

GALERIE NATHALIE OBADIA

BRUXELLES

## JORIS VAN DE MOORTELT

*L'apocalypse excite les nerfs de la nef*

Thursday October 24 - Saturday January 11, 2025



*Mijn hoofd is een zieke vulkaan, 2023. Oil on linen and 3D frame*

Galerie Nathalie Obadia is pleased to present *L'apocalypse excite les nerfs de la nef*, Joris Van de Moortel's new exhibition at its Brussels gallery. A corpus of recent works—some of which were recently showcased in the *Fragmenten, Doorgangen, Afdaling en Terugkeer* (*Fragments, Passages, Descent and Return*) exhibition at the cultural centre De Warande near Antwerp—is displayed throughout the gallery. This collection invites visitors on a journey into the heart of the *Apocalypse*<sup>1</sup> and the human condition, exploring themes of destruction and rebirth through a deeply personal artistic language. For more than twenty years, Joris Van de Moortel has developed a dynamic and diverse body of work. His paintings, watercolours, drawings, videos, sculptures, and models—often presented as substantial installations—are sometimes marked by his signature rendered in neon light.

All of the artist's works come to life during his performances, which are often musical and incorporate hybrid elements such as wax, fire, and glass. This diverse range of practices imbues his work with a spiritual dimension, akin to that of an alchemist. Like this figure, he embraces an approach of continual exploration and discovery. Large oil paintings inspired by Albrecht Dürer's series of apocalyptic engravings, a series of watercolours that draw on the work of painter and printmaker William Blake, a video set in a phantasmagorical universe, neon guitars, and self-portraits engulfed in flames all arise from his explorations. Joris Van de Moortel seeks to navigate the chaos of the contemporary world.

<sup>1</sup> In this new body of work, Joris Van de Moortel draws inspiration from Albrecht Dürer's *Apocalypse*, a series of 15 woodcuts created between 1496 and 1498, depicting scenes from the *Book of Revelation*, the final book of the New Testament.

# GALERIE NATHALIE OBADIA

BRUXELLES

The artist draws inspiration from the works of his predecessors, updating them for our contemporary context while integrating personal references. His interpretations of *The Temptation of Saint Anthony* by Jan Brueghel the Elder stand alongside works referencing Dürer's *Apocalypse* and the poems of William Blake. The English painter, whose utterly unique genius was considered madness at the start of the 19th century, sought to redefine the dichotomy between good and evil. In his famous poem *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, William Blake explores the vital energy and desire that arise from Hell, contrasted with the Reason that emanates from Heaven. He rejects the religious dualism of Body and Soul, celebrating the reconciliation of opposites to reveal the greatness of humanity. For him, each element must be bound to its antagonist, like the two sides of the same coin. The current exhibition reflects on this duality, with Joris Van de Moortel going so far as to depict The fall from both heavenly and earthly perspectives works of the same format that interact like the two poles of a magnet.

In this new body of work, Joris Van de Moortel continues his exploration of binary oppositions, as evidenced by his ongoing reflection on the mythological figure Marsyas<sup>2</sup>, a theme he delved into extensively during his last solo exhibition in Paris. By revisiting this figure across time, the artist portrays himself as both satyr and God, victor and martyr, to underscore the complexity of human existence. The myth of Marsyas also allowed the artist to reflect on the process of flaying: a brutal way of gaining access to a being's interior, either as punishment or as an object of clinical study, shrouded in secrecy<sup>3</sup>. Joris Van de Moortel appears to continue this exploration in a large-scale self-portrait, in which his own skull is flayed alive, depicted in a state of full ebullition. The work *Mijn hoofd is een zieke vulkaan (My Head is a Sick Volcano)* embodies the crossing of a threshold that separates the viscera from the epidermis, and by extension, the body from the mind, offering a glimpse into the mysteries of the human condition.

As the Irish philosopher Edmund Burke observed, 'Terror excites extraordinary tension and violent emotions in the nerves.' The title of the exhibition seems to echo this statement, as Joris Van de Moortel's works fully embrace this paradox: paintings, watercolors and video express a need to externalize violent and contradictory emotions. *The Nave* - bringing heaven and earth together - is embodied as an allegory of the world, welcoming the mad into the chaos our society has created. *L'apocalypse excite les nerfs de la nef (Apocalypse excites the nerves of the Nave)* offers a journey through time and space into the heart of the human condition, navigating the mysteries of existence.

---

<sup>2</sup>In Greek mythology, Marsyas, a musical satyr, challenged Apollo, the god of music, and was ultimately defeated. The Muses affirmed Apollo's victory, condemning Marsyas to be hung from a tree and flayed alive.

<sup>3</sup>Stéphane Dumas, *Les peaux créatrice: esthétique de la sécrétion*, Klincksieck, 2014

# GALERIE NATHALIE OBADIA

## BRUXELLES

Born in 1983 in Ghent, Joris Van de Moortel lives and works in Antwerp (Belgium).

He graduated from the Künstlerhaus Bethanien in Berlin (Germany) in 2013 and from the Higher Institute of Fine Arts (HISK) in Ghent (Belgium) in 2009. Joris Van de Moortel is one of the most noticed artists of the Belgian contemporary art scene.

Joris Van de Moortel has received notable solo exhibitions, including *Fragmenten, Doorgangen, Afdaling en Terugkeer* at Cultuurhuis de Warande (Turnhout, Belgium) in 2024 ; *Guitare préparée* at Sint-Lukas Galerie (Brussels, Belgium) in 2019 ; *Cachivage Bugui Bugui* at BOZAR (Palais de Beaux-Arts, Brussels, Belgium) in 2018 ; *Pink Noises*, his first solo exhibition in the United States, at the Savannah College of Art and Design in Atlanta in 2016 ; *Are you interested in architecture?...* at the Be Part Art Centre (Waregem, Belgium) in 2015.

In 2022 and 2023, Joris Van de Moortel had two solo exhibitions *'Why do you tear me from myself?' a tête-à-tête with Marsyas*, at the Galerie Nathalie Obadia in Paris and *Foolhardy Boarding a Lost State of Mind* in his Brussels gallery. In 2019, Galerie Nathalie Obadia exhibited Joris Van de Moortel's new series of pieces on paper at the Art on Paper fair (BOZAR, Brussels, Belgium), and also devoted a second solo exhibition to him in Paris entitled *The ne'er do wells set out for a dubious pilgrimage* on the occasion of which his first monograph was published.

Joris Van de Moortel has participated in numerous manifesto group exhibitions, including *The Agprognostic Temple Presents: Voices From The Underworld* at X-Bowling Art Center (Elefsina, Greece) in 2023 ; *The Floor & The Door* at Platform 6A (Ottegem, Belgium) in 2022 ; *Fiat Lux*, Pilar (Brussels, Belgium), *Watou Arts Festival* (Watou, Belgium) and the Kortrijk Triennial of Contemporary Art (Courtrai, Belgium), *Mirror Infinities* organised by the nomadic art project *The Agprognostic Temple* at Tour & Taxis (Brussels, Belgium) in 2021 ; *Een blik achter de muur* at the Blikfabriek (Antwerp, Belgium) in 2020 ; *Eyes East Bound* at the 13th edition of the Cairo International Art Biennial (Egypt) in 2019 ; *Danser Brut* au LaM (Lille Métropole Musée d'art moderne, d'art contemporain et d'art brut, Villeneuve d'Ascq, France) in 2018 ; *Ecce Homo* at the Mayer Van Den Bergh Museum (Antwerp, Belgium) in 2017, which brought together some fifty other Belgian artists including Luc Tuymans, Michaël Booremans, Ann Veronica Janssens ; Rebel, Rebel at the MAC's (Museum of Contemporary Arts of the Walloon Federation Brussels, Grand Hornu, Belgium) in 2016 ; *Passion - Fan behaviour and art, a travelling exhibition in 2015 and 2016* at the Ludwig Museum (Budapest, Hungary), Stadtgalerie (Kiel, Germany), Künstlerhaus (Nuremberg, Germany), and Künstlerhaus Bethanien (Berlin, Germany); *Des choses en moins, des choses en plus* at the Palais de Tokyo (Paris, France) in 2014 ; *Upside down Part 2 Let's Dance* at SMAK (Ghent, Belgium) in 2013 ; *Spontaneously* at the Zacheta National Gallery of Art (Warsaw, Poland) in 2012 ; and *Exploded view* at the Centraal Museum (Utrecht, The Netherlands) also in 2012.

In 2021, Joris won the Prix de la Monnaie de Paris followed by a residency to realise his project: *La Médaille et son double*. In 2019, Joris Van de Moortel received the Grand Jury Prize for his participation in the 13th International Art Biennial in Cairo (Egypt). In 2024, two solo exhibitions of Joris Van de Moortel's work are held simultaneously at S.M.A.K. in Ghent and Galerie Nathalie Obadia in Brussels.

His works are included in important institutional and private collections such as the Vehbi Koç Foundation (Istanbul, Turkey); the Dena Foundation for Contemporary Art (Paris, France/New York, USA) ; the Centraal Museum Collection (Utrecht, The Netherlands) ; the Raja Collection (Roissy-en-France, France) ; the Ghisla Art Collection (Locarno, Switzerland) ; the Belfius Art Collection (Brussels, Belgium) and the Collectie Vlaamse Gemeenschap (Brussels, Belgium).

Joris Van de Moortel has been represented by Galerie Nathalie Obadia Paris/ Brussels since 2013.

---

**For further information, please contact Valérie Wille**  
valerie@nathalieobadia.com / + 32 (0)2 648 14 05

---

### Galerie Nathalie Obadia

#### Brussels

Charles Decoster

### Joris Van de Moortel

*L'apocalypse excite les nerfs de la nef*

October 24 - January 11, 2025

### Galerie Nathalie Obadia

#### Paris

Cloître Saint-Merri

### Johanna Mirabel

*Adieu la chair*

September 7 - October 19, 2024

### Jérôme Zonder

*Ras bord*

October 10 - December 14, 2024

### Galerie Nathalie Obadia

#### Paris

Saint-Honoré

### David Reed

*Whirlpool*

September 6 - October 26, 2024

### Laure Prouvost

November 16 - January, 2025