

**MAC's**

MUSÉE DES ARTS  
CONTEMPORAINS

GRAND-HORNU

# The Bees of the Invisible

**29.09** 2019 > **12.01** 2020  
**PRESS RELEASE**

**Jean-Pierre Bertrand**  
**Maurice Blaussyld**  
**Ricardo Brey**  
**Jean-Marie Bytebier**  
**Thierry De Cordier**  
**Mario Merz**  
**Fabrice Samyn**  
**Sarkis**  
**José María Sicilia**  
**Daniel Turner**  
**Angel Vergara**



Thierry De Cordier, *Chambre des pensées (cinéma)*, 1989-1997 (revised in 2019). Belfius Art Collection, Brussels. © SABAM Belgium, 2019. Photo: Philippe De Gobert

Inspired by the similarities between Thierry De Cordier's sculpture, *Chambre des pensées (cinéma)*, 1989-1997 (revised in 2019) and the metaphor of the "golden hive" woven by the poet Rainer Maria Rilke in relation to his *Elegies*, the exhibition brings together works by some ten contemporary artists on the theme of interiority. As private as a chamber or as collective as a hive, this "inside" of humans and objects, withdrawn from the visible world, takes various forms in response to several metaphysical systems: cosmology, alchemy, animism, doctrine or, in a more modern expression, the experience of the sublime. Starting from this symbolic thought which escapes logic, these artists thus extract an entire imaginary world of the invisible in which the memory of the universe is accumulated, like a treasure. Reconnecting with "spirituality in art", their works diverge from rationalist vision in favour of intuition, this perception defined by the philosopher Henri Bergson as "the sympathy by which one is transported into the interior of an object in order to coincide with what there is unique and consequently inexpressible in it."\*

**Denis Gielen**  
**Director of the MAC's**  
**Exhibition Curator**

\* HENRI BERGSON, *The Creative Mind: An Introduction to Metaphysics*, transl. Mabelle L. Andison, New York, Dover Publications, 2010, p. 135.



Fabrice Samyn, *Untitled, 01 Apr 2016 (Color of Time)*, 2016. Collection Renaud Samyn. Courtesy of the artist. Photo: Philippe De Gobert

**“ We are the bees of the invisible. We gather the honey of the visible in order to store it in the great golden hive of the Invisible.”**

**Rainer Maria Rilke**



Daniel Turner, *Untitled*, 2019. © Photo: Kent Pell

## Exhibition

Inspired by a metaphor used by Rainer Maria Rilke to reflect the spiritual dimension of poetry, and by Thierry De Cordier's *Chambre des pensées (cinéma)*, this exhibition brings together works by some ten contemporary artists on the vast theme of the invisible. The curator's choice focused primarily on works that were directly inspired by mythological or mystical thought, such as Ricardo Brey's recent drawings that explore Dante's *Inferno*, or the wax reliquaries in which artist José Maria Sicilia has inset manuscript pages from the *Spiritual Canticle* by the Spanish mystical poet Saint John of the Cross. By illustrating this quest for spirituality through the transformation of metals, alchemy is another common reference in several of the presented works, such as Daniel Turner's sculptures, made by reducing industrial equipment to filings, or Jean-Pierre Bertrand's more shamanic paintings, created by amalgamating his pigments with honey, salt and lemon.

Embodied in a wax sculpture by Mario Merz that has been acquired by the MAC's, Joseph Beuys's thought and his utopia of a "return to a re-enchanted nature" are not unrelated to this, along with Sarkis's sublime "watercolours in water". This pioneer artist was one of the first people in France to recognise the German artist's revolutionary approach. More generally, these spiritually devoted artists reconsider the origins of the

image, as demonstrated by Fabrice Samyn's icons and Maurice Blaussyld's archetypes, including the cross.

Finally, the exhibition would not have been complete without considering the inextricable ties between the visible and the invisible which have been woven by painting since time immemorial, and are highlighted here by Jean-Marie Bytebier's chiaroscuro landscapes and Angel Vergara's video paintings.



Maurice Blaussyld, *Granit*, 1998. Collection Musée des Arts Contemporains au Grand-Hornu, donated by the artist. Courtesy of the artist.  
Photo: Danièle Blaussyld

# Works

## Jean-Pierre Bertrand

**Born in 1937 in Paris, France – Died in 2016 in Paris, France.**

Jean-Pierre Bertrand, *Sans titre*, triptych, mixed techniques under Plexiglas, 245 x 494 x 2.5 cm, 1986. LaM, Lille Métropole, Museum of Modern Art, Contemporary Art and Art Brut.

## Maurice Blaussyld

**Born in 1960 in Calais, France.  
Lives and works in Lille, France.**

Maurice Blaussyld, *Granit*, granite and paper, 80 x 145 x 25 cm, 1998. Collection of the Museum of Contemporary Arts at Grand-Hornu, donated by the artist.

Maurice Blaussyld, *O8O*, resin, cardboard, glass, paper, ink (1991), 61 x 76 cm, 2016. Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Allen, Paris.

Maurice Blaussyld, *Oo...hii...ha*, black glycerophthalic resin, metal, okoume, poplar, oak, ammoniac, Placoplatre, glass (1998 /1987), variable dimensions, 2016. Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Allen, Paris.

## Ricardo Brey

**Born in 1955 La Havana, Cuba.  
Lives and works in Ghent, Belgium.**

Ricardo Brey, *Centro terra*, from the “Inferno” series, Cassel earth pigment, pencil, pastel, metal letters on cardboard, 120 x 160 cm, 2016. Courtesy of Alexander Gray Associates, New York.

Ricardo Brey, *Departure*, from the “Inferno” series, pencil, ink, pencil lead, metallic stars, mirror, cut-out letters on cardboard, 160 x 120 cm, 2016. Courtesy of Alexander Gray Associates, New York.

Ricardo Brey, *Inclosure*, from the “Inferno” series, ink, pencil, graphite, pastel, cut-out letters, wood and mirror on cardboard, 120 x 160 cm, 2016. Courtesy of Alexander Gray Associates, New York.

Ricardo Brey, *Saturne dévorant un de ses enfants*, lead, wax, ostrich eggshell, black emulsion paint, cord, found objects, metal chain, variable dimensions, 2012. Courtesy of Alexander Gray Associates, New York.

## Jean-Marie Bytebier

**Born in 1963 in Deinze, Belgium.  
Lives and works in Ghent, Belgium.**

Jean-Marie Bytebier, sketchbook, 29 x 42 cm, 2015-2019. Artist's collection. Courtesy of the artist.

Jean-Marie Bytebier, *Immigrated Clouds*, acrylic on canvas, 240 x 180 cm, 2018. Courtesy of the artist.

Jean-Marie Bytebier, *Immigrated Water*, acrylic on canvas, 150 x 130 cm, 2018. Courtesy of the artist.

Jean-Marie Bytebier, *I See Nobody on the Road*, acrylic on canvas, 240 x 180 cm, 2018. Courtesy of the artist.

Jean-Marie Bytebier, *I See Nobody on the Road*, acrylic on canvas, 240 x 180 cm, 2018. Courtesy of the artist.

Jean-Marie Bytebier, *I See Nobody on the Road I*, acrylic on canvas, 40 x 30 cm, 2018. Private collection. Courtesy of the artist.

Jean-Marie Bytebier, *I See Nobody on the Road II*, acrylic on canvas, 40 x 30 cm, 2018. Private collection. Courtesy of the artist.

Jean-Marie Bytebier, *A Labyrinth of Time*, acrylic on canvas, 200 x 140 cm, 2018. Courtesy of the artist.

Jean-Marie Bytebier, *Moss*, acrylic on canvas, 150 x 130 cm, 2017. Private collection. Courtesy of the artist.

Jean-Marie Bytebier, *Nature is - Immigration - is Nature*, acrylic on canvas, 240 x 195 cm, 2018. Courtesy of the artist.

Jean-Marie Bytebier, *The Painter Finest Moment*, 210 x 160 cm, 2019. Courtesy of the artist.

Jean-Marie Bytebier, *Source*, acrylic on canvas, 160 x 130 cm, 2017. Private collection. Courtesy of the artist.

Jean-Marie Bytebier, *The Source*, acrylic on canvas, 90 x 75 x 8 cm, 2017. Collection of the Museum of Contemporary Arts at Grand-Hornu, owned by the Wallonia-Brussels Federation.

Jean-Marie Bytebier, *The Source*, acrylic on canvas, 130 x 110 x 7 cm, 2017. Collection of the Museum of Contemporary Arts at Grand-Hornu, owned by the Wallonia-Brussels Federation.

Jean-Marie Bytebier, *Vitrine / Sketches*, small showcase, glass, oak, oil paint, 90 x 50 x 62 cm, 2017-2018. Courtesy of the artist.

## Thierry De Cordier

**Born in 1954 in Ronse, Belgium.  
Lives and works in Spain and Ostende, Belgium.**

Thierry De Cordier, *Chambre des pensées (cinema)*, mixed media, 211.5 x 170.5 x 400 cm, 1989-1997 (revised in 2019), Belfius Art Collection, Brussels.

## Mario Merz

**Born in 1925 in Milan, Italy – Died in 2003 in Turin, Italy.**

Mario Merz, *Sans titre*, metal table, ink and pencil on paper, wax, 74 x 85.5 x 112 cm, 1969-1984. Collection of the Museum of Contemporary Arts at Grand-Hornu, owned by the Wallonia-Brussels Federation.

## Fabrice Samyn

**Born in 1981 in Brussels, Belgium.  
Lives and works in Brussels, Belgium.**

Fabrice Samyn, *Burning is Shining*, burned wood and gold leaf, 63.5 x 51 cm, 2015-2016. Collection Renaud Samyn. Courtesy of the artist.

Fabrice Samyn, *Burning is Shining*, burned wood and gold leaf, 63.5 x 51 cm, 2015-2016. Collection Renaud Samyn. Courtesy of the artist.

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Fabrice Samyn, *Burning is Shining*, burned wood and gold leaf, 63.5 x 51 cm, 2015-2016. Collection Renaud Samyn. Courtesy of the artist.





Angel Vergara, *Course*, 2013. Courtesy of the artist and Axel Verwoordt Gallery. © SABAM Belgium, 2019. Photo: Philippe De Gobert

Fabrice Samyn, *Burning is Shining*, burned wood and gold leaf, 63.5 x 51 cm, 2015-2016. Collection Renaud Samyn. Courtesy of the artist.

Fabrice Samyn, *Mayahuel*, oil on agave flowers, 295 x 305 x 8.5 cm, 2017. Collection Atelier Fabrice Samyn. Courtesy of the artist.

Fabrice Samyn, *Untitled, 01 Apr 2016 (Color of Time)*, installation and sculpture, 12 coloured globes, 12x (39.5 x 15.5 cm), ed. 3, 2016. Collection Renaud Samyn. Courtesy of the artist.

## Sarkis

**Born in 1938 in Istanbul, Turkey.**  
**Lives and works in Paris, France.**

Sarkis, *After Stalker*, 40 watercolours on paper, 40 x (40cm x 60cm) / film, 2'35", variable dimensions, 1999. Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Brussels.

Sarkis, *Film n°114, D'après Caspar Friedrich, « Voyageur contemplant une mer de nuages »*, video, colours, 3'50", 2006. Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Brussels.

Sarkis, *Film n°128, Blanc sur noir jour et nuit*, video, colours, 6'21", 2007. Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Brussels.

Sarkis, *Film n°146, D'après Hokusai, « Danseuse de Shirabyōshin »*, video, 49'39", 2008. Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Brussels.

Sarkis, *Musée de repos des ADA EWE*, metallic furniture, paper, oil paint, wood, 50 "painting" on Arches paper, 157 x 97 x 67 cm, 2013. Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Brussels.

## José María Sicilia

**Born in 1954 in Madrid, Spain.**  
**Lives and works in Majorca, Spain.**

José María Sicilia, *La Luz que se apaga*, oil on wax, 185 x 152 cm, 1999. Collection of the Museum of Contemporary Arts at Grand-Hornu, donated by the artist.

José María Sicilia, *Grisaille 1*, oil on wax on panel, 161.8 x 112.2 x 5.2 cm, 1997. Collection of the Museum of Contemporary Arts at Grand-Hornu, donated by the artist.

José María Sicilia, *Grisaille 2*, oil on wax on panel, 161.8 x 112.2 x 5.2 cm, 1997. Collection of the Museum of Contemporary Arts at Grand-Hornu, donated by the artist.

José María Sicilia, *Grisaille 3*, oil on wax on panel, 161.8 x 112.2 x 5.2 cm, 1997. Collection of the Museum of Contemporary Arts at Grand-Hornu, donated by the artist.

José María Sicilia, *Manuscrito de Sanlúcar de Barrameda*, paper, beeswax, carbon black and incrustations, 25 x 40 cm, 1995. Collection of the Museum of Contemporary Arts at Grand-Hornu, donated by the artist.

José María Sicilia, *Manuscrito de Sanlúcar de Barrameda*, paper, beeswax, carbon black and incrustations, 25 x 40 cm, 1995. Collection of the Museum of Contemporary Arts at Grand-Hornu, donated by the artist.

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## **Daniel Turner**

***Born in 1983 in Portsmouth, United States.  
Lives and works in New York, United States.***

Daniel Turner, *Untitled*, nickel, brass, adhesive tape, 487.3 x 53.1 x 3 cm, 2016. Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Allen, Paris.

Daniel Turner, *Untitled*, brushed stainless steel (WAMC, psychiatric hospital), Belgian linen, 60.9 x 76 cm, 2019.

Daniel Turner, *Untitled*, brushed stainless steel (WAMC, psychiatric hospital), Belgian linen, 60.9 x 76 cm, 2019.

Daniel Turner, *Untitled*, brushed stainless steel (WAMC, psychiatric hospital), Belgian linen, 60.9 x 76 cm, 2019.

## **Angel Vergara**

***Born in 1958 in Mieres, Spain.  
Lives and works in Brussels, Belgium.***

Angel Vergara, *Bananier*, paint on glass, 40 x 60 cm, 2013. Courtesy of the artist and Axel Vervoordt Gallery.

Angel Vergara, *Colchiques-menthe*, paint on glass, 40 x 60 cm, 2013. Courtesy of the artist and Axel Vervoordt Gallery.

Angel Vergara, *Courge*, paint on glass, 40 x 60 cm, 2013. Courtesy of the artist and Axel Vervoordt Gallery.

Angel Vergara, *Jasmin*, paint on glass, 40 x 60 cm, 2013. Courtesy of the artist and Axel Vervoordt Gallery.

Angel Vergara, *Piment*, paint on glass, 40 x 60 cm, 2013. Courtesy of the artist and Axel Vervoordt Gallery.

Angel Vergara, *Pivoines*, paint on glass, 40 x 60 cm, 2013. Courtesy of the artist and Axel Vervoordt Gallery.



Sarkis, *Film n°114, D'après Caspar Friedrich, "Voyageur contemplant une mer de nuages"*, 2006. Courtesy of the artist and Galerie Nathalie Obadia, Paris/Brussels.

# Exhibition Catalogue

*Les Abeilles de l'Invisible . The Bees of the Invisible*

Editor: MAC's/Musée des Arts Contemporains au Grand-Hornu  
Author: Denis Gielen

Bilingual - French /English  
60 pages  
50 illustrations  
250 x 185 mm  
Price: 8 €

## Les Abeilles de l'Invisible

*The Bees of the Invisible*



MUSÉE DES ARTS CONTEMPORAINS  
AU GRAND-HORNU

Jean-Pierre Bertrand  
Maurice Blaussyld  
Ricardo Brey  
Jean-Marie Bytebier  
Thierry De Cordier  
Mario Merz  
Fabrice Samyn  
Sarkis  
Jose María Sicilia  
Daniel Turner  
Angel Vergara

MAC's



**“This spiritual essence of art, as an antidote to nihilism and materialism, is proclaimed in the introductory citation of Rilke through the poetic image of the golden hive and the mythology surrounding the production of honey. Although spirituality in art is nowadays widely overlooked by institutions, probably marked by secularity and the ambient positivism, traces of sacredness nevertheless remain obvious in the creations of numerous contemporary artists.”**

**Denis Gielen, extrait du catalogue de l'exposition.**

# Agenda of activities

Information and reservation:  
+32 (0)65 613 902 / reservations@grand-hornu.be

## >> KIDS <<

### OPENING FOR KIDS 28.09.19 - 5pm

Discover the *The Bees of the Invisible* with an exhibition guide at the opening evening for budding art lovers.

Visit • Activities • Treats  
General opening at 6pm  
By reservation only

### FAMILY THURSDAYS 31.10.19, 26.12.19, 02.01.20 - 2pm

Every Thursday during the school holidays, enjoy a family day out at the museum and take part in workshops and guided or narrated visits.

Additional seasonal activities  
By reservation only

### BAZ'ART WORKSHOP

**Sundays 06.10.19, 03.11.19,  
01.12.19, 05.01.20 - 2 to 4.30pm**

Discover an artist's work during a practical workshop and visit of the exhibition.

**06.10.19** Enter the poetic universe of José María Sicilia and his giant flowers painted on beeswax.

Themes of the upcoming workshops for 8 to 12 year-olds to be specified  
5€ / workshop  
By reservation only

### HALLOWE'EN 27.10.19 - 3pm

Between the visible and the invisible: experience materials through drawings and painting.

3 € / child (free for parents)  
By reservations only

### CHRISTMAS AT GRAND-HORNU

**26.12.19, 27.12.19 - 2pm  
02.01.20, 03.01.20 - 2pm**

Spend time with the family at Grand-Hornu.

- Family Thursdays: narrated walk
- Children's visit to the exhibition

By reservation only

## >> SCHOOLS <<

### MAC'S + IDM

02.11.19, 03.11.19 - 10am to 6pm

Students from the Image Dans le Milieu d'ARTS<sup>2</sup> section present the results of their work following several weeks of workshops at the museum.

### HIGH SCHOOLS' MONTH

From 05.11.19 to 29.11.19

The MAC's and the CID offer free visits to secondary schools for a month.

By reservation only

### WHITE DAYS

From 17 to 20.12.19

During the white days, the MAC's and the CID are open free of charge for classes looking for activities.

By reservation only



Ricardo Brey, *Saturne dévorant un de ses enfants*, 2012. Courtesy Alexander Gray Associates, New York. © Ricardo Brey/Artist Rights Society (ARS), New York.

Photo: Dirk Pauwels

›› ENCOUNTERS ‹‹

**MEET THE ARTIST •  
FABRICE SAMYN**

**20.10.19 - 3pm**

Following a guided visit to the exhibition, meet the Belgian artist Fabrice Samyn.

2pm: guided visit  
3pm: meeting with the artist

By reservation only

**CONFERENCE •  
DENIS GIELEN**

**03.11.19 - 3pm**

Conference with Denis Gielen, director of the MAC's and curator of the exhibition.

By reservation only

**MEET THE ARTIST •  
JEAN-MARIE BYTEBIER**

**17.11.19 - 3pm**

Following a guided visit of the exhibition, meet the Belgian artist Jean-Marie Bytebier.

Presentation of the book on Jean-Marie Bytebier's latest work, published by Mer Publishing.

2pm: guided visit  
3pm: meeting with the artist

By reservation only

**MEET THE ARTIST •  
RICARDO BREY**

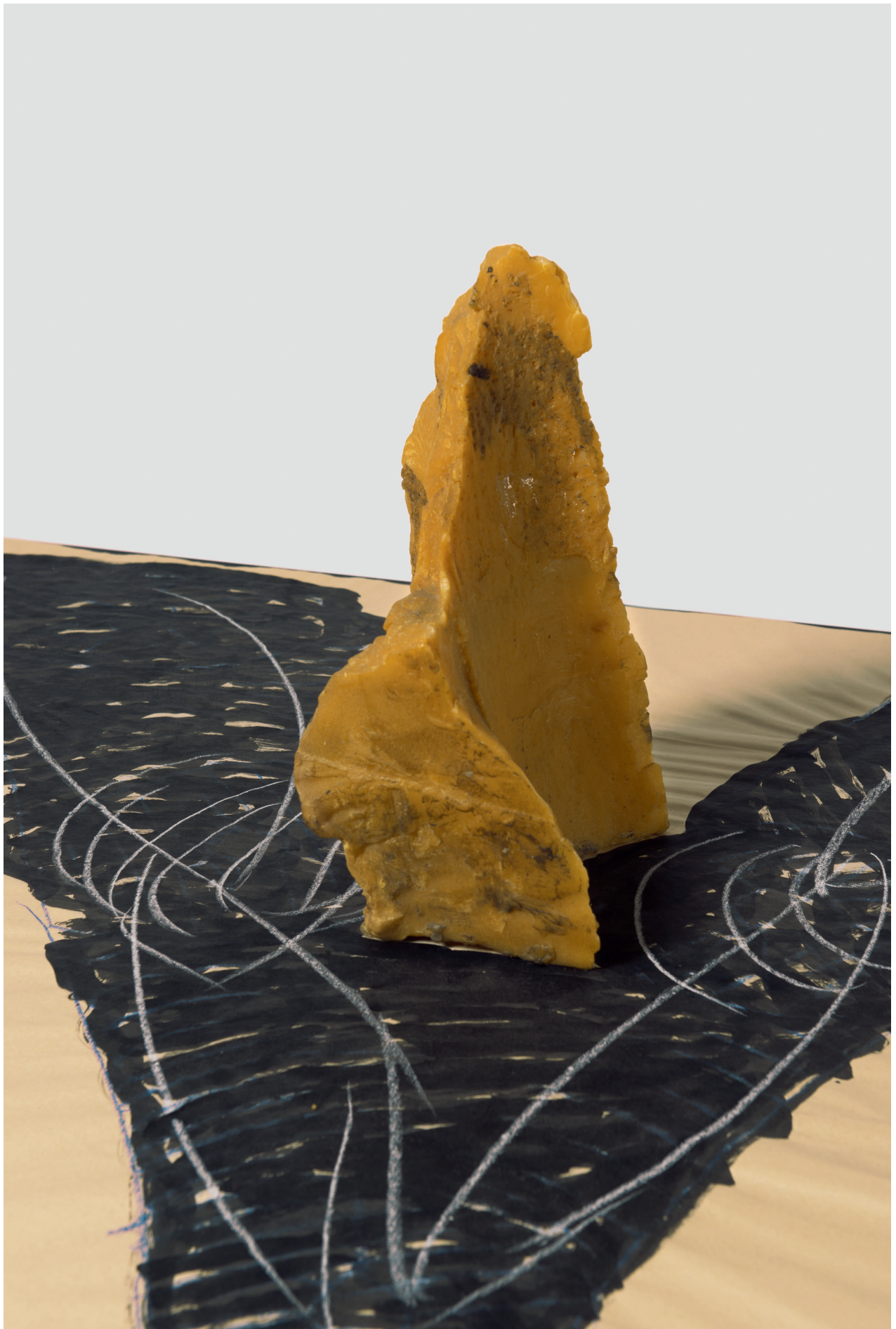
**12.01.20 - 3pm**

Following a guided visit of the exhibition, meet the Cuban artist Ricardo Brey.

2pm: guided visit  
3pm: meeting with the artist

By reservation only





Mario Merz, *Untitled*, detail, 1969-1984. Collection Musée des Arts Contemporains au Grand-Hornu, property of the Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles.  
© SABAM Belgium, 2019. Photo: Philippe De Gobert



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## **Practical Information**

### **THE MUSEUM**

The MAC's is housed in the former colliery premises at Grand-Hornu, an outstanding example of European industrial heritage, listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2012. Since it opened in 2002, the museum has received over a million visitors, produced more than 85 exhibitions and promoted numerous artists from the Wallonia-Brussels Federation. Thanks to major international artists, including Anish Kapoor, Christian Boltanski, Giuseppe Penone and Tony Oursler, who have presented their first major exhibitions in Belgium here, the reputation of the MAC's now reaches far beyond our national borders. Inspired by the unique architectural and historical context of Grand-Hornu, its collection has developed according to themes that connect with the preoccupations of many contemporary artists, including memory, technology and community.

### **LOCATION AND TICKETS**

Chairman: Claude Durieux

Director: Denis Gielen

Address:

Site du Grand-Hornu

Rue Sainte-Louise, 82

B-7301 Hornu (near Mons) Tel : +32(0)65 65 21 21

Fax: +32(0)65 61 38 91

E-mail: info.macs@grand-hornu.be

Opening times:

Every day from 10am to 6pm, except Mondays, 25/12 and 01/01.

Entrance fee:

- Combined ticket for the Grand-Hornu site / MAC's / CID : €10
- Reduced / group price (minimum 15 people): €6
- School group: €2
- Free for children under 6 and adults accompanying school groups



