



News from VISITFLANDERS - December 2023

With Christmas and New Year soon approaching, our thoughts turn to seasonal festivities and New Year Celebrations. But this month, our newsletter looks further forward to events taking place in Flanders for 2024. Highlights include a dedicated year focused on the art by Belgian expressionist James Ensor. Cities such as Ostend, Antwerp, and Brussels will be celebrating this much-celebrated modernist painter. 2024 also marks a special year for art and architecture festivals with the much-anticipated return of the Bruges Triennial and Beaufort at the Belgian Coast. In Antwerp, as Rubens House undergoes radical renovation, we can look forward to its new visitor centre and garden being opened in the summer, whilst works in the main house continue for a few more years. On a totally different theme, Gravel Cycling enthusiasts can look forward to the opening of the UCI Gravel Cycling Championships in the Leuven area. And look out for the return of the unique Toer de Geuze Beer festival which returns to the Pajotteland in May. Wishing all our readers a Gelukkig kerstfeest and Nieuwjaar for 2024 (That's a Happy Christmas and New Year 2024, of course)!

December 2023

ROSE, ROSE, ROSE, À MES YEUX!

James Ensor and the still life in Belgium 1830-1930

December 16, 2023- January 14, 2024

Muzee Ostend – ART EXHIBITION

The most original figure of late 19th century Flemish painting, James Ensor is known for his unique portrayals of grotesque humanity, painting individuals as clowns or skeletons or replacing their faces with carnival masks. His still lifes, painted from 1880 to 1939, demonstrate Ensor's stylistic development, from dark and classical to colorful and expressive, from bright and ethereal. This exhibition will compare Ensor's work from nineteenth-century academic

painting and the modern art of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries from public and private collections from Belgium and abroad.

2024 onwards

James Ensor- Inspired by Brussels

February 22 – June 2, 2024

KBR – Royal Library of Belgium- ART EXHIBITION

2024 marks the 75th anniversary of James Ensor's death and to mark it, the [KBR](#) will be bringing together a diverse collection of 250 of Ensor's paintings, drawings and prints in the Palace of Charles de Lorraine, a hidden gem in the heart of Brussels.

Re-opening of the Hof van Buysleden Museum

February 2024

Mechelen

After a closure, this wonderful city [museum](#) re-opens with its permanent exhibition and redesign of the Renaissance gardens.

Self Portraits – James Ensor

March 16 – June 2024

James Ensor House – Ostend – ART EXHIBITION

To understand James Ensor and his art, a visit to his original home is essential. The house where he worked and lived from 1917 until his death has been preserved in its original state and is well worth the visit. His best-known self-portrait is undoubtedly Self-Portrait with Flowered Hat (Mu.ZEE, Ostend), painted in 1883 and updated around 1888. By adding a flowered hat, he referenced Rubens' famous self-portraits.

Re-opening of the Winter Garden Art Nouveau Building

St Katelijne-Waver near Mechelen

March 24 – OPENING

[The Winter Garden](#) of the Ursuline Nuns is a hidden gem, found just outside the city of Mechelen. A truly magnificent art nouveau building was conceived in 1900 in this former international girls boarding school. The Winter Garden is part of a magnificent, listed complex, which is a stunning mix of architectural styles including Art Nouveau with neo-Gothic elements, neo-Empire style and Art Deco. There will also be a new cycling route that will connect this heritage site to nearby Mechelen

Beaufort Along the Coast

March 27, 2024- November 3, 2024

Various places along the Belgian Coast - OUTDOOR SCULPTURE FESTIVAL

Every three years the Belgian Coast hosts [Beaufort](#). Visitors can look forward to several installations on display across the promenades, in the dunes, and on the beaches. The contemporary art by the sea Triennial is a free event that is open to everyone and is aimed at lovers of culture, residents, domestic and foreign tourists. With its selection of qualitative works that can also be integrated into the public space in the long term, the art project gives the Belgian Coast extra appeal. With a crossover with the Bruges Triennial, British artist Ivan Morrison will create an original piece in Knokke at the Coast. Beaufort visitors can also enjoy former installations being collated into a permanent sculpture park dotted all along the coastline.

Bruges Triennial

April 13, - September 1, 2024

Bruges- various places – OUTDOOR SCULPTURE FESTIVAL

[The Bruges Triennial](#) is a unique art and architecture trail in the center of Bruges. The exhibits featured during the Triennial use the landscape of Bruges to promote its special theme “Spaces of Possibility” this year. Artists and Architects will be invited to create work around both popular as well as lesser-known venues in the city. A navigable route is planned in a very different district of the city to help visitors change their perception of this charming city. This year there will be a collaboration with the Beaufort Triennial, and the route will stretch from the city center of Bruges to Zeebrugge on the Belgian coast.

Rebel Garden

April 13 - September 1, 2024

Groeninge Museum, The Gruuthuse Museum and the new St Jan's Hospital Museum.

Musea Brugge will be hosting a "must-see" exhibition as part of the Bruges Triennial 2024. A topical art exhibition that takes a closer look at the impact of humans on nature and its consequences on our environment.

Opening of the Rubens House Experience Center

Summer 2023

Antwerp- OPENING

With the current works taking place at Rubens House, it means that the main house cannot currently be visited due to its renovation over the next few years. But a brand new building is emerging to the side of Rubens's historic home, garden and studio. This will accommodate the reception area, the new museum café, the research center and the internationally acclaimed Rubens Library: the place to be for any research on Rubens and his contemporaries. This new [Rubens Experience Centre](#) is due to open in April 2024. Furthermore, a new baroque garden will feature plants from Rubens' time featuring historic plant families, following contemporary color advice from fashion designer Dries Van Noten.

Toer de Geuze

May 4-5, 2023

Pajotteland – Flemish Brabant region

One aspect that we believe sets Belgium apart from other great beer countries is the sheer range of diverse types and styles of beer...there really is something for every taste and occasion! One of our unique and most distinct styles is undoubtedly gueuze, and every two years, the brewers and blenders of the Senne Valley in the Pajottenland, to the west of Brussels, open their doors to visitors for the [Toer de Gueuze](#), to celebrate this delicious drink. [Toer de Gueuze](#) is a biennial event when the lambic breweries and gueuze blending houses open their doors to the public. The breweries and blending houses receive guests arriving by their own transport but a special tour bus usually visits various breweries and blending houses to provide a thirst-quenching and insightful tour around the production of this unique beer.

Ostend, Ensor's imaginary Paradise

June 29 – October 27, 2024

The Venetian Galleries- Ostend- EXHIBITION

In 1900, Belgian King Leopold II commissioned architect Henri Maquet to design the first royal gallery between the royal villa and a large octagonal salon. Nowadays it is known by the name 'Venetian Galleries' and provides the venue for a careful, international selection of paintings, colored etchings, photographs and other documents that will illuminate aspects of Ensor's relationship with Ostend.

Satire, parody and pastiche

James Ensor House- Ostend

September 16,2024- January 12,2025- EXHIBITION

To mark the 75th anniversary of James Ensor's death in 2024, The James Ensor House in Ostend is planning an exhibition where all his techniques are represented: oil paintings, works on paper, prints, but also documents and photographs.

In Your Wildest Dreams- Ensor Beyond Impressionism

September 28,2024 – January 18, 2025

Fine Arts Museum Antwerp KMSKA – ART EXHIBITION

This will be the KMSKA's first "blockbuster" [exhibition](#) to coincide with a special program of exhibitions and events focused on James Ensor. This particular exhibition will aim to focus on two crucial aspects of Ensor's art: how a Belgian avant-gardist sought to go 'beyond impressionism' to depict his 'wildest dreams'. It will show works of art which provided Ensor's sources of inspiration and works from well-known contemporaries. With the largest collection of Ensor's work, the KMSKA will shine a light on the deepest aspects of one of Belgium's most famous artists.

James Ensor's Search for Light

September 28, 2024 – January 5, 2025

Plantin-Moretus Museum- Antwerp- EXHIBITION

An exhibition investigating how Ensor made prints, his techniques, and inspirations. A refined selection of preparatory drawings, copper plates and prints as well as items from its print collection will be shown alongside loans from private collections.

Cindy Sherman Anti Fashion

September 28, 2024 –February 2, 2025

FOMU – Photo Museum Antwerp – EXHIBITION

This exhibition examines the themes extracted from James Ensor's works in a contemporary artistic context. Like Ensor, American artist Cindy Sherman (US, 1954) is known for her critical and ironic commentary on social conventions through masquerades. For almost fifty years, the theme of fashion has run like a thread through the work of Cindy Sherman. Anti-Fashion focuses on this and illuminates her photographic work from a new perspective.

Metamorfosis Ensor, Maskerade & Make-up

September 28 , 2024 – January 19,2025

ModeMuseum – EXHIBITION

Ensor's ideas around masquerade, (false) coquetry, the playful, the grotesque and the ephemeral are still applied today. Today, makeup has become a multi-million-dollar industry. This exhibition presents works by make-up artists and artists who delve deeper into themes such as the representation of women, physical and digital facial filters, disturbed body images, and the ritual of makeup.

UCI Gravel World Championships

October 5-6, 2024

Brussels to Leuven

The region of Vlaams Brabant in Belgium will host the 2024 UCI Gravel World Championships. The races will take place in the “Brabantse Wouden”, a forest region south and east of the capital city Brussels. After the start in Halle a first loop is made before entering the Hallerbos, Sonian Forest and the Meerdael Forest before finishing in Leuven. Amateur gravel riders will have to qualify through mass events spread across five continents and over a full year to take part in this race.

New Cycling Routes 2024

In 2024, many new cycling and walking products will be developed in Flanders. Including a [new cycling underground project](#) in Limburg. From the summer of 2024, visitors will be able to pedal straight through quarries in Kanne, along the Albert Canal in Riemst. It will be an experiential course, created nearly 98 feet underground, with parts in the dark to provide an atmosphere for the cyclist!

Meanwhile, in the Westhoek region around Ypres, a new walking network will be realized in 2024: the Zonnebeke walking network connects several existing networks and ensures that the junction system connects with the beautiful region around Zonnebeke. A little further in East Flanders, in the Dender and Scheldt valleys, other new walking networks are also being developed in the New Year.



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VISITFLANDERS North America, The New York Times Building, 620
Eighth Avenue, New York, NY 10018, United States

VISITFLANDERS UK & Ireland, Flanders House, 1A Cavendish
Square, London W1G 0LD, United Kingdom

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