Catalogue

Season VI
29.IX.2017 – 04.II.2018

Blauw. Ceci n'est pas une couleur
Piet Stockmans & Frederik Vercruysse
Duo Show

Piet Stockmans and Frederik Vercruysse converse around the theme *Blauw. Ceci n'est pas une couleur*. Stockmans, master of porcelain and inventor of his famous *Stockmansblauw*, and Vercruysse, talented architecture and interior design photographer, inhabit the space through artistic installations and tactile and visual assemblages.

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Blauw: Ceci n'est pas une couleur.

From Belgian Limburg to Antwerp, two men meet at the heart of a space-time that belongs to them: Piet Stockmans and Frederik Vercruysse. With abstraction as an art that is free and liberated from stereotypes, the two creators preserve and transcend, each in their own way, the detail, the setting, the treatment of light and colour: a striking whiteness, a cobalt blue with deep nuances and densities, a sense of elegance, of folds, of tension, of flatness, of twists that filter the material, throwing their shadow or illuminating the matter with a sudden clarity.

On the occasion of this duo exhibition, Piet Stockmans and Frederik Vercruysse converse around the theme *Blauw. Ceci n'est pas une couleur*. Stockmans, master of porcelain and inventor of his famous *Stockmansblauw*, and Vercruysse, talented architecture and interior design photographer, inhabit the space through artistic installations and tactile and visual assemblages. The three successive rooms of the Spazio Nobile gallery are thus occupied by unique works or limited editions from these two protagonists with a singular sensibility.

Giving form to the object, the landscape, a space, bringing the inert to life, conjuring up an image, an object or a setting with a soul, is a process the two artists pursue naturally. The alchemy between the two creators draws the gaze towards a new way of perceiving the applied arts, design and photography. The mindset in which the exhibition was developed is to insert the visitor into a particular universe that moves beyond the reality of porcelain or photography.

THE GENIUS OF WHITE CLAY

"53 years ago, I came into contact with porcelain. I couldn't have imagined how it would occupy my entire existence... yet it has been my medium now for more than 50 years. I never really had a taste for porcelain itself, rather for clay, plaster, water, kneading, sanding, shaping, rubbing ... but not so much for the porcelain that makes up the finished product, with its rather traditional story. If I had found myself, at the beginning of my career, in 1963, in a paper factory, I would have made similar works, and I would have hung the books on the walls," recounts Piet Stockmans.

The late and renowned curator of Gent's SMAK, Jan Hoet, described Stockmans as *the porcelain man*. His artisanal expertise enables him navigate between art, design and industry without worrying about the borders between the disciplines. What interests him is the concept and the search for meaning. Renewing the medium using a technical and in-depth knowledge, turning porcelain into an artistic substance, simultaneously sensual and diaphanous.

FOCUSSING ON PRESENCE

While architecture is omnipresent in his work as a photographer, Frederik Vercruysse explores photography as a composition, building on rectilinear forms, shadow and light, and a colour palette that is very close to that of a painter. He translates this perspective as much in his still lifes as in his photographs of architecture, landscape, interiors that appear as *tableaux vivants*, microarchitectures and miniatures with an abstract aesthetic.

His images reveal a presence and a search for balance, harmony, silence. It is up to the observer to feel and to create this total experience of the image, which thus becomes open to free interpretation. Although Vercruysse focuses on positioning, the distance he gives us between the images, the rhythm and the cadence of the perspective, he also takes into account the spontaneous relationship between his photographs and the steadfastly strong and delicate pieces of Piet Stockmans.

FLAT LIGHT, SWATHS OF COLOUR

This exhibition explores a mode of representation that is close to the art of the Flemish or Italian Renaissance but that, rather than emphasising the subject, instead focusses on its abstraction using lines, colours and shapes. The rendering of Stockmans and Vercruysses' white and matte surfaces evokes tempera painting, the Italian frescoes of Fra Angelico or Piero della Francesca, as in Vercruysse's *Maria*, in which the overexposed face of the Madonna with child dissolves in the light. Vercruysse combines old techniques with his own unique and innovative processes, and treats photography as a painter would: thin layers, soft and very bright colours, and blurred contours emphasising the intrinsic transparency. The visual impact is strengthened, as with the works of Piet Stockmans, who uses the whiteness of kaolin - white clay - to make the cobalt blue vibrate, unenamelled to bring out the surface luminosity, the delicate aspect of the porcelain. The blue combined with the whiteness, in a biscuit - a soft or hard porcelain -, cooked without glaze at high temperature (from 1200 to 1400 ° C), accentuates the three-dimensional quality of the sculpture.

A GEOLOGY OF THE IMAGE

The photosensitive paper, the mould from which the shapes emerge that then shrink in the firing, these are all white surfaces on which an image could be printed, a more or less liquid paste poured, or the immaculate space preserved. These support surfaces allow a regular and compact rendering, textured or animated with a movement, the stroke of a brush. This sense and this capturing of the original material and of the composition are common traits to Stockmans and Vercruysse.

Each uses repetitive lines, such as the Plexiglas-covered *Porcelain On Paper*, boxes holding thin porcelain plaques, flat or folded, Stockmans's books in relation to his installation of 400 elements in *Stockmansblauw* porcelain, and the *GV Windows* photographs of Vercruysse. There are also the abstract forms, open to the imagination, the layers and successive planes that lead to the controlled freedom in the mould or the framing of the image. An invitation to a voyage within the visible and invisible, simultaneously tactile, visual and poetic. Stockmans uses the shrinking of the porcelain by keeping it in its mould in several of the pieces exhibited – including the

Square Plate and *Dish*, the *Round Dish*, the *Wounded Vase*, The *Poor Remnants*, the *Wind Lights* and the *Soft Blue Oval Vase*, while Vercruysse abstracts the subject by keeping only the colour and contours.

In this geology of the image, Stockmans and Vercruysse also share that culture of minerality which is the focus of Spazio Nobile's exhibitions. By reducing ornamentation in their essential and existential approach, the two creators give form to the idea of *Blauw. Ceci n'est pas une couleur*. More than a pigment, it is a primary colour that oscillates on the border between shadow and light: the ultramarine of cobalt, from sky to sea, from the still image to the porcelain piece. The communion occurs: Stockmans's *Tower in Blue*, *Tower of Babel* and *Examples of a Landscape* are variations on the theme of life, human fragility and entropy.

BLUE : AN ARTISTIC MEDIUM?

Mystery and a feeling of gravity, the shadows expand, the light diffuses across the surfaces of the works, colour floods the material, opaque or translucent. Swaths of colour, flat and low-angled light. The composition is paramount and primordial. The lines are frontal, rather like portrait photography.

The blue blends with other colours, and is made palpable through the frosted glass. Vercruysse abstracts the composition by reframing the images on the rolled glass through which can be seen the colour. The blurred translucidity, the presence of coloured shadows, the absence of decoration, bring the aesthetic to the forefront. The control of the rays of light preserves the intensity of the colour, while creating a sensitive, intimate, oceanic construction, which he himself calls *Atlantic*. The same holds true for the *Vivaio / Blue Moon* diptych that he decomposes and punctuates graphically. *Fattoria / Blue Tiles*, *GV Window, Pool Blue*, *Garden*, *End of the Day*, *Yellow Tape* and *Paint Pot* are all abstract variations on architecture and on colour that fades and revives in the light. The blue delineates the spaces, creating the illusion of volume, as with Stockmans's vases with collapsed collars. The spectator is left free to appropriate the work.

Lise Coirier, August 2017

Piet Stockmans

vases with grey flaps

2012-2013
porcelain, H. 130 cm

vases with blue flaps

2004
porcelain, Ø 8 x H. 32 cm

overvol (Overcrowded)

2012
porcelain,
Ø 40 x H. 4 cm

omgevallen (Collapse)

2006
porcelain,
Ø 36 x H. 4 cm

vase

2012
porcelain,
Ø 26 x H. 26 cm

Plate with 55 glasses

2000
porcelain,
Ø 40 x H. 4 cm

two blue cups falling over

2017
porcelain,
Ø 32 x H. 5 cm

still life with six porcelain cups

2017
porcelain,
90 x 15 x 5 cm

4 x 6 unique cups

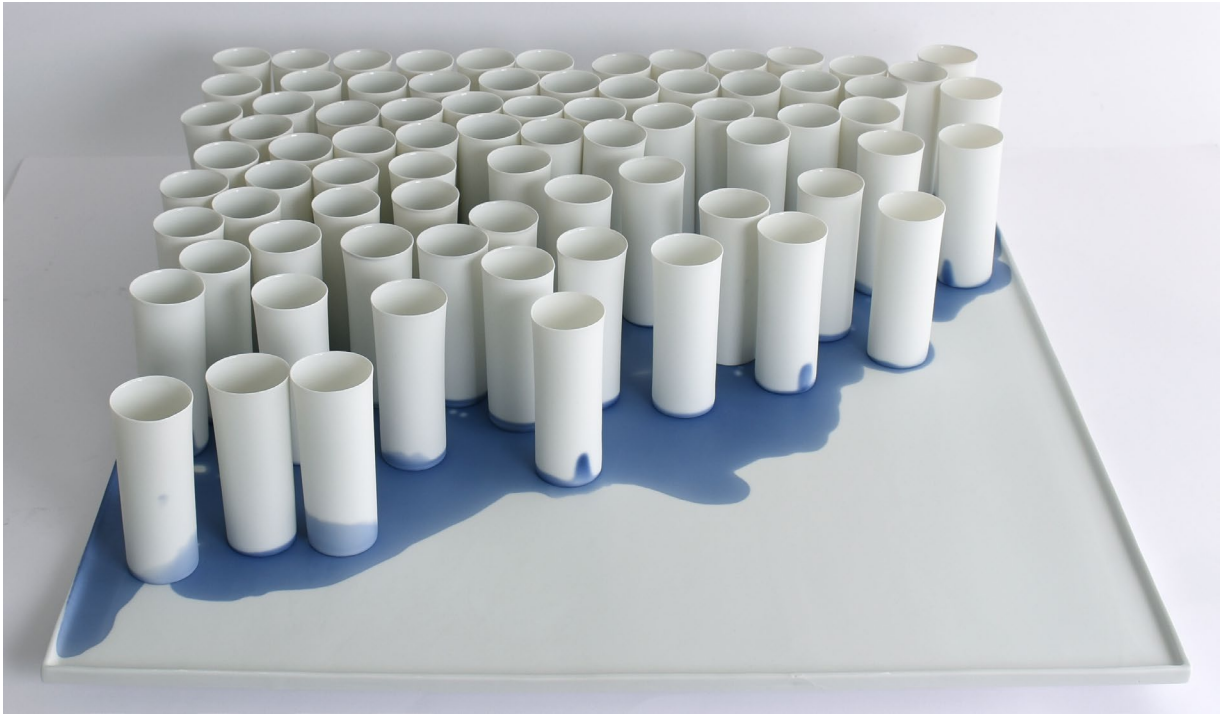
2017
porcelain

4 x 6 unique cups

2017
porcelain

plateau with 75 champagne glasses with blue bottoms

2017
porcelain,
61 x 61 x 11 cm



square dish

2013
shrunk porcelain
in a mould,
26 x 26 x 8 cm

square dish

2016
shrunk porcelain
in a mould,
21 x 18 x 20 cm

round dishes

2017
porcelain,
Ø 40 x H. 30 cm

round plates

2017
porcelain,
36 x 36 cm

square plates

2017
porcelain,
40 x 30 cm

a soft blue oval vase

2017
blue porcelain
in a mould,
60 x 8 x 20 cm

dish with a cuboid shape

2016
porcelain
in a mould,
36 x 36 x 10 cm

wind lights

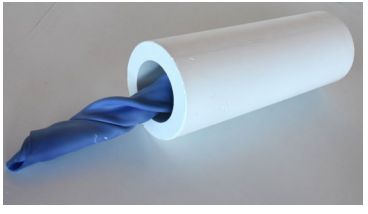
2016
porcelain,
30 x 15 x 15 cm

round dish

2016
blue porcelain
in a mould,
36 x 36 x 10 cm

wounded vase

2016
blue porcelain
in a mould,
50 x 14 x 14 cm

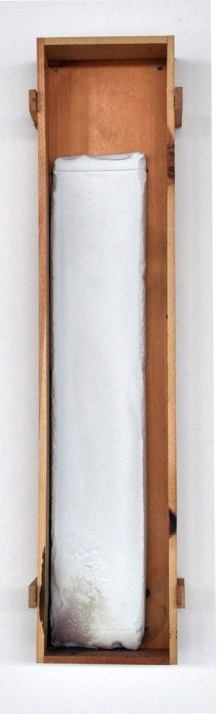


poor remnants (from the 'poor' series)

2016
porcelain,
24 x 13 x 7 cm

elongated chest

2012
shrunk porcelain,
71 x 16 x 7 cm



Tower of Babel

2017
porcelain,
Ø 40 x H. 30 cm

tower in blue

2017
porcelain,
Ø 40 x H. 30 cm

tower in half-blue

2017
porcelain,
Ø 40 x H. 30 cm

example of a landscape

2017
porcelain,
Ø 40 x H. 4 cm

example of a landscape

2017
porcelain,
100 x 35 x 4 cm

example of a landscape

2017
porcelain,
65 x 65 x 1 cm

stille getuigen (Silent Witnesses)

2017
porcelain,
55 x 52 x 1 cm

wilde strippen (Wanted To Strip)

2017
porcelain,
30 x 50 x 15 cm

het blauwe trappenboek (The Blue Stair Book)

2016
porcelain under plexiglas,
24 x 13 x 7 cm

blauw boek (Blue Book)

2016
handmade paper
and porcelain,
55 x 25 x 4 cm

boekje handleiding voor waaiers (A Manual For Fans)

2017
porcelain,
20 x 40 x 3 cm

draaitrappenboekje (Turntable Booklet)

2017
porcelain,
23 x 34 x 6 cm

Box with glazed porcelain plates
1987
porcelain,
35 x 11 x 5 cm, multiple

Box of porcelain rods
1987
porcelain,
10 x 10 x 10 cm, multiple

Box with folded porcelain plates
1987
porcelain,
27 x 9 x 6 cm,
multiple

vallende vazen (The Fallen Vases)

2017
porcelain installation including eleven vases,
each Ø 30 x 130 cm

→ *The Fallen Vases*

Tour & Taxis at Brussels Design Market,
23-24 September 2017

all photos : © Studio Stockmans

wall installation

2017
400 porcelain elements

Frederik Vercruysse

GV Window

2016
40 x 60 cm
ed. 5+2 a.p. - framed, signed and dated

Atlantic with yellow dot

2017
95 x 140 cm
ed. 5+2 a.p. - framed, signed and dated

Atlantic with blue shirt

2017
60 x 80 cm
ed. 5+2 a.p.
framed, signed
and dated

Atlantic with salmon coat

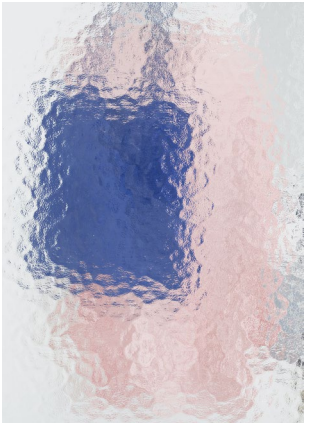
2017
60 x 80 cm
ed. 5+2 a.p.
framed, signed
and dated

Atlantic with yellow jacket

2017
60 x 80 cm
ed. 5+2 a.p.
framed, signed
and dated

Atlantic with blue bag

2017
60 x 80 cm
ed. 5+2 a.p.
framed, signed
and dated



Vivaio doorway

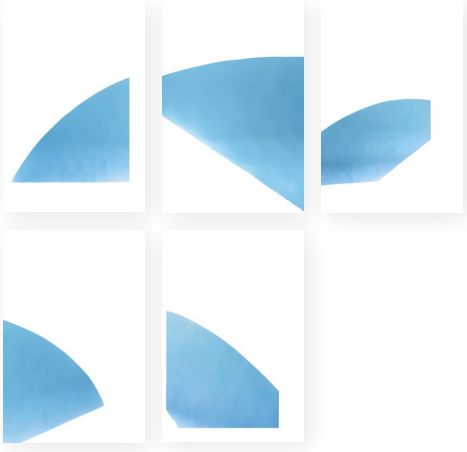
2015
60 x 90 cm
ed. 5+2 a.p. - framed, signed and dated

Vivaio wall

2015
60 x 90 cm
ed. 5+2 a.p. - framed, signed and dated

Vivaio / Blue Moon / Detail

2015-2017
14 x 20 cm each
ed. 5+2 a.p. - framed, signed and dated



Paint Pot

2015
40 x 54 cm
ed. 5+2 a.p. - framed, signed and dated

Yellow Tape

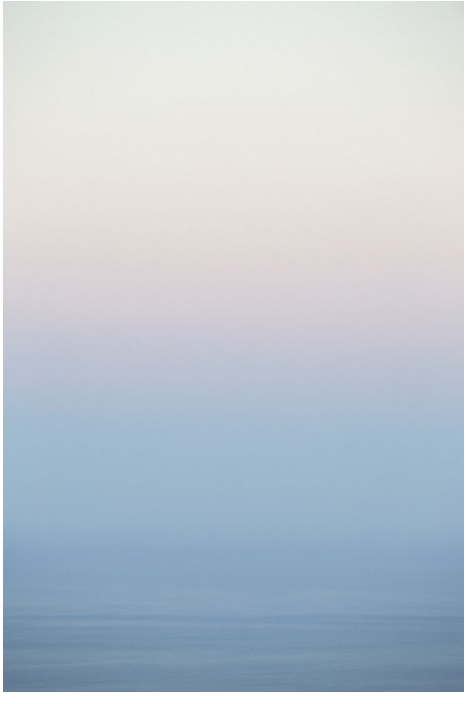
2015
40 x 54 cm
ed. 5+2 a.p. - framed, signed and dated

Fattoria / Blue Tiles

2015
60 x 80 cm
ed. 5+2 a.p. - framed, signed and dated

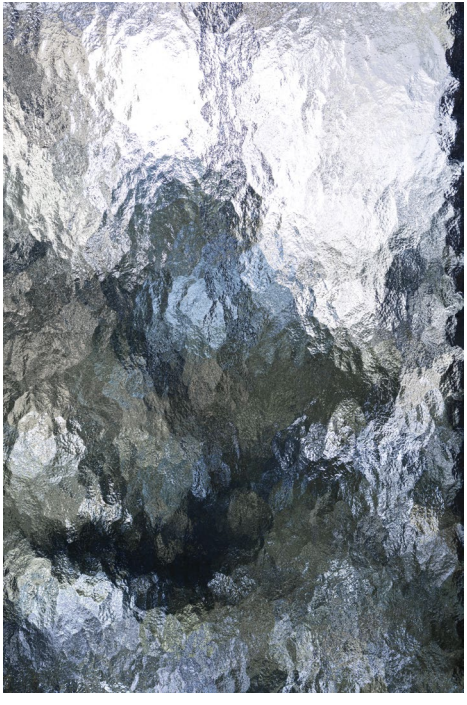
End of the day

2017
93 x 140 cm
ed. 5+2 a.p. - framed, signed and dated



Garden

2016
80 x 120 cm
ed. 5+2 a.p. - framed, signed and dated



Pool Blue

2017
50 x 70 cm
ed. 5+2 a.p. - framed, signed and dated

Piet Stockmans

Born in Leopoldsburg (Belgium) in 1940, Piet Stockmans this year celebrates the 30th anniversary of his studio. Living on the site of Genk's C-Mine, his career fluctuates between art, the applied arts and industrial design. For nearly 30 years, he taught product design at KHLim in Genk and the Design Academy Eindhoven, and collaborated with industry – notably 25 years with Royal Mosa. New ideas and experiments continue to nourish his work as an artist-ceramicist, ranging from unique or multiple pieces of applied art, to integrations of his porcelain works, to architecture. Cultural ambassador for Flanders in 1995, winner of the Henry Van de Velde Career Award (Flanders Design) in 1998, his works have been included in major exhibitions (solo or group) and have been the subject of memorable installations. Stockmans has seen his creations take their place in the largest Belgian and international collections: PMMK Ostende, Designmuseum Gent, Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, MAD New York, Met New York, Mint Museum of Craft and Design, Musée national / Cité de la Céramique de Sèvres, V&A London, etc. He has also led many workshops and conferences in major art and design schools, and has participated in important biennials of ceramics.

Frederik Vercruysse

Originally from Staden, then Antwerp, Frederik Vercruysse has imposed his photographic eye for more than a decade, cultivating a taste for architecture. The very good quality of his documentary and artistic images led to international renown. His minimalist, ethereal style and the graphic dimension of his photographs have allowed him to build a successful career as a photographer, whether for the media or in the design, fashion and luxury sectors (WSJ Magazine, T Magazine, Hermès, Delvaux, Limited Edition, Valentino, etc). His first monograph, *Index 2006-2016*, was recently published by Luster, focussing on his work with fashion and lifestyle brands and on his artistic vision. He is currently represented by the agency Initials LA in Benelux, and by Quadriga worldwide. Spazio Nobile is presenting his third exhibition as an artist-photographer.

Save the date

Vernissage

28.IX.2017, 18.00 - 22.00

Conference by Piet Stockmans
A Highlight of Design September

19.IX.2017, 20.15 — at Flagey, Studio 3

The Fallen Vases Installation by Piet Stockmans

23 - 24.IX.2017 — at Brussels Design Market

Sunday Brunch

15.X - 19.XI - 17.XII. 2017 & 14.I.2018 - 28.I.2018
(during BRAFA Art Fair)
12.00-16.00

Spazio Nobile
by Pro Materia Gallery
Contemporary Applied Arts,
Design & Photography

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Me - sa / wo - za / Wed - Sat,
11.00-18.00
& sur rendez-vous /
op afspraak / by appointment

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Graphic design by
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Frederik
Vercruysse
Maria

2015
12 x 18 cm
ed. 5+2
signed
and dated

By opening Spazio Nobile in April 2016, in the dynamic and cosmopolitan Ixelles neighbourhood of Brussels (Belgium), Lise Coirier and Gian Giuseppe Simeone have united their passions for design and art history, initiating a dialogue between contemporary applied arts, design and photography. Commissioning installations that are both experimental and artistic, with a particular sensibility to everything connected to nature and minerality, the gallery organises four to five exhibits each year, dedicated to both rising and established talents. Without creating borders between the disciplines, the visual arts interact with the fine arts. This sixth season, dedicated to two Belgian creators – master of porcelain Piet Stockmans and architecture and interior photographer Frederik Vercruysse –, will again nourish the imagination of spectators and collectors.

From 22 to 25 February 2018, Spazio Nobile will take part in Collect – The International Art Fair for Contemporary Objects, at the Saatchi Gallery, London, presented by the Crafts Council UK, with a solo show of Piet Stockmans.

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CONTEMPORARY APPLIED ARTS, DESIGN, PHOTOGRAPHY