

**Brewer and artist support WHO in times of COVID19 with "Spatium Spiritus".**

**BRUSSELS, Brewer's House - December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020.**

The world has unexpectedly ended up in an exceptional situation during the past year. At times it seemed as if he had come to a complete stop. Protecting our health and helping to stop the spread of COVID19 has always been the number 1 priority.

In order not to see the healthcare system collapse, the HORECA (Hotel Restaurant & Bars) was considered in many countries as an essential link in the various lockdown measures. During the closure of the HORECA, it became - and it is still clear in many countries at the moment - that the HORECA is much more than a place where you can just eat and drink. HORECA fulfills a connecting role within our society and is in direct relationship with tourism, culture, recreation, events, and manifestations. In addition to its social function, the HORECA also contributes to the well-being of the population.

This observation sparked the ambition of Karl Verhaeghe (from the brewery with the same name in Vichte) to send a positive signal to the world. Indeed, the brewing industry has also been directly affected by the mandatory closure of all leisure activities. Karl Verhaeghe decided last summer to combine his entrepreneurship, sense of creativity, and love for art in a project that would support the hospitality and cultural industries in this strange crisis.

He contacted the abstract artist Lode Laperre, whom he has known for over 30 years, and asked him to make a work of art around beer. Both gentlemen also decided that this joint initiative should not only deliver symbolic value but also generate a financial contribution to the industries in which they both operate.

Lode Laperre isolated himself in his studio and painted a picture, made up of 4 separate paintings. Each section represents one of the basic ingredients of beer, namely water, malt, hops, and yeast. The artist started with microscopic images of the cellular structures of each of these ingredients, then transferred them to the canvas in his own particular style. The result is astonishing, as some great critics in Belgium and abroad testify (see appendix).

Lode Laperre gave his work the name of Spatium Spiritus. *"The name came to my mind whilst creating the painting,"* says Lode. *"The title, from Latin, literally means 'space for the mind' and alludes to the fact that both the consumption of a glass of beer during a good conversation and the experience and practice of the art expand and refresh the mind. 'Spatium' also refers to the spaces between the 4 separate paintings that together form the artwork, while 'Spiritus' also refers to beer as an alcoholic beverage. "*

To further enhance the symbolic value of their collaboration, the initiators decided to fill 4 large bottles (each with a capacity of 3 liters) with the emblematic beer Duchesse de Bourgogne from the Verhaeghe brewery. The label on each bottle is a reproduction of one of the four parts of the painting. The corresponding original artwork is attached to the outside of each of the wooden cases in which these exclusive bottles are packaged.

Mr. YUE TU from China was immediately inspired by this exclusive set of 4 bottles. He bought the original and unique 'bear meets art' project for the price of 7.500€. The buyer himself is a trained graphic designer, a lover of abstract art and is very passionate about Belgian beer. In this role he is currently also active with the promotion of Duchesse de Bourgogne in China.

In order to maximise the proceeds, another 10 sets (of 4 bottles each) are now sold with a numbered and signed reproduction of the work of art. These are offered in various countries (including the USA, Singapore, Taiwan, Belgium, etc.) through the sales network of Brewery Verhaeghe. This second sale runs until 15 January 2021 and - on the basis of today's commitments - will generate at least another €7,500 for charity. The interested parties will not only buy a unique bottle of beer with a limited and numbered reproduction of a work of art, but above all a limited reproduction of a work of art with a special bottle of beer....

The total amount collected by this initiative will be donated to the World Health Organisation to support research into combating COVID19.

This project was made possible by Jacky Bostoen (photography).

*- End of press release -*

**Appendix:** review list Art work "Spatium Spiritus" & Artist Lode Laperre

## **Note to the press (not for publication)**

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Press information and high res images are available via this [link](#). For more information or for interview requests, please contact:

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## **Background Brewery Verhaeghe**

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Brasserie Verhaeghe - Vichte is a small family brewery in the south of West Flanders. Its history dates back to 1885 when Adolphe and Paul Verhaeghe founded the malt house. Today, the 4th generation runs the brewery with Karl Verhaeghe, who deliberately chooses to focus on specialty beers. The beers of Brouwerij Verhaeghe are popular in Belgium, but especially abroad. These are quality beers with a very distinct and recognizable taste. The popularity of "Duchesse de Bourgogne", a mixed fermentation ale is living proof of this.

## **Background artist Lode Laperre**

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Lode Laperre finished his visual arts studies at the Saint Thomas Institute in Brussels at the end of the 1980s as a laureate. In the period 1990-1995, the young work of Lode Laperre received several awards. He received, among others, the National Kulturama Painting Prize as laureate (1990) and held a first remarkable personal exhibition (Tournai, 1992). The pictorial challenges that await him in the studio and his ever-increasing artistic activity are reflected in various exhibitions, individually or in groups.

In December 1998-January 1999, when Lode Laperre first travelled to South-East Asia, his extraordinary interest in other civilisations and image cultures germinated. He often returns there maintaining regular contacts with private and official bodies within the cultural-artistic field and pushing his plastic mission further around the idea of spinning out a striking and emphatically personally charged, oriental-occidental-fused visual language. This intense authentic-artistic engagement results in exhibitions in Asia, including China, Taiwan and Thailand.

Gradually he also focuses on making washed ink drawings on paper, which form part of that same artistic endeavour. Laperre's artistic scope also extends to sculptural work through the series Coprolites, in which excretions from painting sessions are reincarnated in paint plastics - whether or not set up as installations - which he paraphrases as the 'fossil faeces' of his paintings.

His work is collected in private and public collections in: Belgium - China - Denmark - Germany - France - Luxembourg - Netherlands - Taiwan - Thailand - United Kingdom – Switzerland.

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