



April 2023

MALEL

"The Encounter

From 14 April to 23 July 2023, the Church of La Cambre dares to innovate!

The emblematic Abbaye de la Cambre will soon be hosting a retrospective exhibition by the artist Malel. Entitled *La Rencontre*, this exhibition will allow the public to discover, in the church but also in the cloister and the adjacent chapel, some 70 paintings, tapestries, gouaches and drawings by the artist who is often referred to as the "painter of joy".

With this first programme, which was made possible by generous donors and sponsors, the brand new "Exhibition section" of the Grandes Heures de la Cambre, created in 2022 to contribute to the influence of the Abbaye de la Cambre, is trying to provide answers to the thirst for meaning that inhabits the world today. In parallel with the exhibition, a work will be created by the artist and donated to the Cliniques universitaires Saint-Luc (UCLouvain).

A first

This first exhibition goes far beyond a simple display of artworks, and launches a program of activities and participatory events. With this first exhibition, the parish of Notre-Dame de la Cambre resolutely opts for a dialogue with today's world. Spirituality responds fundamentally to the need to find meaning and reason in life's events; it is "anthropological".

Objective: to reach a wider public

The ASBL *Les Grandes Heures de la Cambre*, well known for its spiritual music program, wanted to extend its activities to a new section for culture and exhibitions. Although the initiative comes from the parish and the archdiocese of Malines-Brussels, it is a small, motivated team of four young, dynamic women who will also be creating exhibitions in this place of worship, which is also highly charged with history and culture. The aim is not only to make the spiritual life of the parishioners

more dynamic, but also, in the long term, to reach a much wider public (visitors, passers by, etc.) who are looking for a moment of silence, meditation and renewal on this site.

More than an exhibition

During the three months of the exhibition, the Abbaye de la Cambre will also host a variety of talents: testimonies from young people, couples, disabled people, artists and priests will tell of their encounters with God; thematic conferences about faith, health, psychology and sylvotherapy will provide avenues for hope.

And last but not least, tailor-made guided tours and forest baths will be organised for groups on request.

A complete and authentic artist

Malel is a complete artist, whose authentic art does not require to be situated in any specific current artistic trend. On the contrary, in the eyes of many, he is a timeless artist. His great artistic mastery, his connection with nature and his ability to translate his Christian convictions into a "cosmic" painting are highlighted through the specific choices for this exhibition, thus revealing his diverse talents.

About the works on display

The huge and already famous 64m² canvas in the choir of the church, entitled *The Encounter*, is the flagship work of the exhibition and captures our attention from the very beginning of the visit, allowing us to discover what drives the artist. In the center of this unique canvas, painted in 2000, the inviting face of a young man in his thirties seems to say: *"I have always waited for you. With me you will find listening and comfort"*. With this art exhibition, the Church of La Cambre displays a courageous will to show both God and the paths of light in our world. **The works of Malel, which are subsequently presented in the cloister of the Abbey and in its adjacent chapel**, open our eyes in this sense. The artist knows about life and translates it to us through the joys and happinesses he has experienced. He reveals the beauty and goodness of the world wherever he finds it: springs, waters, rivers, parks, gardens and large natural areas - and is inspired by human relationships to paint. However, he is not indifferent to the wounds and scars of this world, and above all, his gaze is imbued with the Christian hope that he has made his own. Through his work he reveals his personal spiritual quest as well as his encounters with Christ. He is nourished by his daily friendship with Him. On this subject Malel expresses himself clearly: *"The great questions I have, find their answer in this tandem with Christ"*.

The Tree of Life: a social project

Finally, as a social project will be associated with each annual exhibition, the exhibition section hopes this year that a **"Tree for Life"** can be created by Malel and installed via a generous crowdfunding campaign at the Cliniques universitaires Saint-Luc (UCLouvain). Made of painted glass, 4 metres high, the tree, like a powerfully colored and symbolic 3D stained glass window, would find its place after the exhibition in the gardens of the new integrated Institute of Psychiatry which will be inaugurated near the hospital in autumn 2023.

With this new impetus from the Eglise de la Cambre, let us dare to be positive in our lives!

Photos and texts available on the website: <http://www.lesgrandesheures.be/pole-exposition2023.html>

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WITH HEARTFELT THANKS TO THE MANY ANONYMOUS DONORS WHO HAVE HELPED WITH THEIR GENEROUS FINANCIAL SUPPORT
AND WITHOUT WHOM THIS EXHIBITION WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE

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