

# PRESS RELEASE – VILLERS ABBEY

Exhibition. *Folon. Sculptures at the Abbey*

24/10/20 – 21/02/21



L'Abbaye de Villers esblt remercie de leur soutien Le Fonds européen de développement économique régional (FEDER), le Gouvernement wallon, la Wallonie, l'Agence wallonne du Patrimoine (AWaP), le Commissariat Général au Tourisme (CGT), la Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles, la Loterie nationale, la Province du Brabant wallon et la Régie des Bâtiments.



As part of the 20th anniversary of the Folon Foundation, the Abbey - in collaboration with another cultural centre of Walloon Brabant, the Folon Foundation - is delighted to organize an exhibition of twenty monumental and original sculptures by the internationally renowned Belgian artist Jean-Michel Folon. The exhibition echoes the publication of a beautiful art book devoted to the sculptures of the artist (Mercator Fund).

## A prestigious architectural monument

The Abbey's proposal to host some 20 sculptures among the most evocative of the artist, is part of the tradition dear to Folon of confronting his works with the beauty of a monumental, historical and architectural place and seeing how they respond to the light and the seasons. Here, the sculptures are confronted with the spirituality contained in the old stones of the Cistercian site, as well as with the colours of autumn and winter.

## Exceptional places for monumental sculptures

After starting as an illustrator and painter, Jean-Michel Folon (1934-2005) embarked on sculpture at the end of the 1980s, as a second wind in his career. In 1995 his first exhibition of monumental sculptures took place at the Petit Sablon in Brussels. Other exhibitions follow in extraordinary places: at the Castle of Seneffe in 1996, in the small Tuscan town of Pietrasanta in 1999, at the Castle of Saint George in Lisbon in 2001, at the Forte di Belvedere in Florence in 2005. Memorable exhibitions have also been held after the artist's death, such as the one in the Solvay Regional Estate in La Hulpe in 2008, or more recently in Saint-Tropez in 2019.

## The artist Jean-Michel Folon

Whether through his posters, his illustrations, his television shows and his numerous exhibitions, Jean-Michel Folon (1934-2005) left a worldwide mark on the collective imagination of the last third of the 20th century. Humanist, he leaves a figurative and poetic work, anchored in traditional techniques and, therefore, atypical in an artistic panorama dominated by conceptual art. His universe, which was initially very dark, evolved, depending on the artist's great struggles in favour of human rights or environmental awareness, towards an appeasement from the 1980s. In 2000 he created the Folon Foundation in Solvay Park, in La Hulpe, a museum that houses his work. The Foundation celebrates its 20th anniversary in 2020.

## Folon's sculptures, the culmination of his career

Sculpture occupies a special place in Folon's work. It was a challenge that the artist resolutely accepted in the second part of his career. Folon has always collected decommissioned objects that inspire him, with the aim of resuscitating them in kinds of *ready-made*.

During the 1990s, encouraged by his friend César, the artist resolutely embarked on statuary, sometimes monumental, whether in direct carving (wood, plaster) or in modelling. Characterized by their frontality and their corporeality, enhanced with multiple patinas, his

sculptures draw on the primitive arts, from the Cyclades to the Etruscans, from African masks to Native American totems. Largely centred on humans, they embody themes formerly treated graphically and thus project the artist's universe into atypical and natural environments: landscapes, gardens, parks, galleries.

This approach finds its culmination on the beach of Knokke where Folon installed in 1997 a bronze figure, eternally patinated by the tides (*The sea, that great sculptor*).

## Practical Information

**Dates:** from Saturday October 24, 2020 to Sunday February 21, 2021. Closed on December 24, 25, 31, 2020 and January 1, 2021

**Opening hours:** accessible during the Abbey's opening hours, daily till 31 October from 10 AM till 6 PM, and from 10 AM till 5 PM starting 1 November.

**Prices:** access to the abbey is included (no surcharge).

Adults € 9 - Seniors € 7 - Students € 6 - Children (6-12 years) € 4 - Children (<6 years) free entrance.

Detailed programme on [www.villers.be](http://www.villers.be)

**Organization:** Villers-la-Ville Abbey NPO

**Contact for the public:** [info@villers.be](mailto:info@villers.be) – 071/880.980 – [www.villers.be](http://www.villers.be)

## Press contact

### Villers Abbey:

Geneviève Claes – [presse@villers.be](mailto:presse@villers.be) – 071/880.992

Jean-Claude Gerlache – [presse@villers.be](mailto:presse@villers.be) – 0479/40.03.67

### Folon Foundation:

Donatienne de Vleeschauwer - [d.devleeschauwer@fondationfolon.be](mailto:d.devleeschauwer@fondationfolon.be) – 02/653.34.56



FONDATION  
**FOLON**