

Luc Tuymans *The Fruit Basket*

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606 N Western Avenue, Los Angeles



Luc Tuymans, *The Family*, 2025

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David Zwirner is pleased to announce an exhibition of new paintings by Belgian artist Luc Tuymans on view at the gallery's 606 N Western Avenue location in Los Angeles. *The Fruit Basket* debuted at David Zwirner New York in November 2025, and this presentation marks the acclaimed artist's first solo exhibition in LA. Collectively, the works on view consider the pervasive atmosphere of fracture that is specific to the United States at this moment. Foregrounding the highly mediated state of contemporary experience, Tuymans reinforces a growing sense of dissolution through varied subject matter and formal approaches.

One of the most important painters working today, Tuymans pioneered a distinctive style of figurative painting beginning in the 1980s that has been singularly influential to his peers as well as subsequent generations of artists. Featuring subject matter that ranges from the mundane to the profound, the artist's deeply resonant compositions insist on the power of images to simultaneously reveal and withhold meaning. Over time, Tuymans has adapted both the content and formal construction of his works to engage with contemporary visual culture and the sociopolitical contexts in which they are shown, thereby continually asserting the relevance of painting in a digitally saturated world.

Measuring sixteen feet tall and more than twenty-three feet wide, *The Fruit Basket* (2025)—from which the exhibition takes its title—presents a picture that is literally fragmented, composed of nine distinct parts arranged into a grid. Based on an iPhone photo that Tuymans took of an actual basket of fermenting fruit projected onto a blue-cast multipart screen, the eerie tones and diffuse focus of this painting betray the presence of digital light. An object of fascination for the artist, the fruit basket—sometimes seen as a symbol of plenty—and its contents are distorted almost beyond recognition, becoming something else entirely, a kind of *memento mori*. Due to the sheer size of the composition, the viewer must step back to take in the work in full, only to notice the intrusion of the artist's fingers at the bottom corners that indexes his engagement with the image on his phone. The strong diagonal that cuts across the picture plane mimics the construction of the similarly scaled epic history painting *The Raft of the Medusa* (1818–1819) by Théodore Géricault. In likening a fruit basket—an object that is also commonly gifted to the sick—to Géricault's raft of the dying, adrift from a shipwreck, Tuymans emphasizes decay rather than abundance.

A related group of four large-scale works, collectively titled *Illumination* (2024–2025), is installed throughout the show, appearing at first as fields of color that are lit from within in a manner akin to the rectilinear abstractions of Mark Rothko—a prodigious artist whose life ended in tragedy, and an ongoing interest for Tuymans. Tuymans's paintings harken back to 1960s and 1970s abstract expressionism and color field painting, non-referential styles that had their heyday during a period of intense sociopolitical turmoil in the US and are now the subject of renewed interest. In contrast to the spontaneity of abstract painting, Tuymans's works are deliberately constructed, based on zoomed-in stills captured on his phone from a documentary about the restoration of fifteenth-century illuminated manuscripts. Tuymans decided to encase these compositions in nearly black hues (though using no actual black pigment), applied by hand in thick bands around their borders. These off-square "frames" occupy almost as large a portion of the canvas as the actual image, further emphasizing the light that these colorful passages seem to emit—in this case reproducing the bright and mottled light that artificially results from taking a photo of a screen with a smartphone and drastically enlarging it. The subject of these paintings is amorphous, opening onto multiple readings that signal the instability of memory and the ways in which the past can be reinvented through image.

Another group of canvases, painted in Tuymans's distinctive and recognizable style, literalizes a feeling of intrusion at the heart of the exhibition. *Hollow* (2025) features the empty interior of a prosthetic latex mask, which floats against a dark, monochromatic ground. The inverse of a face, this image foregrounds the question of what is real and what is fake. Meanwhile, the smallest work in the show, *The Maggot* (2025) presents a close-up of the titular insect, alternately considered a harbinger of decay and rot and a medical cure capable of cleansing an open wound. *Migrants* (2025) glows urgently with hot reds and oranges and a looser treatment of paint. Rendered in an impressionistic style that is legible only from a

distance, the image of dozens of faceless figures cloaked in shadow derives from a news photograph of migrants waiting at a border—the only work in the show to be based on an unmanipulated, “real” image.

Finally, a group of four canvases based on 3D-printed figurines of actual people feature individuals that in different ways read as quintessentially American. Appearing at once uncannily lifelike and frozen in time, the people are rendered with an increased feeling of dimensionality, hinting at their status as objects. Executed on a more intimate scale that brings the viewer face-to-face with the subjects depicted, these paintings are meant to project optimism. However, Tuymans has bestowed the canvases with an ashen underlayer, coupled with a thin treatment of paint, causing the figures to appear as if they were never alive to begin with. *Hall of Fame* (2025) features a figure donning the yellow NFL Hall of Fame jacket and holding a football between his hands as he stares vacantly ahead, a champion of the most American of pastimes. Likewise, *The Family* (2025) features a group portrait of three generations clustered together, smiling brightly while receding before our very eyes, underscoring the impossibility of a certain kind of reality.

Born in 1958 in Mortsel, Belgium, Luc Tuymans is one of the most important painters of his generation. The artist has been featured in numerous solo exhibitions at prestigious institutions worldwide. An in-situ temporary mural by the artist, *L’Orphelin*, was on view at the Valentin de Boulogne rotunda in the Musée du Louvre, Paris, in 2024–2025. In 2024, the UCCA Center for Contemporary Art, Beijing, presented *The Past*, a major exhibition of the artist’s work. Other solo presentations include those held at Palazzo Grassi, Venice (2019); De Pont Museum, Tilburg, The Netherlands (2019); Museum aan de Stroom (MAS), Antwerp (2016), which traveled to the National Portrait Gallery, London (2016); Qatar Museums Gallery – Al Riwaq, Doha (2015); Menil Collection, Houston (2013); the Wexner Center for the Arts, Columbus, Ohio (2009), which traveled to San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, Dallas Museum of Art, Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago, and BOZAR – Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels; and Tate Modern, London (2004), which traveled to K21 Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen, Düsseldorf.

The artist has received numerous awards and honors, including the Medal of Honor, International Congress of Contemporary Painting (ICOCEP), Porto, Portugal (2019); the Coutts Contemporary Art Foundation Award, Zurich (2000); and the Flemish Culture Award for Visual Arts (1993). His works are featured in museum collections worldwide, including the Art Institute of Chicago; Centre Pompidou, Paris; Fondazione Prada, Milan; Los Angeles County Museum of Art; The Museum of Modern Art, New York; National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC; The National Museum of Art, Osaka; Pinakothek der Moderne, Munich; Pinault Collection, Paris; Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York; San Francisco Museum of Modern Art; and Tate, United Kingdom.

One of the first artists to be represented by David Zwirner, Tuymans has had numerous solo exhibitions at the gallery since joining its roster in 1994. In May 2023, David Zwirner presented *The Barn*, a solo exhibition of Tuymans’s work, at the gallery’s 537 West 20th Street location in New York. This was the artist’s seventeenth show with the gallery and his first solo presentation in the United States since 2016. Previous shows at David Zwirner include *Eternity* (2022); *Monkey Business* (2021); *Good Luck* (2020); *Le Mépris* (2016); *The Shore* (2015); *The Summer is Over* (2013); *Allo!* (2012); *Corporate* (2010); *Forever*, *The Management of Magic* (2008); *Proper* (2005); *Fortune* (2003); *Mwana Kitoko: Beautiful White Man*

(2000); *Security* (1998); *The Heritage* (1996); *Francis Picabia and Luc Tuymans: Paintings* (1995); and *Superstition* (1994).

Tuymans's catalogue raisonné of paintings, from 1972 to 2018, is available from David Zwirner Books and Yale University Press. The three volumes feature full-color images and documentation of more than five hundred paintings.

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