

**PRESS RELEASE**

## **LIGHT AND SKIES!**

### **THE BELGIAN LUMINIST EDMOND VERSTRAETEN**

**June 2 till incl. November 3, 2024**

The MTVP Museum Domburg and the ICEAC Domburg are dedicating their 2024 Summer Exhibition to the Belgian luminist Edmond Verstraeten (1870-1956), who painted almost non-stop throughout his life.

On the advice of the artist Franz Courtens, Verstraeten trained at the National Higher Institute for Fine Arts in Antwerp with the Belgian landscape painter Joseph Coosemans, who went out with his students to explore the forests of Tervuren and the heathland of Genk in order to work plein air'.

From 1900 onwards, Edmond Verstraeten resided with his wife and growing children in Waasmunster/Sombeke. On his estate Den Dommel he lived in symbiosis with nature. During foreign travels he was influenced by old masters and contemporaries, but he remained himself. Numerous luminist-impressionist and colourful, often large landscape paintings testify to this. A nice selection, consisting of about 35 paintings, can now be seen in the MTVP museum.

Curator Francisca van Vloten had a free choice from the collection of the Kunstkring VZW Edmond Verstraeten and some associated private collections. She focuses on the works that the artist made on his estate. She also selected several works that were created during his travels or as a result of them. Verstraeten traveled to Germany, Russia, France and Italy, among others.

Although he made small works outdoors, Verstraeten did not consider himself a plein-air artist. *'I paint from memory or make drawings during longer observations in nature',* he proclaimed. *'They serve as a guideline in my studio. [...] I paint small formats on canvas, panel or cardboard as studies in nature. Afterwards I can incorporate them into large works in the studio with the right colour shades.'*

The exhibition will be accompanied by a trilingual publication of the same name.



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## THE ARTISTS' COLONY DOMBURG

At the end of the nineteenth century, Domburg made name as a simple international Spa town, with the major attraction of the doctor and physiotherapist Johan Georg Mezger (1838-1909). After Mezger's death and the First World War (1914-1918), the town slowly changed into a family seaside resort for the middle class. For a long time its history remained hidden, but from the 1980s onwards Domburg is chronicled as an old style Artists' Colony.

Of old, artists have roamed Walcheren, attracted as they were by the unspoiled beauty of the surroundings, the special light along the coast and its reflection on the country embraced by water. With a couple of Belgian painters such as Emile Claus, Euphrosine Beernaert and Camille Van Camp as forerunners round about 1870, the Artists' Colony Domburg came into a first bloom about 1900, experienced its hey-day during the period of the well-known Domburgsche Tentoonstellingen (1911-1921) and lasted until the end of the 1920s. The Artists' Colony Domburg came to a symbolic end when the 'Kunstzaal' collapsed as a result of violent storms in the winter of 1921-1922.

## THE MTVP MUSEUM

Since 1994, the Marie Tak van Poortvliet Museum Domburg ([marietakmuseum.nl](http://marietakmuseum.nl)) organizes successful exhibitions on the participants in the old exhibitions, on contemporary artists who have ties with Zeeland and in co-operation with the ICEAC ([iceac.eu](http://iceac.eu)) on other notable Colonies from the end of the 19th and the early 20th centuries. The plans to expand the Museum and to connect it to the ICEAC are being elaborated, with the latter representing the scientific side of euroart ([euroart.eu](http://euroart.eu)). One endeavours to let the inauguration of the Research- and Documentation Centre coincide with the opening of the new Museum in 2025 or 2026.

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