

Exhibition

General coordination and curatorship Zahava Seewald,
director/curator of the Municipal Museums of Anderlecht

Activities in the wings

- 11 March > *Duo Plasma* – Serpent & Electronica concert
- 2 April > Nocturnes Brussels Museums
- 17, 18, 19 April > *Itinérart*
- 26 April > Erfgoeddag
- 13 May > Concert *Happy Birthday Haendel!!!*
- 27 May > Family workshop
- 20 September > Finissage *Long Live the Circus!*

OLÉ DÉSIÉÉ!

Yves Malfliet

06.03. —————> 20.09.26



Design by Collin hotermans – Photographs © Sylvain Deleu

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Groundfloor

The chamber of rhetoric

1. *La Bella Abuela?*, 2022 [furniture]
2. *Kalt im Wald*, 2022 [on the wall]

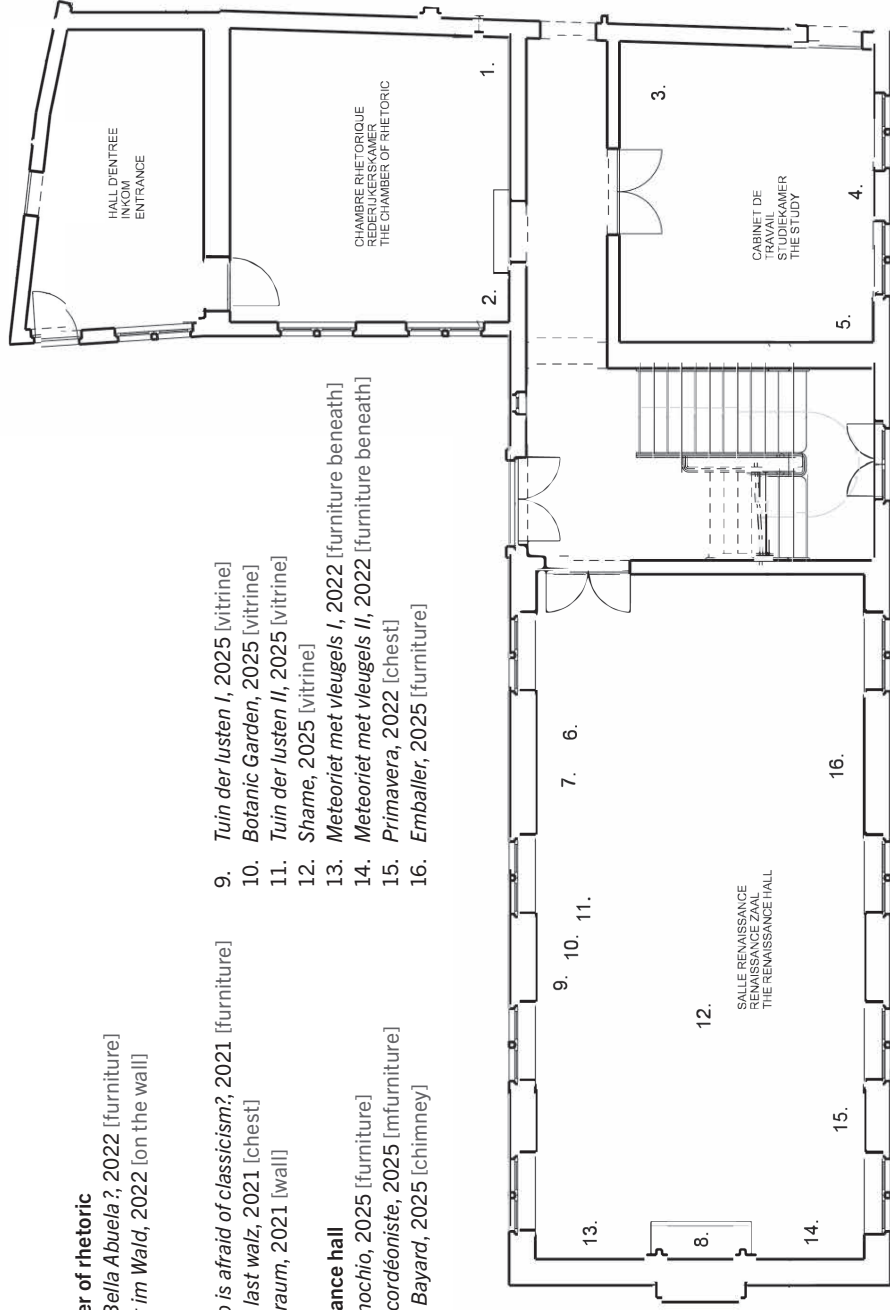
The study

3. *Who is afraid of classicism?*, 2021 [furniture]
4. *The last waltz*, 2021 [chest]
5. *Eistraum*, 2021 [wall]

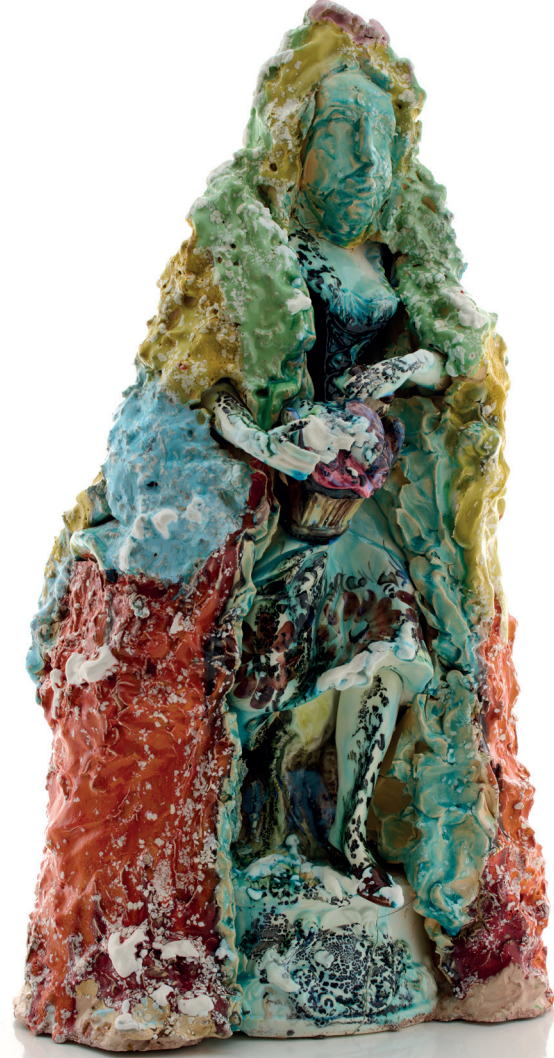
The renaissance hall

6. *Pinnocchio*, 2025 [furniture]
7. *l'Accordéoniste*, 2025 [mfurniture]
8. *Ros Bayard*, 2025 [chimney]

9. *Tuin der lusten I*, 2025 [vitrine]
10. *Botanic Garden*, 2025 [vitrine]
11. *Tuin der lusten II*, 2025 [vitrine]
12. *Shame*, 2025 [vitrine]
13. *Meteoriet met vleugels I*, 2022 [furniture beneath]
14. *Meteoriet met vleugels II*, 2022 [furniture beneath]
15. *Primavera*, 2022 [chest]
16. *Emballer*, 2025 [furniture]



Zita Swoon, 2025



Waldtraum, 2022



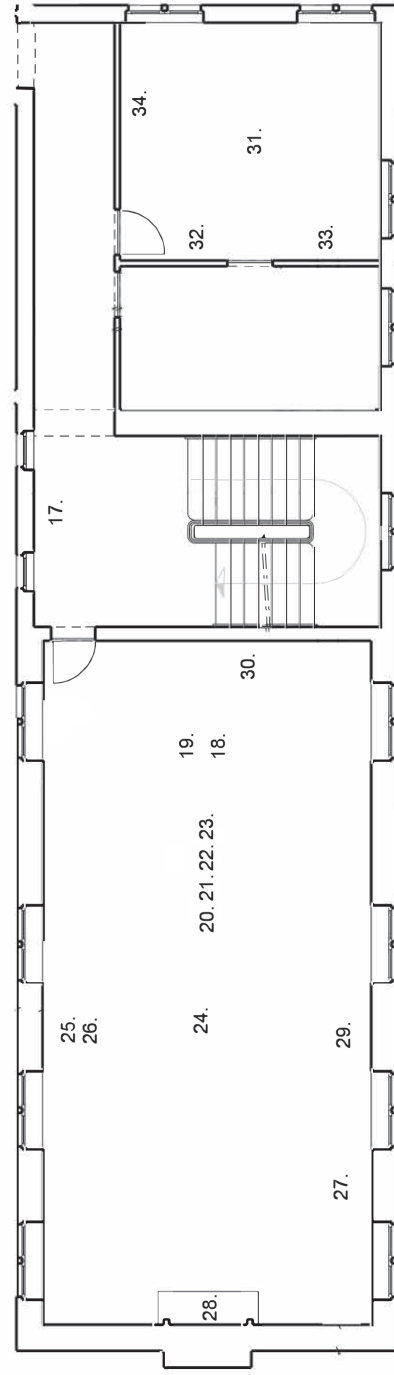
1st Floor

1st floor level landing

17. *Waldtraum*, 2022 [on the furniture]

1st floor room

18. *Romantic Lava I*, 2023 [horizontale vitrine]
19. *Romantic Lava II*, 2023 [horizontale vitrine]
20. *Santa Familia*, 2025 [vitrine]
21. *Italian shoe I*, 2023 [vitrine]
22. *Italian shoe II*, 2023 [vitrine]
23. *Vader en Kind*, 2026 [vitrine]
24. *Zita Swoon*, 2025 [base]
25. *Sax-o-phone*, 2025 [vitrine]
26. *Mon petit secret*, 2022 [vitrine]
27. *Opus magnum*, 2019 [snare drums]
28. *Cabaret magique*, 2026 [chimney]
29. *Bonsoir Monsieur Courbet*, 2023 [on the furniture]
30. *Mirador*, 2022 [furniture]
- Library**
31. *Naissance*, 2026 [table]
32. *Cuernos*, 2025 [on the wall]
33. *Shitting Bear*, 2022 [sideboard on the right]
34. *Arcade*, 2023 [sideboard on the left]



The caustic, theatrical world of artist Yves Malfliet (Hamme, BE, 1962), is taking over the rooms of the Erasmus House Museum

The exhibition, entitled *Olé Désiré!*, reveals a series of recent works, some of them for the first time and created for the occasion. His off-beat vision of humankind's condition contrasts strikingly with the sanctuary of religious knowledge and writings of the Renaissance that is the Erasmus House Museum. Yves Malfliet gives the rules and standards of ceramic craftsmanship short shrift, taking secret delight in doing exactly the opposite of what is supposed to be done. With this exhibition, the museum once again brings to the fore an art that has clearly gained in popularity these last few years. Malfliet's works converse with those in the permanent displays, the paintings, furniture, lighting and mood of the premises. They also echo a lengthy tradition that combines pottery with household uses, cooking and tableware and the creation of cooking utensils and decoration. Malfliet may hark back to this tradition by using old-fashioned decorative items from his family cupboards, but he transforms these objects to create his own stories.

A pioneer in the recognition of pottery in art

Malfliet was poorly understood at the start of his career, for his ceramic work could not be seen as the type of craftsmanship that was still the standard at the time. As the years went by, the world of pottery came to a turning point: artists who shared similar views emerged, galleries opened their doors to their work, and pottery was recognised as a genuine means of artistic expression. Craftsmanship has little importance in Malfliet's eyes. His creations also stand out through his use of recycled materials. The ceramic items that he finds in second-hand shops, and which are often recurrent elements in his creations, are also a signature of his work. These fragments are included in a clay pedestal or assembled to form a new object, and then reglazed to unify the whole. Although the technical concepts of building, firing and glazing a piece are part of his artistic background, in his view, conceptual and artistic power must go beyond craftsmanship. The history and poetry of his work must be so strong, so present, that one no longer thinks about technique and craftsmanship.

28. *Cabaret magique*, 2026

Cabaret magique [Magic Cabaret], in which the porcelain sculpture of a woman is turned upside-down, encapsulates the unbridled mood of mediaeval village fairs, carnivals and buffoonery, i.e. events characterised by a reversal of values and roles. You will discover a fairylike bucolic scene in the hollow at its base and the massive body of the bright yellow sculpture representing a woman's chest flanked by two revolvers. Strength, naïveté and a burlesque world of contrasts are combined in a single work of art in which the cheap, commonplace porcelain figure is given new life..

27. *Opus Magnum*, 2019

One more reference to rock music and the instrument that Malfliet plays can be found in a work that exploits the colour black, become a colour in its own right with all its nuances, in a piece called *Opus Magnum*. Here the body of the work, depicting children harvesting apples, is placed on a snare drum. The work combines innocence with something sinister represented by the mass overhanging the tree.

29. *Bonsoir Monsieur Courbet*, 2023

Finally, with *Bonsoir Monsieur Courbet* [Good Evening Mr Courbet], Yves Malfliet pays tribute to the painter Gustave Courbet, whom he greatly admires. The sculpture is a counterpoint to the polemical Courbet painting entitled *Bonjour Monsieur Courbet*, which shows the artist meeting his patron. In his work, Malfliet imagined a more introspective evening scene, enriched by traces of humour and an irreverent touch in the figure of Christ, behind the artist, who has been taken down from his cross and fallen head first on a tree stump surmounted by a menacing stone block. A surreal, funny, meditative world.

31. *Naissance*, 2026

A monumental piece entitled *Naissance* [Birth] placed on the table in the small library is one of the artist's latest creations for this exhibition. A small being emerges from the waters that pour from a vase representing a uterus, whilst male genitalia nestle in the back of the case. It is a sort of contemporary fairytale swinging back and forth amongst naïveté, the sacred and the mystery of birth, in which the power of concept and narration surpasses practical knowledge.

30. *Mirador*, 2022

The large room on the second floor features a piece entitled *Mirador* placed in front of a series of murals dating back to the late 16th-early 17th century that were discovered in the house. Here, too, the positioning and dialogue highlight both the palette of colours and the themes such as nature and humanity that characterise the grandiose landscapes. Without giving way to pathos, the little chair placed at the summit of the lookout point gives this crackle-glazed, craggy mass a certain lightness and distance from reality

17. *Waldtraum*, 2022

On the upper floor landing, the organic piece called *Waldtraum* [Forest Dream] faces a painting depicting the collegiate church of Anderlecht. The contrast between the architectural structure on the canvas and the organic form of the sculpture creates a dialogue, a new dynamic and a new way of perceiving these two works of art.

23. *Vader en kind*, 2026

Yves Malfliet sometimes does monochrome work, as in *Vader en kind* [Father and Child], which is a small blue piece and a wink at Christian religious iconography and its focus on depicting only the Mother and Child.

24. *Zita Swoon*, 2025

The two-faced sculpture *Zita Swoon* shows the image of a woman (an existing frivolous clay sculpture) whose gilded face is supposed to express Zita's holiness with, on the other side, a childlike face nestled in her coat. The initial sculpture is wrapped up and in part hidden in a mass of clay and colours that gives it a new sense of majesty. The title refers to the Belgian rock band that is one of the artist's many centres of interest. Malfliet himself was also active in a series of rock bands.

"I am alone in my artistic expression, which does not fit into the contemporary trends of today's art world and ceramics. Perhaps that is also what makes it stimulating, for it is not common in the world of ceramics to concentrate solely on the conceptual, the idea, the poetic; attention often focuses as well on working the matter (craftsmanship). For me, craftsmanship is not a philosophy and is not subordinate to a concept. It is merely a tool to express my ideas".

Biography

Born in Hamme, Belgium, in 1962, Yves Malfliet enrolled in classic training in pottery in Antwerp under the guidance of Achiel Pauwels, with whom he shared a sense of the poetry of their work. He then went on to the Higher Institute for Fine Arts (HISK), where, after a rigorous process of selection, he was given the opportunity to work in his own workshop to develop his own artistic language. He also studied at Universidad de La Laguna in Tenerife, Spain. Malfliet regularly takes part in international competitions. Aside from the last Faenza prize – the most important award in contemporary pottery – in 2023, he also won a prize at the Vallauris Biennial (France), in 2014. Another striking moment was that of the Naspä Förderpreis, awarded by the Westerwald Museum. He also won the Andenne Ceramics Prize, in Belgium, in 2016. His achievements over the years have enabled him to weave a broad web of international friendships, a source of human enrichment that he considers invaluable. His work was exhibited recently at the *Anciens Abattoirs* (former slaughterhouse) of Mons and the Keramis Museum. His works can be found in some major international collections, including those of the Musée La Piscine (Roubaix, France), Westerwald Museum (Germany), Musée Magnelli (Vallauris, France), M.I.C. (Faenza) and Yingge Museum (Taipei, Taiwan).

His work is displayed at the Sofie Van den Bussche Gallery in Brussels, Belgium.

A few comments on the works!

Welcome to the eclectic, kitsch world of the Belgian artist Yves Malfliet. Born in Hamme in 1962, he moved to Antwerp and today lives in the town of Ros Beiaard, near Dendermonde. Yves Malfliet works with clay, but does not consider himself a potter in the traditional sense of the word. In his view, ceramics is above all a language, a way to express idea, images and stories. It is a way to create polychromed sculptures by working with matter and colour.

His quirky vision of humanity makes a striking contrast with the Erasmus House Museum, a sanctuary of religious writings and knowledge of the Renaissance.

Olé Désiré!

The title of the exhibition, *Olé Désiré!*, is a tribute to his grandfather, Désiré Malfliet. It also echoes Desiderius Erasmus, a major figure of the European Renaissance. In it, the artist creates a joyous, exuberant world combining theatre, poetry and humour. Each work tells a story, sometimes a brief anecdote, and each work bears a title that reveals a part of that story.

Language plays a vital role in Yves Malfliet's universe. His titles skip from Flemish to French, from Spanish – a language close to his personal story – to German or English. Each language expresses a different emotion or a specific association, in line with its particular sound, expressive force, lyricism, poetic scope or literary references.

Take time to take everything in.

Each of Yves Malfliet's works of art can be seen from many angles, and as the artist says, each observer is urged to take in the sculptures their own way.

Malfliet calls upon your imagination and suggests that you become his accomplice.



Primavera, 2022



Ros Bayard, 2025

2. *Kalt im Wald*, 2022

In the first room, the completely white work *Kalt im Wald* [Cold in the Forest] immediately catches the eye. The physicality of the German language, calling cold and shades of white and blue into play, reinforces this icy impression. Playing on contrast is a constant of Malfliet's work. Here, the heat of the kiln necessary to fire pottery opposes the cold feeling that emanates from the piece.

1. *La Bella Abuela?*, 2022

Another piece in this room is called *La Bella Abuela* [the beautiful grandmother] with a question mark. This cohort of small figurines, insignificant knick-knacks that require close inspection, is inspired by theatrical characters such as those in Garcia Lorca's *La Casa de Bernarda Alba*, a play that tells the story of Bernarda Alba, a sixty-year-old Andalusian woman who incarnates strong authority, both protective and dominant. This omnipotence, which is not always positive or benevolent in certain traditional societies, is also part of Malfliet's own story.

3. *Who's afraid of classicism*, 2021

As you progress through the exhibition you will see this kind of white "wave", which continues to cross the next room like a guiding thread. In this room you will also discover the intriguing, unexpected and drole aspects that permeate Yves Malfliet's work. In *Who's afraid of classicism*, for example, he hijacks the conventions of classical sculpture by adding comical, almost absurd, elements in a back-and-forth between tradition and derision.

6-7. *Pinocchio* and *l'Accordéoniste*, 2025

Several pieces in the Renaissance Room explore colour. Two examples are *Pinocchio* and *l'Accordéoniste* [The Accordion Player], which are spontaneously and very intuitively created recent works less constructed than others in the exhibition. The shapes, modelled on an existing, "ready-made" character, are deliberately naïve, almost childish. The tragi-comic references to the circus presented here imbue many of his creations and are part of his journey. Indeed, Malfliet created and debuted a clownish performance called Circus Concordia with Philip Vercammen in early 2000. The pair's show ran until 2013.



La Bella Abuela?, 2022



Pinochio and l'Accordéoniste, 2025

The dynamics between bric-à-brac or figurines and the final piece varies. Sometimes the artist barely changes an existing object. At other times, his intervention dominates. His creative process often relies on assembling and/or incorporating existing objects. He works on several pieces at the same time, and his creations evolve apace, without a pre-established plan. He combines scattered ceramic objects, often knick-knacks, with other materials, including refractory cement and clay, then reworks them with various glazes. Close scrutiny of the pieces will reveal the process to you. However, in Malfliet's view, technique remains a tool. The main thing is the story that the piece tells.

13-14. *Meteoriet I & II*, 2022

At the back of the room, on either side of the chimney, you will come across two pieces entitled *Meteoriet I & II* – two large masses endowed with little wings, the earthly mixed with humour. They represent an image inspired by a childhood memory: in the old days, it is said, presents were not brought by a bunny at Easter. Rather, they came with the winged church bells that returned from Rome after being blessed by the Pope!

8. *Ros Bayard*, 2025

Malfliet taps into the springs of the Low Country where he was born, into its folk art, history and traditions. One local story that dates back to the 15th century is incarnated in the work placed in the fireplace entitled *Ros Bayard* [The Horse Bayard]. According to legend, the horse bearing the four Aymon brother was doomed to die with a stone around its neck where the Dendre flows into the Scheldt. Yves Malfliet revisits this scene, which is part of Belgium's folk tradition, including in Dendermonde, where he lives.

15. *Primavera*, 2022

With *Primavera* [Spring], placed in front of Cornelis Metsys's painting of the flight from Egypt, Malfliet evokes the renewal of life but also the atmosphere of local processions, with their richly decorated floats, and the popular feast days that have always caught his attention. The piece, which combines architectural references, flower patterns and an organic shape connecting the two worlds, vibrates with colour as much as because of the shapes and motifs used, like a reference to re-awakening nature.