A New Key: Modern Belgian Art from the Simon Collection  
February 10 – July 22, 2007

The McMullen Museum is proud to provide this rare opportunity to see the finest collection of modern Belgian art outside Belgium. Housed in London and France, the Simon Collection has never been displayed in North America. The eighty works in the exhibition include important paintings by René Magritte, James Ensor, Frans van den Bergh, Paul Delvaux, Théo van Rysselberghe, Émile Claus, Leon Spilliaert, and Constant Pemereux among others. Although modernist scholarship has focused on Paris, Berlin, Moscow, and New York as the centers of modern art, this exhibition challenges the canon by highlighting Belgian art. It reveals how the history of modern art looks different when viewed from the vantage point of this “marginal” center—hence the title of the exhibition, A New Key. Accompanying the exhibition is an illustrated catalogue edited by Jeffrey Howe with contributions by Claude Cernuschi, Jeffrey Howe, Sara Levine, Patrick Demou, John J. Michalczyk, Susan A. Michalczyk, and Katharine Nahum.

Curated by Jeffrey Howe, A New Key: Modern Belgian Art from the Simon Collection has been organized by the McMullen Museum. The exhibition has been underwritten by Boston College with major support from St. Life Sciences, an indemnity from the Federal Council on the Arts and the Humanities, and the Patrons of the McMullen Museum.

Museum Opening Will Feature Belgian Music Premieres

The opening celebration for A New Key on February 13 will pair great paintings and sculpture with music by the Robsham. When artists like René Magritte and others were painting in the 1920s and 1930s, the sounds of the popular music floated in the air. Magritte felt a special connection to this music, as his brother Paul was a composer of popular music, and René illustrated many editions of sheet music. European pop of that period was more heavily influenced by classical music than its pop of that period was more heavily influenced by classical music than its European contemporaries. Composers also wrote in a variety of styles such as the tango, waltz, and others. In order to sell their music to a popular audience, these composers combined classical sounds with a lightness that was their own.

Jeffrey Howe, Curator of A New Key, found copies of sheet music connected to Magritte in Brussels during the summer of 2006. He shared them with his colleague Sebastien Bonaito, Director of Bands at Boston College, who arranged the music for modern instruments. The results will be premiered on February 13 by a small student ensemble directed by Bonaito and followed by the release of a recording.

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6 Tuesday
Lowell Humanities Series. Tony Judt reading from his work. Location: TBA. 7:30 p.m. Information: 617-552-5005.

12 Monday
Music in the Alnorium. Trio Lutetia. Anne Marie Chubukov, violin; Jan Pfeiffer, oboe; James Chubukov, piano; with Frances Reis, viola. Beethoven’s Trios c M Op. 3 No 3 and Tchaikovsky’s Piano Quintet in E Major, op. 49. Gasson Hall, Room 101. 4:15 p.m. Information: 617-552-6004.

15 Thursday

15-17 Thursday-Saturday
The Shape of Things. Written by Neil Labute. Directed by Matthew Cullinan ’07. Robsham Theater Arts Center, Born Studio. Admission: $10. Thurs-Fri 7:30 p.m.; Sat 7:00 p.m. Information: 617-552-4005.

17 Saturday
University Wind Ensemble Presents Eluard! This engaging look at dance-inspired music from the wind ensemble repertoire includes music influenced by tango, modern ballet, and Elizabethan music. Gasson Hall. 8:00 p.m. Information: 617-552-5186.

18 Sunday

21-25 Wednesday-Sunday

22 Thursday

22 Sunday
Lowell Humanities Series. Philip Jenkins reading from his work. Location: TBA. 7:30 p.m. Information: 617-552-2095.

25 Sunday

28 April
A Saturday of Chamber Music. Featuring the winner of the Boston College Concerto Competition. Gasson Hall, Room 101. 7:00 p.m. Information: 617-552-8100.

3 May
Gaelic Roots Music, Song, Dance, Workshop, and Lecture Series. Concert: Jerry Fishkin, uillean pipes; Connolly House. 7:00 p.m. Information: 617-552-3928.

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