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FLUIDE 2015
Contemporary art trail

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PRESS RELEASE

Re-enchanting the town through art and culture!

Thuin, the pearl of the Val de Sambre, owes its charm to the remnants of its mediaeval past: its belfry, its alleys and its Hanging Gardens. As part of its desire to promote its heritage and position the town as a real tourist destination, the Thuin-Haute Sambre Cultural Centre is continuing the tradition of the contemporary art trail, begun in 2006, within the framework of *Mons 2015* and in partnership with BPS22: *Fluide* has become a biennial event, with each trail leaving a permanent mark on the town. As well as the 14 permanent works of 2015, other works will be added every two years with the aim of transforming Thuin into an open-air contemporary art museum! The foundations of a new culture policy keen to reach a wide audience have been laid.

An original event with an international reach, *Fluide 2015* is in keeping with the first trail that was held: an original and audacious public art trail where the works, exhibited in places other than the traditional museums, etc., 'encounter' the public to arouse emotions, curiosity and reflection.

Fluide therefore offers the chance to discover contemporary art – and Thuin! – in another way, and invites us to look differently at our environment.

Fluide 2015 is a reflection on the town, its past, its folklore, its exceptional architecture and green spaces, but also on its urban reality and its urban development. Offering a trail that can be covered on foot, *Fluide* has taken over various places in the town (historical centre, Hanging Gardens, Grand Bon Dieu woods, the Bateliers Quarter, the churches of Notre-Dame du Val and Mont-Carmel, etc.).

The 18 selected artists, comprised of young talents and well-known artists from abroad and the Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles, visited the various parts of the town and entered into a dialogue with the environment, envisaging Thuin as a medium. The particularly diverse range of artistic works, the majority of which are monumental and permanent, deal with the notions of public and private, of things that remain and things that disappear, as well as popular tradition. They also question the town's urban, commercial and touristic stakes.

The works

The Hanging Gardens, which are part of Thuin's charm, were chosen by several of the artists, who questioned and reinterpreted them. Following a photography assignment in the gardens, **Olivier Cornil** provides us with a view of what they are, focusing on what can and can't be seen, the public and the private. **Ludovic Mennesson** questions private gardens, access to private property, and transforms this dream, which is inaccessible to the majority of citizens, into a colourful and fanciful oasis in the town. In a patch where you would expect to see plants and flowers growing, **Christine Mawet** has taken gardening tools as her source of inspiration and turned them into motifs instead, leaving new traces on an old wall lining the alleyways of these gardens. As for **Jérôme Considérant**, he has used different graphic symbols particular to the town of Thuin, to create the image of an animal, in the form of a mediaeval coat of arms, watching over the vines and gardens.

A relationship between illusion and the sacred can also be seen in the works selected for the exhibition. The **Société Volatile** collective is questioning the role of the Church and religion as a communications agency, by installing a neon sign in the deconsecrated church of Notre-Dame du Mont-Carmel, which can be seen as a propaganda tool, a profane device or a poetic installation. As for **Sophie Langohr**, she has integrated three new 'talking stones' into the walls of the Church of Notre-Dame, merging the genres of classic portrait painting, electoral photography and advertising. Erected on a church, like a 'virgin prophetess', **Sara Conti's** crowned matryoshka in glory reveals her voluptuous female attributes, demands equality for the sexes and envisages, as a 'Great Reproducer', the possibility of another version of history where the Messiah is a woman. **Michael Dans**, who has also created a Marian sculpture, although this one is in a traditional style and is shown begging, questions our relationship with solitude and grief, and shows us a world where the role of the Church has been reversed and can no longer save us.

The trail also reveals the town's urban reality. This can be seen in both **Adrien Tirtiaux's** work, which combines one of the region's specialities and a brutal vision of modernity; and in **Stephan Vee's** installation, which reinterprets the daily life of towns, with a mocking eye, by (re)introducing and increasing the number of pigeons on a facade; or in **Olivier Kosta-Théfaine's** sculpture, which adapts his poetic view from the top of the town to a 'non-place', i.e. the area around the station, which can't compete with the touristic gems of Ville Haute.

The history of the inland waterways is also evoked in the rusted cast iron barges by **Daniel Fauville**. Heavy effigies of boats that have run aground, sights that are both familiar and imaginary, they invite us to travel and dream at the water's edge. As for the **DSCTHK** collective's boat, it distorts the references to the maritime and popular history of Thuin to create a new celebratory monument, referring to the desire to be somewhere else and the need to return home.

Several of the artists offer a view of Thuin evoking the town's past and future, while calling upon the visitor's imagination. For instance, **John Cornu** has created eight blue-stone monoliths evoking upturned buttresses, arranged in a circle and no longer playing a supportive role. Another reference to the resistance of time and the protective function of the town's ramparts is **Djos Janssens'** "L'ombre n'a pas encore étendu son emprise sur nos espérances" in neon, obliging visitors entering the town to decode this new symbolic construction. Just like **Jonathan Sullam's** billboard, placed opposite the Sambre valley, reflecting and distorting the surrounding landscape to better question our images and desires subjected to the public space.

Manoeuvring between art, fun and functionality, **Christophe Terlinden** and **Xavier Rijs** are responsible for two of the urban projects. By installing eight masts and flags on Thuin's viaduct, Terlinden questions the borders between art and urban reality, while Rijs reflects on the life cycle, in plant and human terms, by breathing new life into the urban furniture in Grand Bon Dieu woods.

The artists

Olivier Cornil, Charleroi (BE), 1976 - **John Cornu**, Seclin (FR), 1976 - **Jérôme Considérant**, Charleroi (BE), 1977 - **Sara Conti**, Baudour (BE), 1971 - **Michael Dans**, Verviers (BE), 1971 - **DSCTHK : Thibaut Blondiau**, Brussels (BE), 1973 and **Jérôme André**, Brussels (BE), 1972 - **Daniel Fauville**, Charleroi (BE), 1953 - **Djos Janssens**, Brussels (BE), 1972 - **Olivier Kosta-Théfaine**, Paris (FR), 1972 - **Sophie Langohr**, Chênée (BE), 1974 - **Christine Mawet**, Rocourt (BE), 1971 - **Ludovic Mennesson**, Lille (FR), 1985 - **Société Volatile : Philémon Vanorlé**, Brussels (BE), 1980 and **Arnaud Verley**, Roubaix (FR), 1980 - **Xavier Rijs**, Brussels (BE), 1954 - **Jonathan Sullam**, Brussels (BE), 1979 - **Christophe Terlinden**, Etterbeek (BE), 1969 - **Adrien Tirtiaux**, Brussels (BE), 1980 - **Stephan Vee**, Charleroi (BE), 1970.

Director of the Thuin-Haute Sambre Cultural Centre: Pascal Marlier
Exhibition curator: Dorothee Duvivier – BPS22

Exhibition: from 20 June to 20 September 2015 – Public space

Preview: 20 June 2015 from 17:00

Press conference: 19 June 2015 from 10:00 to 11:30

In the presence of numerous artists, the exhibition's curator and the director of Thuin's Cultural Centre

Website: www.fluide-thuin.be

Fluide 2015, an exhibition organised by the Thuin-Haute Sambre Cultural Centre and Fondation Mons 2015 in partnership with BPS22, the Musée d'art de la Province de Hainaut. With the help and support of the Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles, the Région Wallonne, the Province du Hainaut and its visual arts sector, the Ville de Thuin, the Commissariat Général au Tourisme, the Office du Tourisme de Thuin, the Maison du Tourisme Val de Sambre et Thudinie, the Pôle Culturel Haute Sambre.



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