

# BRUNO MERTENS

*Visual Artist*

*Constructed Fields*

*Sculptural systems between expanded painting, installation and modular composition*



## Overview

Bruno Mertens (°1968, Ghent, BE) is a visual artist working with hand-formed ceramic blocks made from unglazed clay. He brings these elements together into compact masses on panel, fixed fields on canvas, modular configurations, and site-specific spatial installations.

Represented by Galerie Adrienne D, Ypres.

Post-minimalism · Modular systems · Expanded painting · Ceramic sculpture · Conceptual practice

# Artist Statement

I studied ceramics and free graphics at the Academy of Fine Arts in Ghent. Since then, I have developed my own artistic trajectory at the intersection of sculpture, ceramics, conceptual art and installation art. Central to my work is the relationship between the individual and their social environment, with themes of vulnerability and strength, freedom and changeability.

I fragment large blocks of clay into many small pieces, each with its own irregularity. The core of my work is about the power of the small and the power of the many.

In the beginning, I placed the ceramic blocks close together into compact masses on panel. Closed structures in which thousands of small elements merge into a physical object. A monolith emphasizing mass, weight and closure. The work was still entirely object.

Gradually, these masses opened up. The blocks were fixed on canvas and space emerged between the elements. Each ceramic block broke the light in its own way. Rhythm and shadow began to determine the image. The work became more layered and moved from object to image, from mass to field.

Then I began placing the elements loosely on nails. First on small panels, later directly on the wall. Suddenly they were movable, rearrangeable. The viewer could intervene and shift, remove, or add blocks. The work became system, no longer endpoint but continuous possibility.

Increasingly, the elements also find their way into space itself. They occupy architecture, respond to light and scale, become site-specific. The field expands from panel to canvas to wall to space.

What remains throughout this development is the tension between part and whole, between autonomy and collective. Each block remains itself: irregular, handmade, unique and vulnerable too in its smallness, but together they determine each other, give each other meaning and form something larger: a rhythm, a field, a constellation. The work moves between expanded painting, sculpture and installation. It explores how meaning emerges from relationships: between element and form, between fixity and change, between maker and viewer.

## **Selected Works: Fixed Compositions**

Ceramic fields on canvas

**Migration, 2025**

Ceramic elements on canvas, 60 × 80 × 4 cm





**Where the shadow falls, 2025**  
Ceramic elements on canvas, 60 × 60 × 4 cm



## Affordable Art Fair, Brussels, 2026

*Left: Connected by Shadows, right: Waiting Lines*

**Ceramic elements on canvas, expanded painting**





## Site-responsive expanding painting, 2026

*Ceramic elements on panel and canvas in dialogue with the environment, Ghent*





## Monolithic works on panel

Work in situ during expo Pabulum in Watou, 2025

*A site-specific installation that traces the journey of clay: from the ground, out of its packaging, to fragmented handmade blocks, namely thousands of individual elements that together become one monolith.*





## One Piece is a Day, 2025

detail work

*Each ceramic element is marked with a letter forming the phrase 'one piece is a day', repeated throughout the work. The letters appear in a chaotic order.*





## **De witte raaf, 2024**

**Ceramic elements on panel, 60 × 40 × 4 cm**

*One black ceramic element sits among hundreds of white ones, each marked with a letter forming the phrase 'de witte raaf', repeated throughout the work. The letters appear in a chaotic order.*





## Open Configurations: Modular installations in space

*Modular installations with movable ceramic elements, ranging from intimate small-scale configurations (approx. 25 × 25 cm each) to larger site-specific wall installations. Elements are loosely placed on pins, inviting viewers to rearrange and interact with the composition.*

### **No Fixed Position, 2025**

Galerie Noir de Noir, Oostende, during the expo Alles wordt niets, 2025



## Dialogue, 2025

*Carmelite monastery during expo Alles van waarde is weerloos, 2025*

*55 black ceramic blocks and one white block rest loosely on pins in the panel. They enter into dialogue with each other, with the play of light and shadow, and with the viewer, who becomes a co-creator in this installation work.*





**Mini-installation, detail: open configuration with movable blocks**  
*in situ, De Weverij, Sleidinge*



## Four configurations, 2025

*Four successive configurations show how the movable blocks form a new image each time: from white to black, from dispersal to concentration.*





## Material Process

Hand-formed, unglazed ceramic; each element retains the traces of its making. No glaze to protect or embellish. The material speaks for itself, raw and authentic.



# Artist CV

**Bruno Mertens (°1968, Gent)**

## Education

Keramiek & Grafiek, Academie voor Beeldende Kunst, Gent

## Representation

Galerie Adrienne D, Ieper

## Solo Exhibitions

2024: If walls could speak, KOVE, Antwerpen

2023: Layers of Identity, Parce Art Initiative, Gent

2022: Textile Sculptures, Nylonfabric, Sint-Niklaas

2015: Scratches on the Wall, Galerie Ludwig Trossaert, Antwerpen

## Selected Group Exhibitions

2026: Affordable Art Fair, Brussel

2026: Boekenhuis Theoria, Kortrijk

2025: Noir de Noir, Concept Gallery, Alles wordt niets, Oostende

2025: Watou Art Foundation Pabulum, Watou

2025: Parce Art Initiative Fungi, Gent

2025: Galerie Adrienne D Kunst in Ieper

2024: Raam103 Retrospect, Gent

2024: De Weverij Wunderwall, Evergem

2023: Noir de Noir, Concept Gallery, Oostende

## Collections

Willemsfonds Scheldevallei: Uitbreken, 1998

## Press & Publications

**2023** — De ziel gevrijwaard: Atelierbezoek bij Bruno Mertens

*Johan Debruyne, Schrijver-kunstcriticus*

**2023** — Bruno Mertens en het ongrijpbare verhaal van de mens

*Frederic De Meyer, The Art Couch*

**2023** — Bruno Mertens: De schoonheid van het verval

*Annelies Vanbelle, The Art Couch*

**2022 — Van iets naar niets en omgekeerd**

*Hans Theys, Interview*



# Contact

## **Bruno Mertens**

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Atelier visits upon request.

## **Working with Bruno Mertens**

Available for:

- Studio visits by appointment
- Site-specific commissions and installations
- Collaborations with galleries, institutions and public spaces
- Works available through Galerie Adrienne D, Ieper, or direct contact
- International shipping available