



PREVIEW

# Tom Poelmans

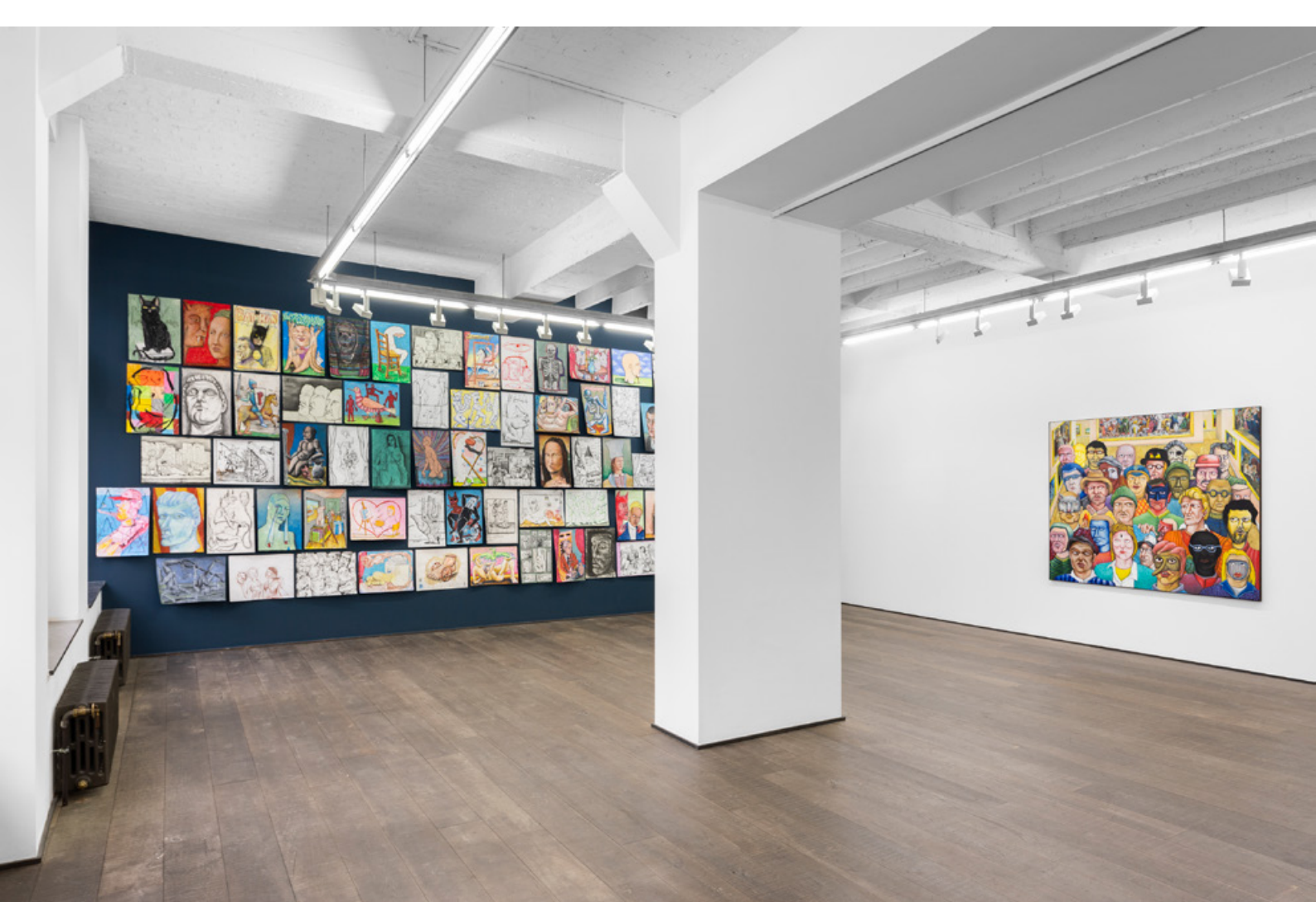
## *The Magic Market*

(EXHIBITION) 22.02 – 30.03.2024  
(GALLERY) LIVOURNE 32

**rodolphe janssen**

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# It is inappropriate not to look. (for Tom Poelmans by Lieven Segers)

In 1911, Leonardo Da Vinci's famous painting, the Mona Lisa, is stolen from the Louvre in Paris. During the twenty-eight months, the artwork is not occupying its usual place in the museum, masses of people come to look at the empty wall. Looking at this emptiness and the disappearance of the painting makes the Mona Lisa more famous than ever.

In the early 90s, local city marketing in Kasterlee chose to make the pumpkin the trademark of the Kempen village. A small, extremely ordinary stone pumpkin is placed on a pedestal in the market. The questionable sculpture is seen by many and soon becomes an essential part of their shared identity. As a result, villagers begin to refine their pumpkin soup and make pumpkin beer. Pumpkin competitions are set up for who can grow the biggest one, there is a Miss Pumpkin pageant, a wacky pumpkin regatta is created and feats of strength to see who can throw the furthest pumpkin with immense catapults are now annual and popular activities. Pumpkin watching has become Kasterlee's local pride and tourist success.

In 1563, Italian mannerist Paolo Veronese painted "The Wedding at Cana". The painting is almost ten by seven meters, making it the largest work in the Louvre's collection. In this canvas, Jesus performs his first and most important miracle; he turns water into wine. The gigantic canvas hangs right opposite the Mona Lisa. The scene is crammed with teeming revellers, but it is only the bride and Jesus who turn away from the wedding party and look out of the painting. Not even Veronese knew that this meant they would share secret eye contact with the legendary gaze of the Mona Lisa across the room.

On Sunday morning, 28 January 2024, two climate activists hurl pumpkin soup at the Mona Lisa. The orange liquid lands on the painting's bulletproof glass casing. "Qu'est-ce qu'il y a de plus important? L'art ou le droit à une alimentation saine et durable?" they shout. Security quickly intervened and staff placed black screens around the painting, attempting to block spectators' view of the scene. The Salle des États is temporarily evacuated and museum security leads the two away. Half an hour later, the room reopens to look around freely again, and at this point Tom Poelmans and Lieven Segers, unaware of what has just happened, walk into the room and attentively study Veronese's "The Wedding at Cana". The almost ritualistic queuing towards the Mona Lisa is analysed by the two and the success of the Mona Lisa is scrutinised; the speed at which spectators consume the viewing is madness.

It seems that many people watch but do not know why and therefore do not see what is really happening. As if shuffling in and finally beholding the Mona Lisa only happens digitally via the smartphone and becomes the metaphor for life itself. The general flow is followed, and one only looks where others do the same. No one yet knows why.

In the autumn of 2023, Tom Poelmans begins work on a painting that will be titled "The Mona Lisa". It depicts an eclectic group of thirty-two figures trying to look out of the painting; they attempt to make eye contact with the undepicted Mona Lisa. Some succeed, but many are also lost in their gaze. The exercise of looking at the world's most famous painting is the only thing that brings this group together. It is a moment of shared identity. In his painting, Poelmans masterfully manages to unite this collection of viewers and at the same time makes the viewer look at the Mona Lisa through collective memory. How well do we know this Renaissance masterpiece? If we have ever been allowed to meet the Mona Lisa, have we looked at the other works in the room? And have we really seen the Mona Lisa, have we looked hard enough? Tom Poelmans makes us aware of the other artworks in the room, and he makes us look more consciously. He turns "looking" into "seeing" like on Veronese's canvas where Jesus turns water into wine.

From 22 February to 30 March, Tom Poelmans presents his "The Mona Lisa" flanked by more than 120 drawings in the "The Magic Market" exhibition. Clearly Tom is a broad and skilled viewer. He likes to do this and does it often, visually quoting art history and combining many other visual stimuli. But Poelmans does not copy and associate indiscriminately. He demonstrates that there is more to looking, actually looking also means understanding. Tom Poelmans thus miraculously sees through what is happening before his eyes, and from the moment we can see this, we become the Mona Lisa.





TOM POELMANS  
THE MONA LISA, 2024  
OIL ON CANVAS  
200 X 160 CM / 78 3/4 X 63 IN (UNFRAMED)  
201 X 161 CM / 79 1/8 X 63 3/8 IN (FRAMED)  
(TPOE128)

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TOM POELMANS  
THE GOD OF NIKS, 2023  
MIXED MEDIA ON PAPER  
59 X 42 CM  
23 1/4 X 16 1/2 IN  
(TPOE-MM38)

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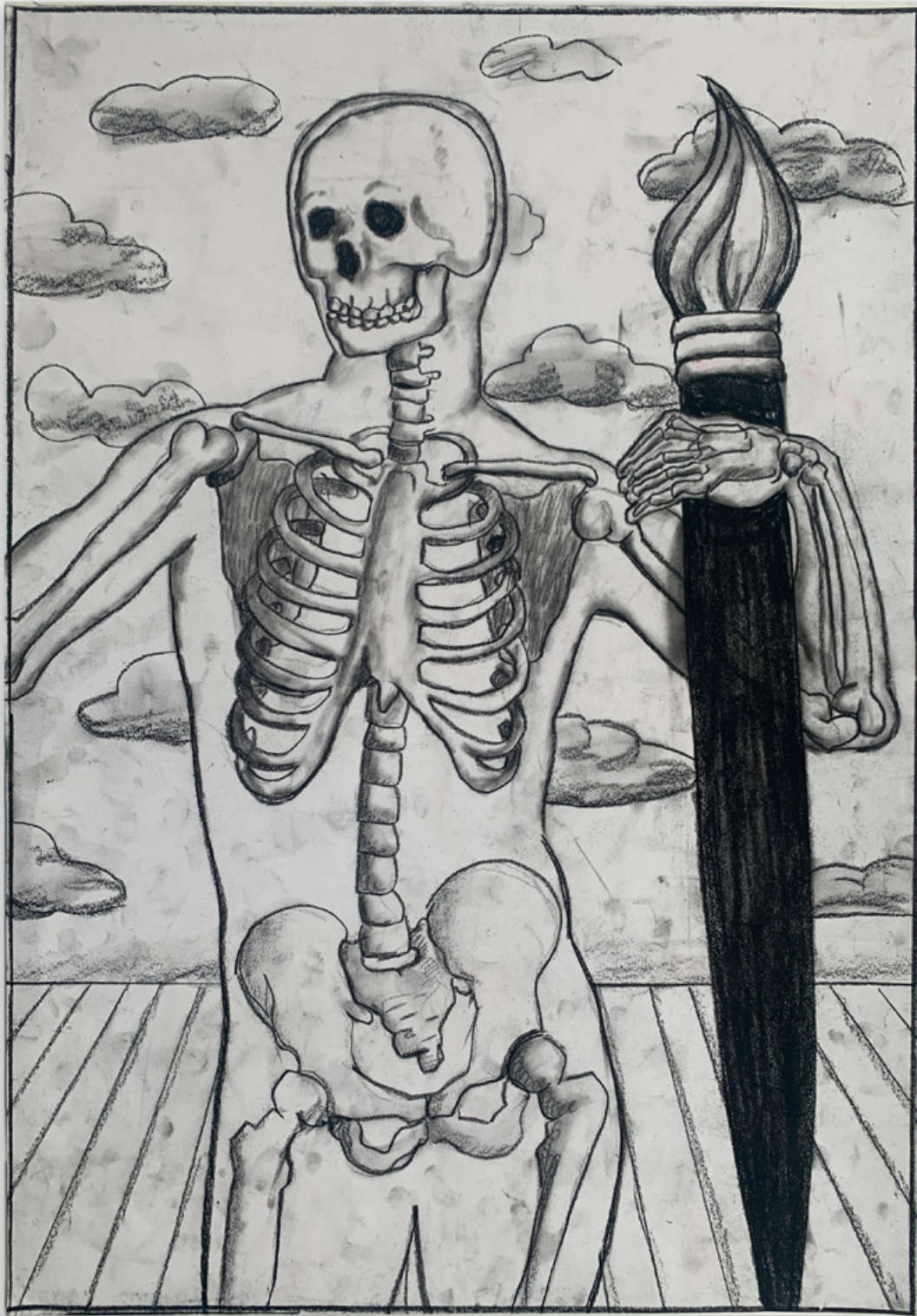




TOM POELMANS  
UNTITLED, 2023  
MIXED MEDIA ON PAPER  
59 X 42 CM  
23 1/4 X 16 1/2 IN  
(TPOE-MM52)

Enquire





TOM POELMANS  
TOT DE DOOD, 2024  
MIXED MEDIA ON PAPER  
59 X 42 CM  
23 1/4 X 16 1/2 IN  
(TPOE-MM15)

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TOM POELMANS  
DIEREN TUIN, 2023  
MIXED MEDIA ON PAPER  
42 X 59 CM  
16 1/2 X 23 1/4 IN  
(TPOE-MM48)

Enquire

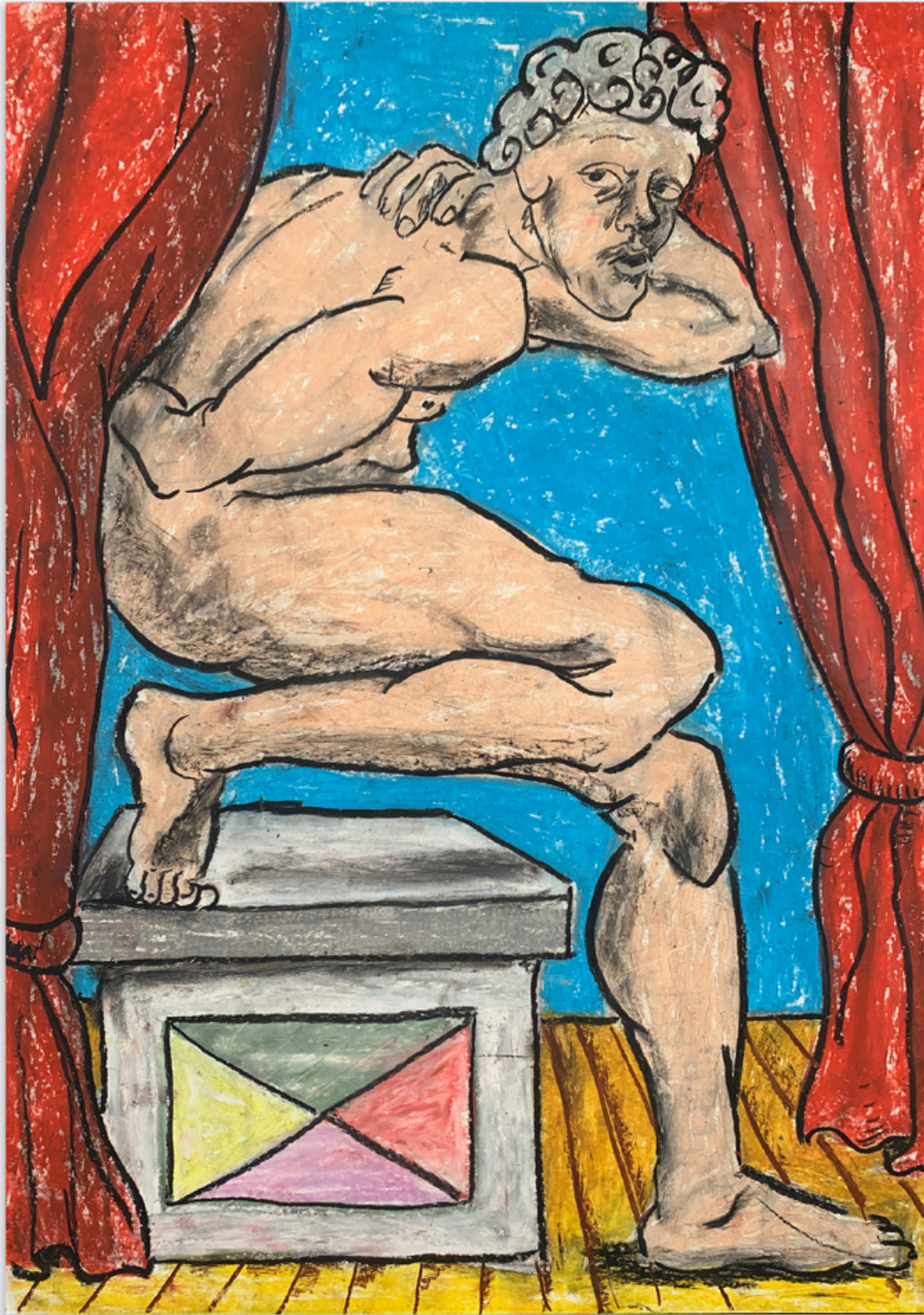




TOM POELMANS  
HUUS II, 2024  
MIXED MEDIA ON PAPER  
42 X 59 CM  
16 1/2 X 23 1/4 IN  
(TPOE-MM12)

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TOM POELMANS  
CLASSIC-BOY, 2023  
MIXED MEDIA ON PAPER  
59 X 42 CM  
23 1/4 X 16 1/2 IN  
(TPOE-MM31)

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TOM POELMANS  
GREEK TOM, 2023  
MIXED MEDIA ON PAPER  
59 X 42 CM  
23 1/4 X 16 1/2 IN  
(TPOE-MM54)

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TOM POELMANS  
DEVIL WOMAN, 2023  
MIXED MEDIA ON PAPER  
59 X 42 CM  
23 1/4 X 16 1/2 IN  
(TPOE-MM51)

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TOM POELMANS  
GROEP MET MENSEN EN ÉÉN KUNSTENAAR, 2023  
MIXED MEDIA ON PAPER  
42 X 59 CM  
16 1/2 X 23 1/4 IN  
(TPOE-MM72)

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TOM POELMANS  
SPIEGELVUUR, 2024  
MIXED MEDIA ON PAPER  
59 X 42 CM  
23 1/4 X 16 1/2 IN  
(TPOE-MM81)

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TOM POELMANS  
MAGIC, 2024  
MIXED MEDIA ON PAPER  
59 X 42 CM  
23 1/4 X 16 1/2 IN  
(TPOE-MM28)

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TOM POELMANS  
POPPENSPEL, 2024  
MIXED MEDIA ON PAPER  
59 X 42 CM  
23 1/4 X 16 1/2 IN  
(TPOE-MM50)

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TOM POELMANS  
TOMTARROT, 2024  
MIXED MEDIA ON PAPER  
42 X 59 CM  
16 1/2 X 23 1/4 IN  
(TPOE-MM47)

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TOM POELMANS  
DEVILAER, 2024  
MIXED MEDIA ON PAPER  
59 X 42 CM  
23 1/4 X 16 1/2 IN  
(TPOE-MM64)

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TOM POELMANS  
A SMALL DEVIL'S HOUSE, 2024  
OIL ON WOOD  
25 X 18 CM (FRAMED)  
9 7/8 X 7 1/8 IN  
(TPOE126)

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TOM POELMANS  
THE STUDIO #5, 2023  
MIXED MEDIA ON PAPER  
46.2 X 62.4 CM (FRAMED)  
18 1/4 X 24 5/8 IN  
(TPOE117)

Enquire



# The Magic Market

(1 <sup>ST</sup> DRAWING)	1.000,00 €
(2 <sup>ND</sup> DRAWING)	900,00 €
(3 <sup>RD</sup> DRAWING)	800,00 €
(4 <sup>TH</sup> DRAWING)	700,00 €
(5 <sup>TH</sup> DRAWING)	600,00 €
(6 <sup>TH</sup> AND MORE)	500,00 €

\*All prices taxes & frame exclusive



# Tom Poelmans

(BORN) 1984, DUFFEL, BELGIUM

(BASED) ANTWERP, BELGIUM

Whenever Tom Poelmans starts to paint, he is flooded with a rather innocent and spontaneous thought that he can freely paint whatever he wants, through his floating brushstrokes on the canvas. Each of his creation inevitably faces that illusion of free will that he himself claims. The final painting is undoubtedly the result of this struggle. It is a journey into the author's mind, based on infinite possibilities, a process that begins with a drawing and then ends with a decidedly unpredictable pictorial image. His work shows an exceptional and intricate heterogeneity, with a dreamlike vocation rich in symbols, allegories and metaphors, characterized both by precise compositions and by confident and material brushstrokes, covering every inch of the surfaces he uses.

His work has recently been exhibited at Anna Zorina Gallery, New York, NY USA; rodolphe janssen, Brussels, Belgium; Andrea Festa Fine Art, Rome, Italy; Ballroom Project, Antwerp, Belgium; Jack Barrett Gallery, East Hampton, New York, NY USA; the White Whale Gallery, Antwerp, Belgium; The Cabin, Los Angeles, CA USA; SecondRoom, Antwerp, Belgium; Tatjana Pieters, Ghent, Belgium; Garage, Mechelen, Belgium; DMW-Artspace, Antwerp, Belgium; Base-Alpha Gallery, Antwerp, Belgium; SVA, New York, NY USA; and Be-Part, Waregem, Belgium.

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