

# GLADSTONE GALLERY

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## Jan Vercruysse Works 1990–2011 Curated by Anne Pontégnie 515 West 24th Street June 21 – August 3, 2012

Gladstone Gallery is pleased to present an exhibition of works by Belgian artist Jan Vercruysse, curated by Anne Pontégnie. The exhibition encompasses a selection of Vercruysse's work created between 1990 and 2011 and is the artist's first show in New York since 2009. Vercruysse began his career as a poet, and though in 1974 he shifted his practice to focus on the visual arts, poetry and the presence of language remain a central influence on his work.

### *Curatorial Statement:*

I conceived of this exhibition as an homage to Vercruysse's distinguished oeuvre. Featuring a selection of sculptures from each of Vercruysse's distinct bodies of work from the last two decades, the exhibition comprises a unique glimpse into the artist's continually unfolding logic and his meditations on recurring themes. The show features sculptures from the *TOMBEAUX*, *M(M)*, *Les Paroles*, and *PLACES* series, which explore memory, monuments, and loss.

Starting in 1987 and until 1994, Jan Vercruysse developed a series named *TOMBEAUX*. *TOMBEAUX (T. 184)* (1990), is made of cobalt blue glass sheets and adapts itself to the architecture in which it is installed. *TOMBEAUX [Extrait]* (1991), is a trombone made of blue cobalt glass. In both cases, the artist infuses the use of the object—shelves and trombone—with a different power of invocation, what Vercruysse calls "memory as an active energy."

From 1992 to 1998, Vercruysse worked on the *M(M)* series, using three different prototypes of the piano form to produce wooden forms of each. From these Vercruysse created a mold, followed by hollow, plaster, "positive" forms. All are legless pianos resting on beams. The *M* stands for Memory, Monument, and Momentum. Here, *M (M 3)* (1992), *M (M 7)* (1992), and *M (M 8)* (1993) echo the musical elements found in *TOMBEAUX [Extrait]* and in *Les Parole [Letto]*.

Developed between 1998 and 2001, *Les Paroles [Letto]* takes the shape of a lectern. Standing half open, the painted wooden structures both conceal and reveal, combining flatness and volume. Inside the structures, Vercruysse sometimes places musical partitions and at other times marbles, as in *Les Parole [Letto] III* (1999), presented here. Marbles introduce the "game" element and thus relate to the next series: *PLACES*.

In 2005, Vercruysse started a new work, also developed through a series, called *PLACES*. Where the *TOMBEAUX* works were "empty," *PLACES* concentrate "meanings," "things that happened," "parts of lives."

A first group of works, *PLACES I*, comprises the hands of the five cards of the Poker card game. A second group of works, *PLACES II*, is based on the *image* of commemorative plaques, often embedded in the floors of churches or found in archeological sites. In this case, the artist replaces the traditional inscriptions with the four suits of playing cards. A third group of works, *PLACES III*, introduces text. The characters in the Roman alphabet, which

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would typically appear on commemorative plaques, are here replaced by the symbols commonly found in a deck of playing cards.

Vercruysse composed the works in his latest series, *PLACES [Lost]*, from a limited number of objects: wine crates, billiards cues, and pallets. The objects are combined, cast in bronze, and often painted. Together, these objects become their own site.

Since the 1980s, Jan Vercruysse has worked to redefine the language of contemporary sculpture. His works, at once poetic and playful, philosophical and meditative, display an uncommon precision, which helps them resist interpretation to open new modes of thoughts and enjoyment.

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For further information, please contact Abby Margulies  
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New York gallery hours beginning June 18: Monday – Friday, 10am – 6pm  
Brussels gallery hours: Tuesday – Friday, 10am – 6pm, Saturday, 12 – 6pm