

## **Johan Muyle: A Contemporary Belgian Artist**

### **Biography**

Johan Muyle was born in Charleroi in 1956. He lives and works in Belgium.

He has exhibited in numerous private galleries, art centers, and museums worldwide, including in Germany, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, China, Cuba, South Korea, Denmark, Spain, France, Italy, Senegal, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Poland, and Portugal.

His works are part of public and private collections in Europe and North America. He regularly participates in international contemporary art fairs and biennials.

### **Artistic Work and Approach**

Johan Muyle primarily produces animated assemblage sculptures. He records his preparatory sketches in A5-format notebooks, which serve as the foundation for the creation of his objects and installations.

In 1991, he decided to leave the intimacy of his studio and travel to Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of the Congo) to meet and collaborate with local artists and craftsmen. During his stays, he worked with Kinshasa-based artist Chéri Samba (their conversation was published in the book *Kin moto Na Bruxelles*) and street children, who created objects under his guidance. These creations were later integrated into sculptures reflecting the artist's impressions of his African travels, addressing themes such as the Mobutu regime, looting, famine, and AIDS.

In 1994, he focused on producing installations composed of monumental animated paintings created in collaboration with billboard painters from Tamil Nadu, in southern India. In 2003, this collaboration resulted in a **1,600 m<sup>2</sup>** animated mural at Brussels-North railway station, titled *I Promise You ('r) a Miracle*.

### **Evolution and Recognition**

Since 2004, Johan Muyle has reactivated his individual practice, producing motorized sculptures that incorporate new technologies. These works are composed of assembled objects collected during his travels or sourced via the Internet. They offer a singular, poetically distanced critical perspective on topics such as:

- the human condition,
- the radicalization of religions,
- the disappearance of collective utopias,
- contemporary social issues.

His unique artistic approach—combining vanitas, carnival-like elements, and humanism—places him within the tradition of Belgian art. He is recognized as one of the most prominent figures in the international contemporary art scene.

Some of his notable exhibitions and acquisitions include:

- *La Belgique visionnaire* (curated by Harald Szeemann) at the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels in 2005,
- *ABC – Art Belge Contemporain* at Le Fresnoy, France, in 2012 (curated by Dominique Païni),
- The acquisition of his monumental work *Het zwarte schaap – Hommage à James Ensor* by the Middelheim Museum in Antwerp,
- A retrospective at **MACs** (Musée des Arts Contemporains du Grand-Hornu) in **2020-2021**.

Johan Muyle is today considered one of the most original and thought-provoking artists on the contemporary Belgian art scene.

Wikipedia, 2023. *Johan Muyle*, Wikipedia. Available at:

[https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johan\\_Muyle](https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johan_Muyle).