



Fred Bervoets 2015 - 2019 Paul Huvenne

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- New work by one of Belgium's most legendary artists

Fred Bervoets (b. 1942) is a legend in the Belgian art world and revered by the younger generation of artists.

For years he has made both expansive, teeming artworks and extremely traditional prints, the latter of which has seen him develop his own unique technique. Although his spontaneous and gestural style seems to accord with Expressionism, Fauvism or Cobra art, Bervoets is above all an idiosyncratic artist who uncompromisingly treads his own path and gives free reign to his imagination.

A simple anecdote from a friend in a café might provide the catalyst for a work in which the story assumes new proportions and adopts its own twists. His personal life also engenders self-portraits or other types of artworks, all crowned with an essential degree of self-mockery and irony. Bervoets allows everyday events to expand into miniature universes governed by their own rules and laws. The *horror vacui* of his large paintings conceals countless details, all of which contribute to the narrative.

Bervoets' works might seem playful but they are tinged with melancholy. His caricatural figures are compelled to stand their ground in a denuded world. They achieve this by completely surrendering, with the necessary humour, to the inevitability of life. In recent years, Bervoets has increasingly presented himself as a *peintre-graveur*. This means he does not use the etching technique as a method of reproduction but as a means of expression.

Each and every one of his chaotic and colourful works testifies to his pictorial passions, consummate skill and unbridled energy. This book presents the evocative work produced by Fred Bervoets between 2015 and 2019, including his most recent *Night Drawings* series, the masterful embodiment of the nocturnal reveries and memories that persistently haunt his mind.

In 1984 **Paul Huvenne** gained his Art History PhD at Ghent University through his study of the sixteenth-century Bruges-based painter and cartographer Pieter Pourbus. Since 1973 he has been involved as a researcher at Antwerp's Centrum Rubenianum, which is concerned with the study of Rubens. In 1984 he became the curator in charge of the Rubens House. From 1997 to 2014 he was general director of the Royal Museum of Fine Arts Antwerp, which he comprehensively revitalised, re-establishing its international reputation. He has taught at the University of Antwerp, the Vrije Universiteit Brussel and KU Leuven. He organises high-profile exhibitions and has a special interest in the role of the visual arts in contemporary society.

