

## **Farewell to Years of Art Promotion**

To all artists, to all friends, to all visitors, to all supporting parties.....

With sincere pain in our hearts, we announce that the recent International Paper and Textile Art Biennale in October 2024 was our last Biennial. After years of enthusiasm and dedication in promoting four important art crafts—paper, textile, glass, and ceramics—we are compelled to put an end to this unique concept. This initiative, supported for many years by only two people (my wife and I), has become too heavy a burden to continue. Although this decision weighs heavily on us, we are convinced that it is now time to close this chapter “in beauty” after a more than successful event last October. We fully realize that this is not only a significant loss for us but also for our national and international artists/friends and loyal visitors. They now face a difficult-to-fill “cultural void” in Belgium and Europe.

What began as a “local art manifestation” has grown into an internationally recognized and unique art forum that placed the municipality of Haacht on the international cultural map. It was a joint adventure with a clear mission to promote and connect four important art crafts—ceramics, textile, glass, and paper—beyond borders. Thanks to this initiative, we, as an organization, have achieved an exceptionally high level and a milestone in nurturing and sharing these rich artisan traditions with both national and international artists and visitors for thirteen years. Our commitment reflected not only our deep-rooted respect for artisanal arts but also demonstrated the ability of a small, local association to embrace cultural diversity and foster new collaborations. This initiative provided an inspiring platform where craftsmanship and creativity found a place on an international stage.

With these Biennales, the Art Foundation Perspektief vzw has not only showcased its impressive organizational skills but also confirmed a connecting force in the art world. These initiatives have served as a beacon of cultural exchange and have given the foundation a pioneering role in the international promotion of artisanal art, becoming a source of inspiration for future generations.

The impact of the Biennales has been profound and far-reaching. They served as a vital platform for artists to showcase their work, facilitating cultural exchange and collaboration among creatives from various backgrounds. By focusing on the crafts of paper, textiles, glass, and ceramics, the Biennales not only highlighted the significance of these traditional art forms but also fostered a deeper appreciation for artisanal techniques in contemporary art. The events attracted a diverse audience, ranging from art enthusiasts to professionals in the field, thereby enhancing the visibility of the participating artists and contributing to the cultural landscape of Belgium and beyond. Many artists reported new opportunities and connections made during the Biennales, which have had lasting effects on their careers.

The organization of the Biennials presented several challenges. One of the primary difficulties was securing funding and sponsorships to support the extensive logistics involved in such a large-scale event. Each Biennial required careful planning and coordination to bring together artists, exhibits, and audiences while always ensuring high-quality presentations. Additionally, managing communication and collaboration among diverse participants from different cultural backgrounds sometimes proved complex. Moreover, adapting to changing circumstances added another layer of unpredictability to the planning process. Despite these challenges, the dedication and passion of the organizing team and the support from the community helped us to create a last successful and enriching biennial.

We are proud of what we have achieved and grateful for all the support and encouragement we received over the years. With our last Biennale, we conclude a period of years of “love for art” and art promotion. We look back with great respect and appreciation for the wonderful collaborations and deep connections we have built with many artists and our audience.

Thank you to everyone—our staff, sponsors, press, artists, and audience—with whom we have embarked on this journey together.

Danielle & Maurice