

EN :

Big Appple presents

Luilekkerland

An exhibition by Max J.P. Postma

February 9, 2025 – March 23, 2025

When I met Max about ten years ago, he had just returned from Venice, where he had done a performance: dressed in a fluorescent vest, he waved a tiny, ridiculous flag so that passersby would mistake him for a tour guide. I can't remember what he said or the colours of the flag he was carrying, but Venice is a city threatened by the rising water and overwhelmed by the weight of mass tourism attracted by the cities' history.

The history of Belgium is more recent than that of Venice. In 1830, the harvests were poor in Brussels, and discontent was rising. On August 25, 1830, the opera *La Muette de Portici* by Daniel-François-Esprit Auber was performed for the first time in Brussels, at the Théâtre de la Monnaie. The opera exalts the Neapolitan people who had revolted in the 17th century against their Spanish oppressors. This was enough to inspire the Brussels audience, whose ground was under the rule of the Netherlands who could identify with the people of Naples. Even before the performance was finished, a crowd started rioting. Protests grew, the bourgeoisie protected themselves by forming an armed guard, and the demonstrations turned into a revolution: on October 4, 1830, Belgium's independence was proclaimed.

The land of Cocaïne however, has no flag. It is a place where one leads a slothful life, marked by carefreeness and temptation, an illusory land, a dream and a nightmare. The Dutch word for this place is *Luilekkerland*, which is also the title of a painting by Pieter Bruegel the Elder, inspired by a Flemish folk tale. In a landscape where the mountains are made of buckwheat dough, roasted geese lie in dishes, and pies grow on trees, a soldier, a cleric, and a peasant – three representatives of society – are slouched under a tree. All have succumbed to the same sins of gluttony and laziness. Where his Renaissance contemporaries painted mainly biblical scenes, the powerful and the beautiful, Bruegel became known for painting rural life, showing people doing what they can with what they have. It is said that he came from a village once called Brueghel or Brogel, but no one really knows where he came from, as there were several villages with that name: one near Breda and another in Limburg. What we do know is that Big Apple is located at the entrance to the Pajottenland, a hilly agricultural region that Bruegel the Elder loved and painted.

Max J. P. Postma grew up in a town split in two by the border between Belgium and the Netherlands. On either side, the town has the same name. At Place de la Monnaie, tour guides sometimes tell the story of Belgium's independence to groups of people, who, I imagine, come from elsewhere. But that doesn't mean much: borders are just lines, and Belgium was born out of an opera. For a long time, eggs were an essential material for painting. Marcel Broodthaers saw in the egg a metaphor for human origin; for him, everything was egg. However, by taking hold of the great visual narratives of Belgium, Max J. P. Postma confronts us, in a negative way, with the dark side of the national narrative, the part that has been hidden or minimised – even though the country was born from an utopia.

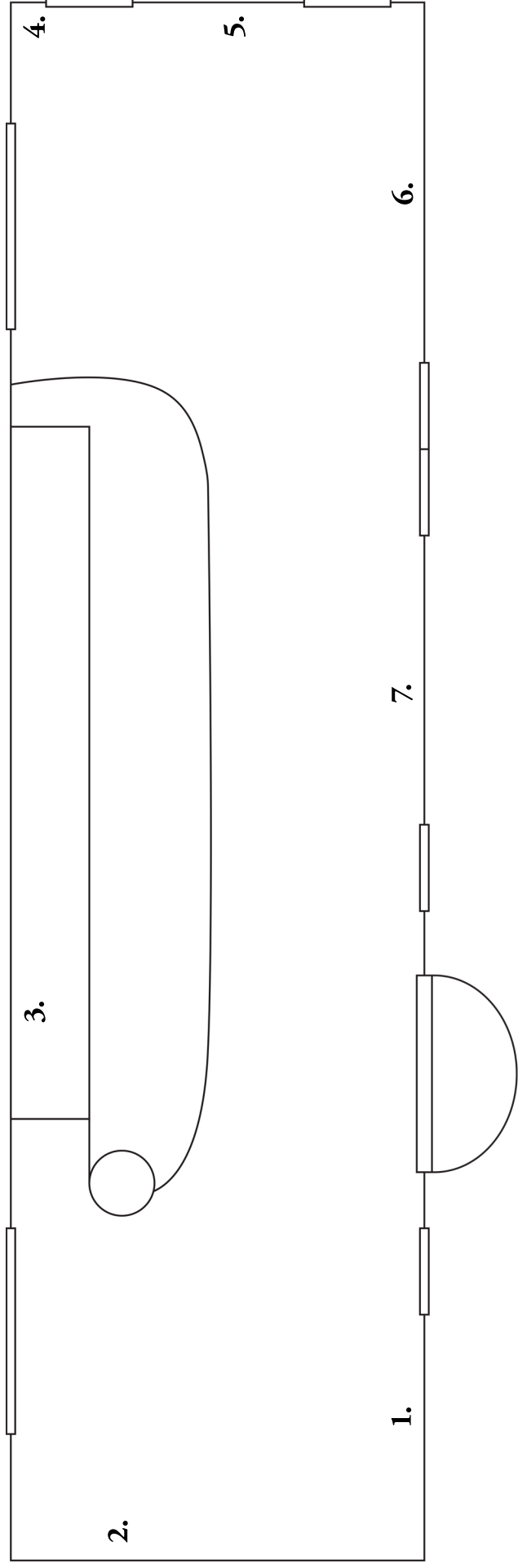
To see the entirety of an egg, you have to break it.

Clément Hébert

Biography:

Max J. P. Postma was born in 1995. Based in Hamburg, he studied at the École de Recherche Graphique in Brussels and graduated with a BFA from the LUCA School of Arts in Brussels (2019). In 2024, he earned an MFA from the Hochschule für Bildende Kunst in Hamburg, under the guidance of Jutta Koether. He exhibited at BBBerlin (Berlin) and at Salon75 (Copenhagen). Since 2022, Max J. P. Postma has been running WMP, an artist-run space located in his apartment.

Big Appple is a collective art space founded in 2024 by Thily Vossier, Rachel Magnan, and Clément Hébert. It is situated in a fairground-like structure in the garden of the *In den Appelboom* restaurant at Rue du Pommier 401 in Anderlecht.



1. *The Resurrection*, oil on canvas, 130 x 90 cm, 2024.
2. *Portrait of an unknown man*, graphite on paper, 41 x 31 cm, 2025.
3. *The Annunciation*, oil on canvas, 150 x 79 cm, 2025.
4. *The Nativity*, oil on canvas, 34 x 48 cm, 2024.
5. *Untitled*, oil on canvas, 120 x 94 cm, 2025.
6. *The Adoration*, oil on canvas, 110 x 70 cm, 2025.
7. *Lvilekkerland*, oil, eggshell, paper towel, tin foil, nails on canvas, 84 x 47 cm, 2024.