



RMSWA

**GENERAL
PRESS FILE**

ROYAL MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS ANTWERP

THE COLLECTION

PRESENTING THE COLLECTION

KAAN Architecten have created new white volumes in the heart of the historic museum. This provides visitors with two museums in one. We continue this division in the way we display our art works. Upon entering you are immediately faced with a choice. Do you want to see the old masters or do you prefer the modern iconoclasts? In the historic galleries you get to see art created before 1880, in the white halls you can enjoy art created after 1880. The link between the two is the Ensor wing, which houses the largest James Ensor collection in the world. Moreover, the KMSKA also holds the largest collection of Rik Wouters and Jules Schmalzigaug. In total, the KMSKA displays over 600 works, carefully selected from a collection of more than 8,400 pieces.

LOANED WORKS

At the end of the 18th century, the Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen (KMSKA) inherited a very fine collection of chefs-d'oeuvre from, for example, the Guild of St Luke and Antwerp's Royal Academy. Acquisitions, gifts and bequests have been added to that founding collection. This is what makes the collection unique, but not of course complete. So the KMSKA supplements works from its own permanent collection with relevant pieces from other institutions and private collectors.

From Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen (NL) – which is closed for major renovation work – we received a five-year loan of six masterpieces. These works not only fill gaps in our own collection, but also offer a transhistorical perspective on the themes in the galleries. So a late landscape by Rubens, missing in our collection, enables us to shed light on Rubens' role in landscape art. In its turn, the prized *Mandrill* by Oskar Kokoschka provides a light-hearted commentary on showy, 17th-century portrait art. Similarly, loans from other institutions, such as the Rijksmuseum, enrich our display of old masters. These sometimes unexpected interventions invite visitors to take a fresh look and consequently see more.

The same applies to the contemporary art we integrate selectively into the galleries, such as work by Luc Tuymans and Berlinde De Bruyckere. These contemporary additions show our own pieces in a contemporaneous light and reinforce the universal stories they tell. Moreover, by collaborating with private collectors, the KMSKA can take a further step towards internationalization. Monumental works by Anish Kapoor and Anselm Kiefer, and Marlene Dumas' intrusive *Give the people what they want*, lend fresh perspectives to our historical and contemporary collections. Marlene Dumas' piece, together with work by De Bruyckere and the Italian baroque painter Artemisia Gentileschi, allows us to compensate somewhat for the historical dearth of female artists in the collection.

The KMSKA's permanent presentation of work from its collection is flexible and dynamic. When works are loaned to other museums, the empty places are filled with short-term loans or pieces from its own reserve. Indeed, our storeroom abounds in treasures which can provide a fresh perspective on the existing presentation. This dynamic stimulates new insights and research into what we show and why, and is often replenished with new donations that lead to reflection.

THE RESTORATION STUDIO

The KMSKA is one of the few Flemish museums with its own restoration studio. It was founded in April 1999. When the museum closed in 2011, the restoration studio moved to a studio outside Antwerp. Here, the studio ran as never before. One hundred and thirty-three paintings and sculptures received conservation treatment. Extra attention was paid to works on paper, and to frames. Meanwhile, the restoration studio is back in the museum. You can follow some of the operations from behind a glass wall.

Rubens' most monumental masterpieces do not fit in the restoration studio. Of necessity, they are given a revamp in the Rubens Gallery. A special venue has been set up for this purpose: Studio Rubens. For two years, restorers have been working on immense scaffolds to make the gigantic altarpiece *Enthroned Madonna Adored by Saints* by Rubens sparkle like it used to. Visitors can follow the restoration from a distance.

VISIT & OFFER

RADIO BART

To look differently and see more, that's what you do with Radio Bart. Because Bart, Youssri, Ditmar and Lesley are curious about the works of art surrounding them. Being blind, they invite you to join them and look at art together. Step inside their mobile radio studio for a good chat with surprising perspectives. And, from now on, look at art differently *and* more actively.

THE TEN

'The Ten' is an adventurous journey of discovery through the museum for children and their families. Together with Opera House De Munt, artist Christophe Coppens created ten surprising installations throughout the museum. He got his inspiration from striking details in the paintings. The works invite you to look at art in a different way. Each installation is accompanied by creative assignments for children, collected in a free booklet.

KMSKA DRAWS!

The KMSKA challenges the visitor to liberate the inner artist. Pick up drawing materials at a KMSKA Draws! distribution point and interact artistically with the museum. There are three levels of experience: 'I can't draw', 'Creative Type' or 'Fancy a challenge'. During events, the museum organises free guided tours with an artist guide.

OPEN STUDIO

A place where anyone can be creative. In the Open Studio, visitors can choose from a range of workshops, each accompanied by enthusiastic studio guides. One time, you get to work with colour and shape through collages. Another time, you look at movements in art. The workshops are open to everyone: young and not so young, art lover or connoisseur.

MULTIMEDIA

In the KMSKA you don't just look at the arts, you experience them. Via the museum app and the in-depth screens, you dive into the masterpieces. Or walk in virtual reality through the imposing painting studio of the old masters. The immersive space takes you into projections of works of art and opens up a world full of eye-catching details.

MUSEUM APPLICATION

The KMSKA app facilitates your visit. Lost your way momentarily in the museum? The app is your gps. Looking for a specific work of art? The app guides you smoothly through the collection catalogue. The app also includes audio plays and audio tours that draw you into artful stories. Dutch is not your native language? All commentaries and audio tours (including the audio story of *Turning Heads*) are available in English, French, German as well as in Flemish sign language and international sign. The same applies to all hall texts and labels, which have also been translated into Spanish, Italian, Russian and Chinese.

SCHOOLS

Our interactive school offer is structured by age group. It stimulates all the senses and pays attention to the different talents of the student. For younger children, the programmes focus on creativity and expression. For young adults, they connect to current events. In this way, we encourage them to think critically, without losing sight of their everyday environment.

ARTISTS IN RESIDENCE

Rubens, Van Eyck, Fouquet, Ensor, Magritte, Memling, Rodin, ... What effect do they have on contemporary artists? Our Artists in Residence show and tell. Over a five-year period, a first batch of twenty-two artists, groups or collectives immersed themselves in the museum's collections and gave it a contemporary interpretation in words, music, images, performances, ... In the meantime, a new batch of artists in residence is already drawing inspiration from the old and modern masters. They share their artistic interpretations particularly during KMSKA LATE.

KMSKA LATE

Thursday nights at KMSKA are a new tradition. The museum is open every Thursday evening until 10pm for anyone with an entrance ticket. KMSKA LATE gives you chance to stroll around galleries at dusk to enjoy the collection. Chance to peep behind the scenes to learn about how the museum works. And to enjoy both a cool drink and contemporary interpretations of our art. KMSKA LATE is your special chance to dream. Week after week after week...

KMSKASHOP AND COFFEEBAR

Visitors can extend their museum experience with a visit to the KMSKAshop. The Finest Shop offers a high-quality range of merchandising in which the museum's own works of art play the leading role. As a creative hub, the shop also offers an exclusive range in collaboration with Christophe Coppens and Essentiel. All this beauty is complemented by books and catalogues. Visitors can also take a break during their museum visit in the shop's coffee bar. We will treat you to a delicate moment of happiness with products from renowned Antwerp houses such as Cross Roast, the Theefactorie, brewery De Koninck and the Taartfabrik.

MADONNA GRAND CAFÉ

With its stylish interior, Madonna is without a doubt the new hotspot of the city. Antwerp citizens, day trippers or casual passers-by. Everyone is welcome, with or without a museum ticket. During the day you can go there for a lunch, something sweet or a drink. In the evening Madonna transforms into a fine dining restaurant and cocktail bar.

MUSEUM BUILDING

MASTER PLAN

To present seven centuries of top art in optimal conditions: that was the starting point of the renovation of the KMSKA. The phased master plan took into account both the past and the future. A sleek new museum volume was inserted into four courtyards so that the historic 'architectural shell' remained intact. KAAN Architecten's architectural concept takes the visitor on an adventurous journey through two worlds in one museum, two contrasting and conversing museums. A restoration that shows maximum respect for the centuries-old architecture and at the same time responds beautifully to the contemporary museum collection.

FAÇADE

Tormented by weather and time, the museum's façades had for years been left a dull grey. The mosaics, too, had to endure a lot. In 2016, PERSPECTIV architecten started prospecting for the building. Two years later, contractor Artes Woudenberg began renovating the southern façade. Each façade took six months to complete. After the meticulous restoration, the façades have regained their original hues of pink, yellow, orange, grey and blue.

MOSAIC

During the restoration of the KMSKA, the mosaic floors were also given a facelift. Unfortunately, the floor at the top of the stairs - just before the entrance to the museum - could not be saved. So we opted for an ambitious alternative: a wondrous welcome carpet in stone, which is also the largest art mosaic in the country.

GARDEN

The story of the KMSKA starts outside. Because the museum garden is also the first museum space. Here, you can stroll among impressive sculptures from the KMSKA collection. But above all, this green oasis is a place that brings people from the neighbourhood together. A wonderful haven of peace in the bustling Zuid.

FUNDRAISING

BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS

The KMSKA is a cultural entrepreneur. The museum actively sought collaboration with entrepreneurs. Our main partner Delen Private Bank came on board first and set the tone. DCA, Maison Vervloet 1905, Port of Antwerp-Bruges, BMW and many others followed. The more than 75 members of the museum's business club, the "Club Fouquet", meet within the museum's exceptional setting. Together with these partners, we continue to build the finest museum.

PATRONAGE

Without donations, the collection of the Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp would never have become as impressive as it is today. Works of art received through donations and bequests represent no less than 40% of the museum's collection. KMSKA keeps the tradition of donations alive and kicking and can continue to count on the important support of patrons.

SUPPORT FROM FUNDS AND NATIONAL LOTTERY PLAYERS

Not only companies and individuals, but also various funds contribute to the museum's image and appeal. Thanks to the generous support of the Baillet Latour Fund and National Lottery players, among others, important masterpieces from the collection could be conserved. This allows visitors to see these restored works in prime condition.