

TEMPLON



Press Release
April 7, 2018

JAN FABRE

The Appearance and Disappearance of Antwerp / Bacchus / Christ (2016)
Special creations for The State Hermitage Museum

April 18 – June 2, 2018

Opening Wednesday, April 18 from 5:30 to 8:30pm



Exhibition view, Jan Fabre, *Knight of Despair, Warrior of Beauty*, 2016
The State Hermitage Museum, Rubens Gallery (New Hermitage)

Galerie Templon in Brussels, is unveiling a series of work by artist Jan Fabre, previously unseen in Belgium, produced for his major exhibition *Knight of Despair, Warrior of Beauty* at St Petersburg's Hermitage Museum in autumn 2016. The exhibition coincides with the presentation of the series *My Queens* (2016) at the Brussels Musée Royal des Beaux-Arts¹ a collection of bas-reliefs and a sculpture in white Carrara marble, also produced for the Russian project.

With *The Appearance and Disappearance of Antwerp/Bacchus/Christ*, Jan Fabre holds up an unfathomable mirror to the viewer: the blue ballpoint pen ink, applied until the point of saturation, ideal for conjuring up apparitions. This blue, which has become one of his signature shades, is the colour of the blue hour, that fleeting moment when night ends and day begins, when forms escape their boundaries and everything seems possible. The moment 'when everything turns upside down (...) offers every freedom,' explains the artist. Made up of a photographic film covered in layers of ballpoint pen ink, the works see their painted motifs disappear, only to reform again according to the exhibition's light, resulting in a permanent transformation.

In creating these works, destined for the *Rubens Room* at the Hermitage Museum, Jan Fabre drew inspiration from the Flemish master, a fellow son of Antwerp, thus paying him poetic tribute. His work features the themes of the city of Antwerp as metropolis, the secrets of Christian faith, the Christ as artist and Dionysian mysteries. Jan Fabre's models use the body language of Rubens. But whereas in the theatre the artist develops these themes exuberantly, here he reduces the baroque to a 'post-modern reference, as modest as a Byzantine icon,' as Paul Huvenne describes it.²

A visual artist and internationally renowned author who has worked in the theatre, Jan Fabre, (born in 1958 in Antwerp where he lives and works), has developed a body of art work over the last thirty years based on a variety of materials, including blood, beetle wings, bones, stuffed animals, marble and blue ballpoint pen ink.

Jan Fabre is an inveterate draughtsman, creating sculptures and installations that explore his favourite topics, including metamorphosis, the dialogue between art and science, humankind's relationship to nature and the artist as a warrior of beauty. Recent remarkable solo exhibitions include his retrospective at the Louvre (L'ange de la métamorphose, 2008) and shows at the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, Musée d'Art Moderne in St Etienne (Jan Fabre. Les années de l'heure bleue, 1986 – 1991, 2011) and Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg (2016). The Fondation Maeght in Saint Paul de Vence is presenting a major exhibition of his work from 29 June 2018: Ma nation: l'imagination.

¹Exhibition from 20/04 to 19/08. Press Office : Samir Al Haddad +32 (0) 2 508 34 08

² Former Administrator of Musée Royal des Beaux-Arts d'Anvers (KMSKA) in *Jan Fabre, Knight of Despair, Warrior of Beauty*, Skira, 2017