorporates in its subtitle the "self-portrait as a building" concept adopted by Manders in 1986 at the start of his career. Here self-portrait refers not so much to an actual self-portrait of the conventional sort, as an all-embracing portrait of Manders' reflections, emotions, memories and ideas. According to the artist, this sculpture of a fox and mouse, tied together with a belt, originated from a series of three separate words. The word "fox" consists of a jumping fox that he froze mid-leap, caught at a moment in time. He then used his own belt to tie a mouse to the fox's stomach, into which the mouse would normally disappear. Through the simple gesture of lying them on the ground, he realized the "unit" sank deeper into motionless, and that the stylization created "an unbelievable standstill without a 'before' or 'after.'"



Mark Manders
Fox / Mouse / Belt (fragment from Self-portrait as a building)
1992-93
Photo: Dirk Pauwels
Courtesy: Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp

Composition with Four Yellow Verticals

2017–19
266 x 391 x 419 cm
Painted bronze, wood, iron

Manders' latest work is a striking sculptural piece in which four lengths of yellow wood are inserted vertically into the faces of human figures. The sculptures appear to be cracked clay, but are in fact cast bronze that has been colored. The busts are all positioned at different angles, their subtle variations in size creating perspective. Walking around them, one is prompted to note that things have multiple viewpoints, and change occurs through creation by the onlooker. Belying its lack of material bulk, the intervention of the pieces of wood on the faces, in overall terms minor in volume, has a power that threatens the entire foundation of the work.



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Mark Manders
Composition with Four Yellow Verticals
2017–19
Photo: EPW Studio
Courtesy: Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp & Tanya Bonakdar Gallery, New York

Composition with Two Colours

2005–20
48 x 36 x 4 cm
Painted wood, offset printing on paper

Language plays a vital role in the practice of Mark Manders, and a connection between language and ideas can be identified in most of his works. The newspaper is a recurring motif in his artistic endeavors involving language. Based on a rule that he created, the newspaper includes every word from the English dictionary, only once, in random order. Items of English vocabulary are arranged with no regard for grammatical order, however including edited sections for example hidden by overpainting or collage, may include notable words related to the work. Despite the small dimensions of the page, as long as one can keep coming up with new combinations of the words, there is endless potential for play in an imaginary world separate from reality.

Regarding the two colors: for a long time, Manders only used color when it was inherent to the material he was using. Slowly he found ways to integrate it, and he has a strong preference for the color yellow. Here, however, the two colors are of an indeterminate hue; not exactly yellow, nor orange, somewhere in between, they are colors without a name.



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Mark Manders
Composition with Two Colours
2005–20
Photo: Peter Cox
Courtesy: Zeno X Gallery, Antwerp

Related event

To be announced on the Museum website after September 1.

Exhibition catalogue

With installation views of the exhibition.

Texts: Matin Germann (Independent curator)

Kurosawa Hiromi (Chief curator, 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa)

Published by 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa

Release date: November 3 (TBC)

Price: 3,500yen (TBC)

About purchasing dated-entry tickets

Admission will be restricted to a specific date to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus. Please purchase a ticket for the desired admission date in advance on the 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, Kanazawa website.

- Purchasing reserved dated-entry tickets / Entering the exhibition

Reserved tickets will be available from 10:00 September 1 until 23:59 on the day before the exhibition viewing date.

Purchase reserved tickets at: www.kanazawa21.jp

- Select your desired admission date and purchase a reserved ticket.
- Show the QR code screen from your purchase or a printout of the page in order to enter to the exhibition.

- Please note

• Reserved tickets cannot be used outside the specified admission date. Be sure to enter within the date indicated on the ticket.

• The number of reserved tickets sold for each date is limited (availability on a first come, first served basis).

• Same-day tickets will be available each day, however we highly recommend purchasing a reserved ticket ahead.

• Purchased tickets cannot be refunded.

• Please see the museum website for other details.



Purchase
tickets
here

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