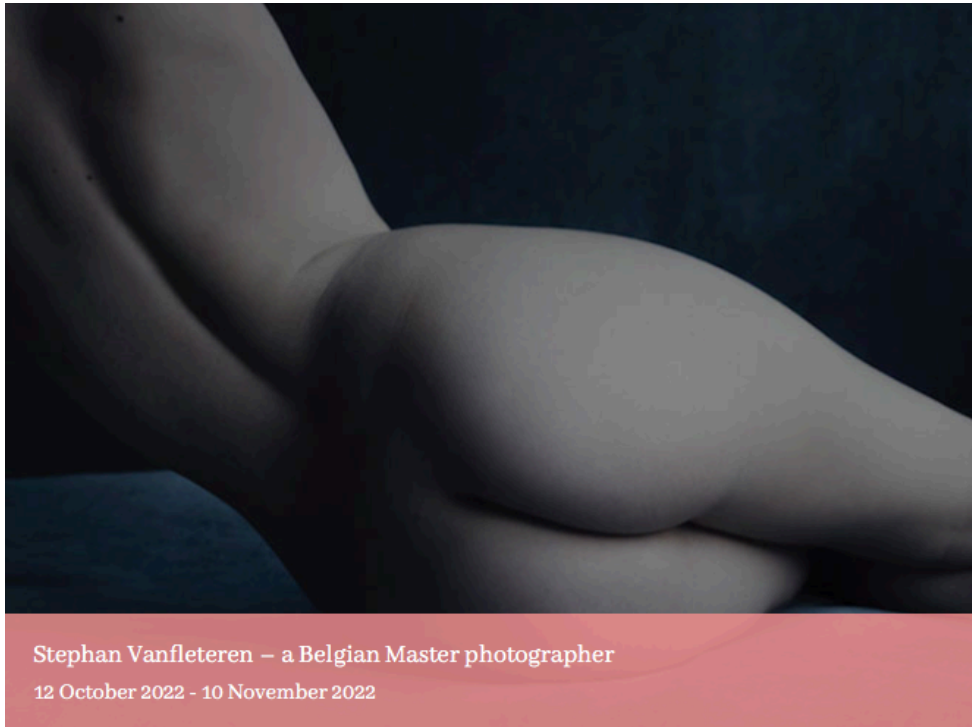


STEPHAN VANFLETEREN – Catching Light, Freezing Time - 12th October - 10th November 2022
'Stephan Vanfleteren - a Belgian Master photographer' by Christophe Rocour, on October 5th 2022
on Foto-Agenda.nl

(<https://foto-agenda.nl/fototentoonstelling/stephan-vanfleteren/>)



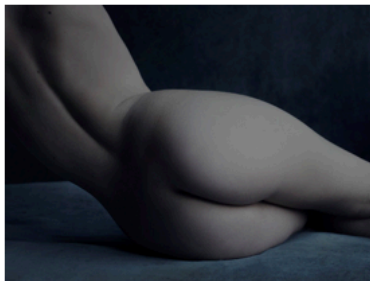
Stephan Vanfleteren (*1969) has been one of Belgium's most famous and important photographers for the past 30 years. He exhibits internationally in various museums and publishes his photographs in newspapers and magazines around the world, including Le Monde (FR), The New York Times (US), De Volkskrant (NL) and Die Zeit (GER). He is also a six-time winner of the prestigious World Press Photo awards



among other international prizes. In 2020, the year Vanfleteren turned fifty, he was celebrated with a major retrospective exhibition that filled the entire building of the Foto Museum Antwerpen (FOMU). With over 146,000 visitors, the expo – called 'Present' – broke all FOMU visitor records. For the occasion, an eponymous photo book was released; a heavy tome containing no less than 505 photographs, both iconic and unknown treasures. In the publication, Vanfleteren reflects on how his own work and the photography genre as a whole have evolved in recent decades. The viewer gets a close-up look at his intriguing career from the beginning, when he travelled the world with an appetite for action, to recent more introspective evolutions in his work.

© Stephan Vanfleteren – Corpus #14, 2016 | Courtesy Gallery FIFTY ONE

Vanfleteren started out as a photojournalist for the Belgian newspaper De Morgen. All of the headline news stories of the 1990s appeared before his lens, such as the Kosovo War, the Rwandan genocide, the death of King Baudouin and the Dutroux affair. Among the general public, he is mainly celebrated for his penetrating black and white portraits of people from all walks of life, from artists and actors, to surfers, fisher- and sportsmen. Around the Millennium, Van- fleteren started to focus on that which is on the verge of disappearing. With painstaking attention to nuance he creat- ed a unique visual archive of his homeland and of his fellow Belgians. It's clear that his oeuvre is very diverse, rang- ing from documentary, to artistic and personal pictures. From street photography in world cities like New York to storefront façades and the mystical landscapes of the Atlantic wall, from still lifes to intense portraits; Vanfleteren cov- ers a broad range of subjects, which he always approaches in his unique and inimitable style.



© Stephan Vanfleteren – Golf, Noordzee | Courtesy Gallery FIFTY ONE

In the last few years Vanfleteren has brought the world inside, to his daylight studio, resulting in many encounters and portraits. This exhibition will include, among others, two series showing this more recent work, born in the intimacy of his studio: an exploration of the still life and a study of nude photography, both in colour. In his photographic series 'Nature Morte', he portrayed dead animals he found near his home. Where most of his images are very time phased, this series marks an evolution in Vanfleteren's work towards a more timeless and universal approach. Quietude and death are becoming central elements in his work connecting life and death, past and present or light and dark.

© Stephan Vanfleteren #31 – Swan, Veurne, Belgium, 2016 | Courtesy Gallery FIFTY ONE

"I am more than a passenger of the past. People sometimes ask me if I look back too much. Of course, I look back, but I also look forward, to the left, to the right, up and down. Far and near. And for the first time I'm also really looking inside."



Stephan Vanfleteren

Whether it concerns his journalistic, documentary or artistic photographic projects, Vanfleteren always remains true to his characteristic style and aesthetic. He is influenced by several artists such as Berenice Abbott, Walker Evans, Irving Penn or Bernd & Hilla Becher. A palette of black and whites, sharp contrasts and well-defined details are the trademark that he developed throughout the years. His purified and raw images stand out because of their simplicity, intensity and drama.

Vanfleteren is also famous for his beautifully designed and tactile photo books. 'Belgium' was an instant classic about this homecountry Belgium. 'Façades&Vitrines', 'Atlantic Wall', 'Charleroi, Il est clair que le gris est noir', 'Surf Tribe' and his latest 'Present' are books that have found their way into Belgium and far beyond.

The exhibition will be open to the public from October 12th to November 10th and will be on show at Sotheby's Belgium newest offices, Avenue Louise 251, Brussels, in its gallery space shared with Sotheby's International Realty. For this special occasion and unique exhibition, Sotheby's collaborates with Gallery FIFTY ONE, a gallery founded in 2000 in Antwerp, specialized in fine art photography and works on paper. The gallery represents Vanfleteren's work among other 20th and 21st century photographers.