Els Nouwen, b.1968, Belgium
Lives and works in Antwerp, BE

Working primarily through painting, Nouwen draws on photographic images from the media, art history and her own archive. Translated onto canvas with technical precision, these images are subsequently disrupted, displaced and transformed, creating works in which recognition remains unstable and the image shifts between legibility and abstraction.

Nouwen studied painting at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts, Antwerp, and philosophy at the University of Antwerp, followed by periods of study at the Bauhaus Dessau. In 2026, M Leuven presented OXOMORON, a major solo exhibition of her work.

Her work is held by the Flemish Community, with works on permanent loan to M Leuven and S.M.A.K., Ghent.

Education

1994	Bauhaus Dessau, Grundkurs Intermedia, led by prof. P. Jenny, in collaboration with ETH Zürich & Stiftung Bauhaus Dessau (okt – nov 1994)
1992	Bauhaus Dessau, participation in the Umweltklasse, led by prof. J. Borner
1990 – 92	University of Antwerp, Philosophy degree programme (uncompleted)
1986 – 90	Royal Academy of Fine Arts, Antwerp, painting

Solo Exhibitions

2026 *OXOMORON*, M Leuven (curated by Ralph Collier) Leuven, BE
2025 *small,* SECONDroom, Antwerp, BE
2024 *els nouwen 2024*, Behind Bars, Antwerp, BE
2022 *els nouwen 2022*, Behind Bars, Antwerp, BE
2020 *els nouwen 2020*, Behind Bars, Antwerp, BE
2018 *Twist,* Ruimte Morguen, Antwerp, BE
2017 *Painting Treatments*, Behind Bars, Antwerp, BE (curated by Thibaut Verhoeven)

2016 *as close as two coats of paint,* Ruimte Morguen, Antwerp, BE
2013 *Interference*, Ruimte Morguen, Antwerp, BE
2010 *Bildübersetzung,* Ruimte Morguen, Antwerp, BE

Selected Group Exhibitions

2025 *Tegen de onmacht van de kunst*, a selection from the Ruimte Morguen archive, M HKA, Antwerp, BE
2025 *Catastrophe,* Bleekstraat, Mechelen, BE
2025 *Le Mariage Arrangé,* Albert van Abbehuis, Eindhoven, NL (curators Henk Visch & Jos van der Sommen)
2024 *10 jaar Behind Bars,* Antwerp, NE
2020 *The Fast Show #2*, Loods12, Wetteren, BE
2020 *_wals07_ De Pastorie*, Ressegem/Herzele, BE
2019 *Auction presentation*, MDD, Sint-Martens-Latem, BE
2017 *(On) The Radar*, Waldburger Wouters Gallery, Brussels, BE (curators Thibaut Verhoeven & Matthias Dornfeld)

AWARDS

1987 Proost de Barsy, painting
1988 Marc Macken, painting
VRIKA, grafic arts
1989 Marc Macken, painting
Van Lerius, painting
1990 Vincke Soeurs, painting
Staf De Bruyne, life drawing
Gulden Sporen, laureates Royal Academy of Fine Arts

COLLECTIONS

2021 Acquisition of 'OXO' (2019–2020) by the Flemish Community on permanent loan to MLeuven
2026 Acquisition of 'Bonhomme' (2018–2019) and 'Hoax' (2017) by the Flemish Community on permanent loan to SMAK, Ghent