

# Alain Bornain

*amourable*

# Éric Fourez

*On the traces  
of the North Sea...*

Carte blanche  
for Claude Lorent

+

**Merci (contre)Facteur !  
Mail art #8**

*Jef Lambrecht*



**Press release**

01.06 > 01.09.2024

**BP** MUSÉE D'ART  
DE LA PROVINCE  
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# Programme 01.06 > 01.09.2024

## Exhibitions

- 4 **Alain Bornain**  
*amourable*
- 12 **Éric Fourez**  
*On the traces of the North Sea... / Carte blanche for Claude Lorent*
- 20 **Merci (contre)Facteur ! Mail art #8**  
*Jef Lambrecht*

## To come

- 22 **Next exhibitions**  
September 2024 > december 2025

# Alain Bornain

amourable

A self-taught artist obsessed with the idea of memory and disappearance, **Alain Bornain** (Genappe, 1965) takes over the Pierre Dupont Room with several series of new paintings, punctuated by a few older works.

Titled *amourable* – a neologism originally coined by a child who meant to say “immortal” and that the artist understood to mean “capable of being loved,” thus associating death and love – this exhibition explores new perspectives in his work, all while not losing sight of his previous 25 years of work, against a background of repeated meditation on the randomness of existence.

Alain Bornain knows that life is a perpetual succession of questions lacking surefire answers. Also, rather than ignoring them or inventing reassuring solutions, he confronts them head-on, leaving none to the wayside, not even the smallest, and dissects them to create new works that articulate these interrogations. Each piece thus carries, regardless of its physicality, an existential questioning that can resonate with anyone who views it.

**Curator:** Pierre-Olivier Rollin



Alain Bornain,  
*Image 22/A/15*, 2022.

Throughout his career, Alain Bornain has never confined himself to one single artistic technique, although painting is his preferred medium. He has occasionally explored other mediums, such as installation, sculpture, and drawing. Outside, for instance, the artist addresses passers-by on the campus by inscribing the short phrase "Will you have the time?" on the facade of the BPS22. This question perfectly summarises the artist's concerns, as he often acts through erasure and continually questions the meaning of life. The exhibition also showcases other iconic pieces of his career, such as his transformation of Boris Vian's novel *L'Écume des jours* [Froth on the Daydream], his haikus, his recent *Images avérées* [Proven Images], photographs covered with gold dust, or *Memento*, a vast installation of 40,000 dice with faces bearing the words: EXTASE [EXTASIS], MANQUE [LACK], OUBLI [OBLIVION], PROFIT, and PRESENCE. The last face is left blank, making each dice a succession of antithetical concepts that cover the range of existence's randomness.





It is precisely one of these random events that led to one of his new series of painted canvases where he addresses the portrait for the first time. One day, having not kept a single object from his childhood capable of occasionally activating his memory, he received a photograph of his nursery school class as a gift. From this rediscovered image, the artist created 26 portraits of his classmates and himself, playing with the figures' appearance and disappearance in order to evoke the evanescence or permanence of memories in his mind. Overall, while his work does not avoid a discreet autobiographical dimension, Alain Bornain shares concerns inherent to the field of art in general and painting in particular, taking up numerous pictorial references such as, for example, the theme of Vanity.

Left:  
Alain Bornain,  
*Memento* (detail), 2012.

Right:  
Alain Bornain,  
*Images*, 2022.

The ground floor of the Pierre Dupont Room has been entirely occupied by two new series of large paintings. The first consists of five new *Blackboards*, the largest of this series that began in the late 1990s. Evoking school blackboards, these paintings feature monochromatic backgrounds that reflect their generic title. The paintings' surfaces are covered with the traces of erasure, of spreading layers of dust, of vanished signs, words, or figures that peek through from the underlying layers. While the signs can induce a meditation on the meaning of existence, the works' general appearance plays with illusion to mislead the viewer as to their

real nature: are they a representation or a presentation of the ready-made? An image or a found object?

Opposite, five immense diptychs specially designed for the exhibition turn our attention to the new developments in the artist's work. They are based on images found in magazines or on the Internet, chosen for their strangeness, indefiniteness, or imprecision. Children walking during a session of light therapy, crowds, microscopic views, graffiti, etc. The images are transcribed through broad but precise strokes, in white on black, while colourful graphic elements

Alain Bornain,  
*Blackboards*, 2022.





emerge here and there to disrupt perception, shift the image towards flatness, and confuse interpretation.

As Pierre-Olivier Rollin, curator of this exhibition, writes in the introduction to its forthcoming catalogue: *"For the recent works, recovered images serve as a base or rather a structure for ensemble compositions where graphic and pictorial elements are added: a few numbers, letters, or words, uncertain or rigorous forms, coloured spots whose geometric precision contrasts with the airy strokes of the initial forms, and erasures that act as falsely clumsy acts of repentance."*

*Even when it is built on a more unabashedly figurative base, Alain Bornain's painting never yields to the principle of immediate recognition that characterises the imagery production of our time. It always dissembles more than it resembles, always plays with making images bloom or close. More than ever, painting is a mental thing, a place for wandering thoughts, invited to deepen and reinvent itself endlessly."*

Alain Bornain,  
*Images*, 2023.







Born in Genappe in 1965, Alain Bornain moved to Charleroi where he lives and works. After receiving technical training in computer science and robotics, he became a self-taught painter. He quickly made a name for himself in the art world, winning numerous awards. Since the early 1990s he has been exhibiting in his native country as well as Europe and, in the last two years, in China.

Alain Bornain also teaches at the École supérieure des Arts de la Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles, at ARTS<sup>2</sup> (Mons) and at the Académie des Beaux-Arts de Charleroi.

Portrait of Alain Bornain,  
2024.

Alain Bornain,  
*Apostrophe*, 2024.

+

**sun. 16.06.2024**

Alain Bornain guides museum visitors through his exhibition. An opportunity to discover his own perspective on his work and the main ideas guiding his practice.

**sat. 29.06.2024**

Through the format of a conference on the occasion of the release of *amou-  
rable's* catalogue, Alain Bornain, accompanied by the exhibition's curator Pierre-Olivier Rollin, will explore the numerous themes evoked throughout his artistic career.

# Éric Fourez

On the traces of the North Sea...

The museum is launching a new series of exhibitions based on the 'carte blanche' principle, for which it has invited art critic and curator Claude Lorent (Charleroi, 1943) to curate its first. Wishing to work with scenographer Françoise Vandenberghe, he has chosen to showcase, in the Grande Halle, the work of artist **Éric Fourez** (Tournai, 1946), whose artistic journey takes visitors *On the traces of the North Sea...* The exhibition brings together more than seventy art pieces, covering some fifty years of work (from 1973 to 2023).

His work is marked by important aesthetic and conceptual constants. This is because, from the late 1970s, Fourez has identified, in monochrome hyperrealist paintings of seascapes, the object, style and theme that were to dominate his entire artistic output; in other words, what Claude Lorent calls *landscape work that is infinitely the same but always different*.

**Curator:** Claude Lorent

**Scenographer:** Françoise Vandenberghe



Marines, 2002-1981

Initially interested by hyperrealism, the artist swiftly made his mark with his distinctive light and luminous monochromatic blue paintings, creating variants upon his favourite subjects, which are views of the North Sea. For him, the solitary expanse of it, in winter, evokes both a fascinating and dangerous experience he had in the Sahara, as well as childhood memories.

Over the years, Éric Fourez's canvases have lightened, moving to grey, then to brilliant white, as he narrowed his field of vision to focus on the traces left in the sand by the receding North Sea. The result is a body of work that blurs the boundaries between the figurative and the abstract, revealing faint incisions of grey against vast immaculate white backgrounds. Canvases that, while contracting space, seek to embellish the experience of duration, in a desperate but shared attempt by many artists to slow the passage of time and symbolically defer death.



Top and bottom:  
Éric Fourez  
*On the traces of the North  
Sea...* (exhibition view),  
BPS22, 2024.

Middle:  
Éric Fourez, *Traces*,  
1985.



Éric Fourez's palette  
in his studio, 2024.  
Photo BPS22

The immaculate white will go on to become the artist's favourite colour. He maintains all its luminous brilliance by taking care to not add any paint thinner (i.e. oil) to his paint, which he applies directly to the canvas. It's an extremely physical job, since it involves brushing the white paint in dense, wide, thick layers, without the fluidity provided by

the thinner. Symbolizing both abundance and emptiness, this white expresses a form of serenity, calm, silence, infinity, even disappearance. Fourez strives to convey certain emotions that can overwhelm humans when faced with expanses, like the sea, the desert, or the sky.

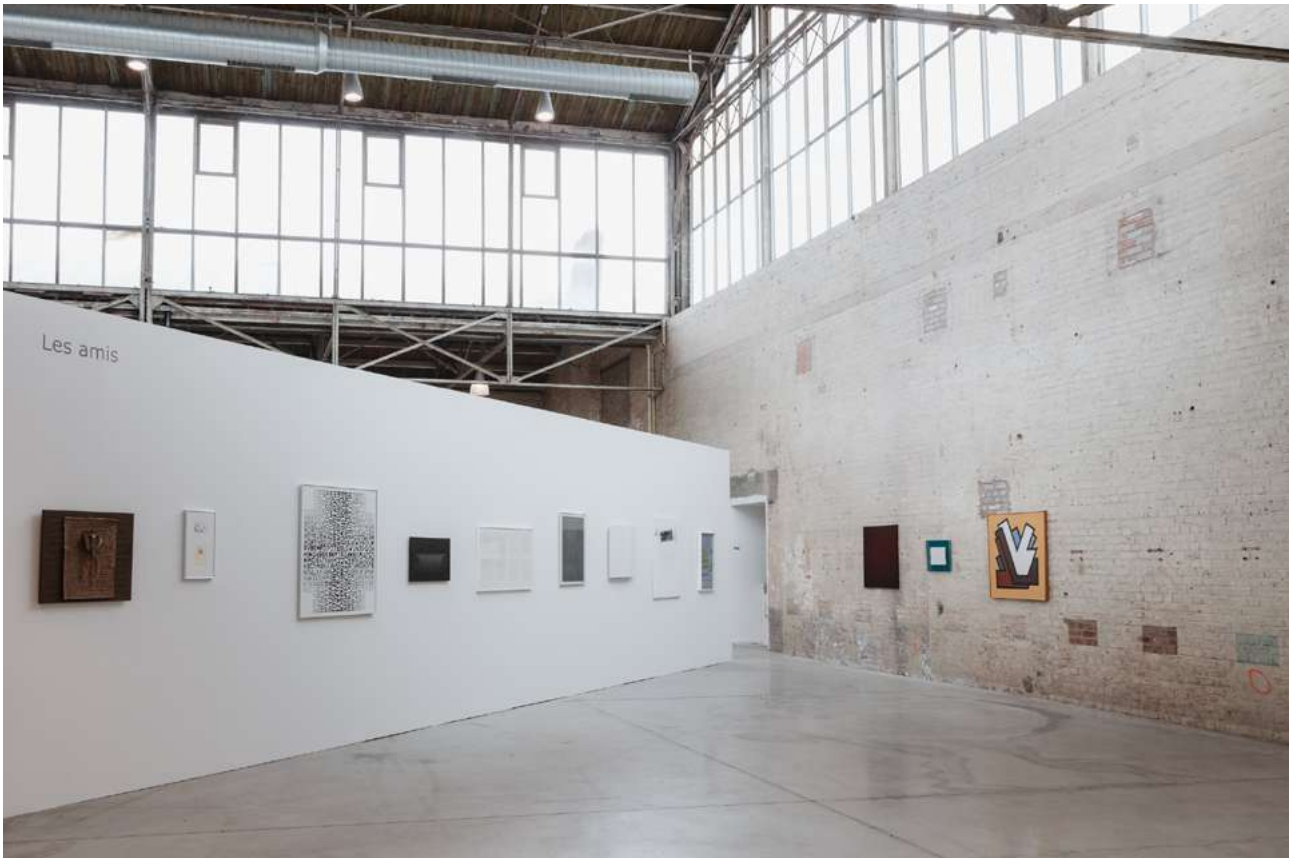


Uniformly spread on the canvas, the white colour borders on monochrome, in the sense that it does not reveal any trace of application, of “making”, thus presenting a uniform surface disturbed only by anthracite tones that evoke the traces left by water on the sand. The painting teeters between abstraction and figuration; at once, the white could just as well be a flat area crackling with dark spots, akin to informal tachism, as it could be an infinite expanse whose dark elements offer a sense of an impressive depth.

Curator of this exhibition, Claude Lorent highlights this form of obsession which consists of painting the same subject without ever repeating oneself, each time bringing a specific nuance to each canvas. The seventy-odd works, covering more than forty years of creation, illustrate this fascinating side of the work of an artist who tirelessly repeats his motifs without duplicating them, thus multiplying points of view and playing with each person’s own perception. In this regard, Fourez fits into an “other history” of

Éric Fourez  
*On the traces of the North  
Sea...* (exhibition view),  
BPS22, 2024.





modernity, one no longer based on invention and diversification, as embodied by the demiurgic figure of Picasso, but on the incessant resumption of a theme and a technique, explored in infinitesimal variations.

Éric Fourez is also making the most of this retrospective to include some works by friends such as Gabriel Belgeonne, Patricia Dopchie, André Lambotte and Guy Vandenbranden.

Éric Fourez  
*On the traces of the North Sea...* (exhibition view),  
BPS22, 2024.



Éric Fourez was born in Tournai in 1946, where he still lives and paints today. He worked there for many years as head of the city's visual arts department, creating the *Art en ville* festival and the *Prix artistique de la Ville de Tournai* contest in 1980.

He took drama classes, tried his hand at film and finally turned, as a self-taught artist, to painting at the end of the 70s, *at a time when painting was pretending to confront the means of technical reproduction in the field of meticulous duplication of reality, but truthfully was part of a much broader critical thought. But instead of the condensed dramatisation that hyperrealism sets out to achieve, Fourez chose an opposite path, less conceptual and more personal, less demonstrative and more intuitive.* (Pierre-Olivier Rollin, *Éric Fourez, Monographie*, 2024, p. 9)

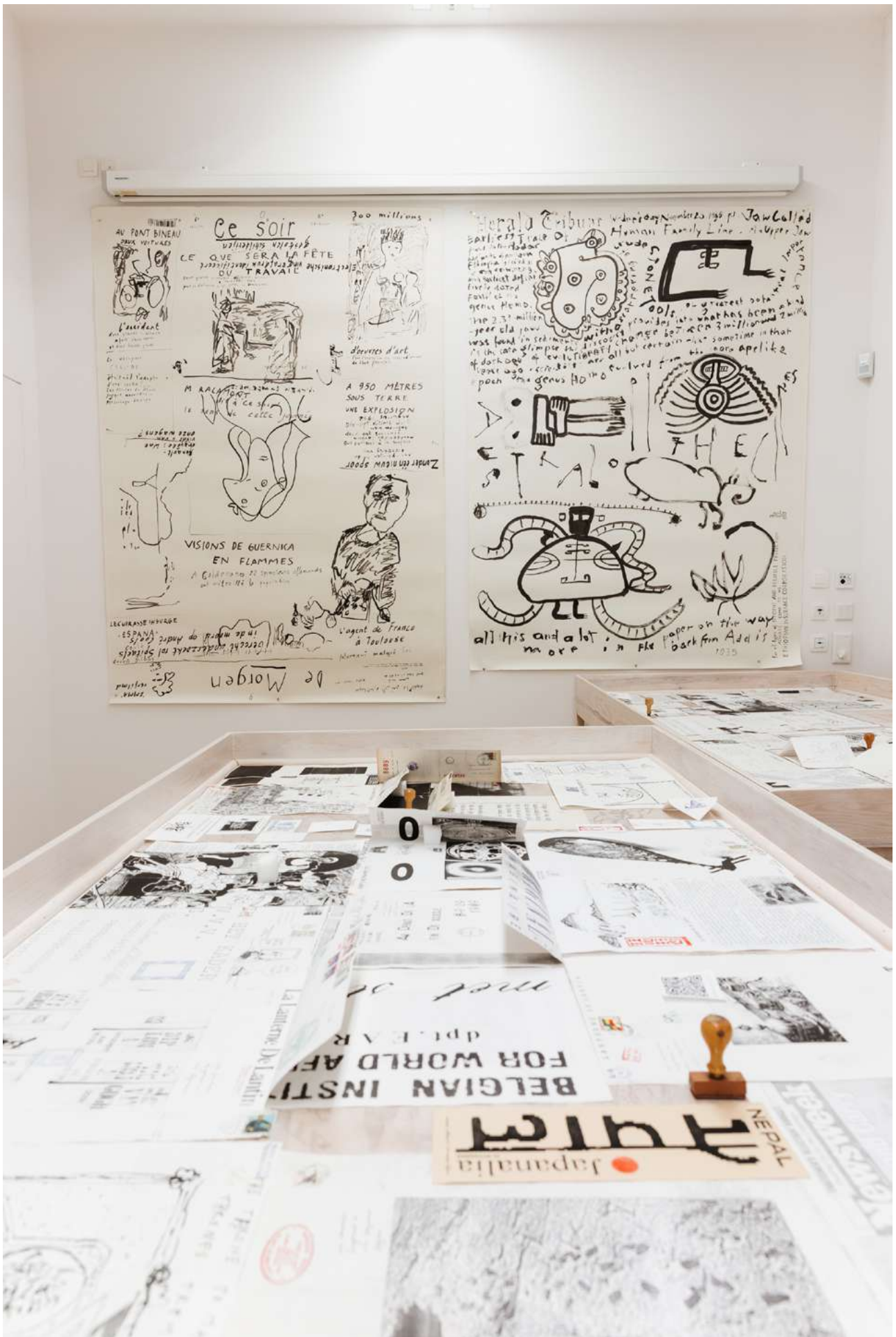
Top:  
Portrait of Éric Fourez,  
2024.  
Photo BPS22

Right:  
Éric Fourez  
*On the traces of the North  
Sea...* (exhibition view),  
BPS22, 2024.

+

**sat. 08.06.2024**  
A meeting with Claude Lorent, curator of *On the traces of the North Sea...* alongside Éric Fourez. This introduction to the artist's career spanning half a century commemorates the publication of a monograph about the painter.





# Merci (contre)Facteur ! Mail art #8

Jef Lambrecht

Part #8 of the Mail art series presents the epistolary work of Dutch journalist **Jef Lambrecht** (Avelgem, 1948 - Antwerp, 2016), in a special project devised by ex-gallery owner Chris Straetling.

This exhibition highlights the various inexpensive periodicals and magazines, akin to mail art fanzines, that Jef Lambrecht published: *La Lanterne de Lantin* and *L'Original Imaginaire* to name but a few. His magazines, as well as his correspondence, posters and drawings form a body of work marked by a certain poetic confusion around the notions of truth and authenticity. It is in this spirit, nourished by both the Dada and Dutch Provo movements, that this seventh part of the exhibition cycle dedicated to Mail art in Belgium has had its title redacted to say *Merci (contre)Facteur* [Thank you, Mailman/Forger] and assigned the number 8, a number dear to Jef Lambrecht.

For this exhibition, Chris Straetling has also chosen to show Jef Lambrecht's works from the BPS22 collections. Notably, the series of large *Sheherazade* ink on paper drawings created during assignments as a foreign correspondent. Two transformed "chairs," are also included and used during a performance mimicking the "canonisation" of Vincent van Gogh, in response to his exponentially rising status in the art market. Thus, on Saturday 11 May 2024, Chris Straetling took one of these chairs for a "courtesy visit" to the Van Gogh Houses in Colfontaine and Cuesmes. This operation is documented by a few photographs.

**Curator:** Chris Straetling

*Merci (contre)Facteur !*  
*Mail art #8*  
*Jef Lambrecht*  
(exhibition view)  
BPS22, 2024.

# Next exhibitions

**Alain Séchas / Juliette Vanwaterloo**

Oct. > dec. 2024

**Candice Breitz**

Feb. > may 2025

**Democracia / Hervé Charles**

June > aug. 2025

**La "S" Grand Atelier**

Oct. > dec 2025

Alain Séchas, *Grosse  
bêtise*, 2003.  
Hainaut Province Coll.,  
on deposit at BPS22  
Photo Alain Séchas



## Press visuals

Available for download via [Google Drive BPS22](#)

Mandatory mention = File name

Unless stated otherwise, all photos by Leslie Artamonow.

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## BPS22

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Open from Tuesday to Sunday, 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Closed on Mondays and during exhibition set-ups.

#### Prices

Adults: 6 €

Seniors: 4 €

Students en job seekers: 3 €

Free for children under 12 and on the first Sunday of each month.



Duvel

Cover photo  
Top: Alain Bornain, *Image*  
23/05, 2023.  
Bottom: Éric Fourez,  
*On the traces of the North*  
Sea... (exhibition view),  
BPS22, 2024.