

**BIOGRAPHY JESSE WILLEMS**

Jesse Willems (born 1984 in Antwerp/Belgium) has an interest in exploring the boundaries between the figurative and abstract aspects of street life. When his great grandfather left him a collection of 800 old National Geographic magazines, he started scanning them, looking for tiny abstractions in photographs from the fifties. Thus creating contemporary collages, while working with 70 year old materials. In both his photography and collage work, he works in this same manner. Scanning the streets for small fragments of everyday life, often overlooked, enlarging them until their beauty can no longer be overlooked. This first resulted in the series 'The future - and other jet age inventions', a very first solo gallery show in April 2017.

This first show was a pivoting point toward an even more abstract view on everyday life. Inspired by the avant-gardist movement of the interbellum, and the stoic philosophy of Epictetus, his work took a more personal approach, closer towards the needs felt in 21st century life. His work got smaller, leaving more space for silence. Ultimately leading to the series 'Chresis ton phantasion'. The rational testing of different impressions, to see whether or not they deserve our assent. By eliminating all clutter, all that remains is the few fragments worth remembering.

Jesse's work is in the collections of the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the MAS Museum Antwerp, and has appeared in publications such as Billboard magazine (US), The New York Times (US), The Times (UK), De volkskrant (NL), ...

His first book, Barak Friture was published in the fall of 2014, selling both in Europe as in the US, UK and Asia. The book was on display in stores such as Colette in Paris, and Tate Modern in London.

The collage he made for hip-hopartist Coely earned him a Red Bull Elektropedia Award (1st place, Best Artwork) and a MIA's nomination for best Artwork.

He lives and works in Antwerp / B

**Awards**

2017 Marc Meulemans Award

**Exhibitions** (*Selection*)

- 2023 Interpretation of space; group-exhibition, zs art galerie, Vienna
- 2022 Luxembourg Artweek / The Fair (Schönfeld Gallery / B), Luxembourg / LUX  
Kairos (with Jan Yoors), Schönfeld Galerie, Brussels / B  
Art on Paper (Schönfeld Galerie), Brussels  
Collage II; group-exhibition, zs art galerie, Vienna  
Sketch for a summer, artist in residence; Schönfeld Projects, Antwerpen / B  
Lido, Galerie Zeit, Antwerpen / B
- 2021 Luxembourg Art Week (Schönfeld Gallery / B), Luxembourg / LUX  
Ordnung : Unordnung; group-exhibition; zs art galerie, Vienna  
7 x 70 / That was then, this is now; Zeit Gallery, Antwerp
- 2020 Renaissance II; Schönfeld Projects, Antwerp  
Renaissance I; Schönfeld Gallery, Brussels  
'Collage', Museum Dr Guislain, Gent  
Paper Stories; Schönfeld Gallery, Brussels

- 2019 Barak Friture; Belgian Embassy, Kinshasa, Kongo  
MAS – Antwerpen à la carte, Antwerpen  
'Belgian Contemporary collage'; Verbeke Foundation, Kemzeke / B  
Eden; Artelli Gallery, Antwerpen  
Paper Positions Munich (Schönfeld Gallery), Munich / D  
Luxembourg Art Week (Schönfeld Gallery), Luxemburg / LUX
- 2018 Barak Friture; Belgian Embassy, Kinshasa, Kongo  
Antwerp à la carte; MAS-Museum Antwerpen / B  
Fallen Idols – Native; Solo show, Brussels / B  
Chresis ton Phantasion – BAD; Solo show, Gent / B
- 2017 Barak Friture; Belgian Embassy, Kinshasa, Kongo  
Antwerp à la carte; MAS-Museum Antwerpen / B  
The future – and other jet age inventions; Solo show; Samuel Maenhoudt Gallery,  
Knokke / B

**Works held in public and private collections** (*Selection*)

Verbeke Foundation, Kemzeke / B  
Foreign ministry Belgium / B

Private collections in Austria, Antwerp, Brussels, London, Athen, Singapur, Luxembourg, Paris, New York, Chicago