

PRESS RELEASE BRAFA 2026

Galerie Oscar De Vos - Stand 107

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MEMORIES OF THE LYS REGION 1850-1930

Press Summary

At BRAFA 2026, Galerie Oscar De Vos presents the exhibition **“Memories of the Lys Region 1850–1930”**, a tribute to the artists who immortalised the river, the villages, and the light of the Lys region. In the 20th century, the village evolved into an **international artists’ colony**.

The selection features highlights from eight decades of art, from Xavier De Cocks' *Flemish Fairground* (1857) and Albijn Van den Abeele's subdued *Last Rays of Sunlight, Rising Moon* (1904) to Emile Claus' rediscovered *Villa Sunshine on the Lys* (1893) and his iconic masterpiece *After the Crossing* (1899).

Never-before-seen works on the art market by **Jenny Montigny** (*Summer*, c.1905; *The Lys at Deurle*, 1934) and **Maurice Sys** (*Nocturne*, c.1905) are presented alongside expressionist canvases by **Frits Van den Berghe**, **Constant Permeke**, **Hubert Malfait**, and **Albert Saverys**.

The exhibition evokes the seasons, intimate interiors, and village life of the Lys Valley, forming a poetic remembrance of a landscape that continues to inspire artists and collectors alike.

MEMORIES OF THE LYS REGION 1850-1930

Full Press Text

The Lys Region – with its meandering river, gentle light, and quiet villages – has been an inexhaustible source of inspiration for artists since the late 19th century. In the 20th century, the village evolved into an **international artists' colony**, attracting painters, sculptors, and writers who sought the serenity and poetic atmosphere of the Leie valley.

At BRAFA 2026, Galerie Oscar De Vos pays homage to this artistic tradition with the exhibition “Memories of the Lys Region 1850–1930.”

A Journey Through Time

The exhibition opens with a festive scene: *Flemish Fair in Sint-Denijs-Westrem* (1857) by Xavier De Cock, illustrating the **vibrant rhythm of village life**.

Valerius De Saedeleer's *Interior of the Tempelhof* (1903) offers a contemplative glimpse into the **spirituality and silence** of Sint-Martens-Latem.

With *Last Sunrays and Rising Moon* (1904), Albijn Van den Abeele captures the **poetry of a landscape** bathed in evening light.

The Latem mill — symbol of the traditional village and of Galerie Oscar De Vos, which occupied it from 1972 to 2000 — embodies continuity in the story of the Latem School.

A Luminist Highlight

A recent and exceptional rediscovery is Emile Claus's *Villa Zonneschijn on the Lys* (1893).

Together with his iconic *After the Crossing* (1899), it reveals how Claus mastered the river's light, establishing Luminism as a landmark movement in Belgian art history.

New Voices in the Collective Memory

The selection also includes works **never before seen on the art market**: Jenny Montigny's *Summer* (c.1905) and her tender *The Lys at Deurle* (1934) reflect a deeply personal connection with the region, while Maurice Sys's *Nocturne* (c.1905) and *Bend of the Lys at Latem* (1910) introduce a **symbolist tone**. Gustave De Smet's *Lady by the Pond* (1910) marks a transition toward modernism.

Expressionism and the Seasons

In *Twilight* (1924), Frits Van den Berghe evokes the **rhythm of the day**: the glow of evening, the day's labour, and the cows returning to the barn.

Constant Permeke's *Flemish Rural Life* (c.1928) celebrates the bond with the soil and the dignity of work.

With *Trees and Villa Sunshine* (1918), Albert Saverys pays **tribute to Emile Claus**, while Hubert Malfait's *The Horse and Cart* (1930) captures the **simplicity of rural life**.

A Tribute to Time and Place

This carefully curated collection is more than a group of masterpieces: it embodies the **soul of the Lys Region**.

Its river, seasons, and inhabitants form an artistic memory passed down through generations of painters.

With “Memories of the Lys Region 1850–1930,” Galerie Oscar De Vos offers at BRAFA 2026 a homage to a landscape and a way of life of **timeless beauty**.



Albijn Van den Abeele (1835–1918)

Last Sunrays and Rising Moon (Latem Mill), 1904

Oil on canvas – 80.5 × 110.5 cm

Signed lower right: *Albijn Van den Abeele*

Provenance:

Albijn Van den Abeele, Sint-Martens-Latem, thence by descent to the last private owner
(premiere on the art market – never previously offered for sale).

The 17th-century mill – a symbol of Latem – becomes in this painting a **beacon of calm and tradition**.

Van den Abeele's sensitivity to light, shadow, and atmosphere makes this work his **magnum opus**.
Verso bears several international exhibition labels.



The mill and its outbuildings, Sint-Martens-Latem, c. 1910

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Emile Claus (1849-1924)

Villa Zonneschijn (Sunshine) on the Lys, 1893

Oil on canvas – 83 x 73 cm

Signed : Emile Claus

Signed on the reverse : Julij / 1893 / E.C.

Provenance:

Private collection, Belgium (unique offering – first appearance on the art market)



Villa Zonneschijn (*Sunshine*) and the river Lys, Astene, c.1900

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Emile Claus (1849-1924)

After the crossing (The farm), 1899

Oil on canvas – 130 x 203 cm

Signed : Emile Claus

Monogram and date on reverse: E.C. / ii (1899)

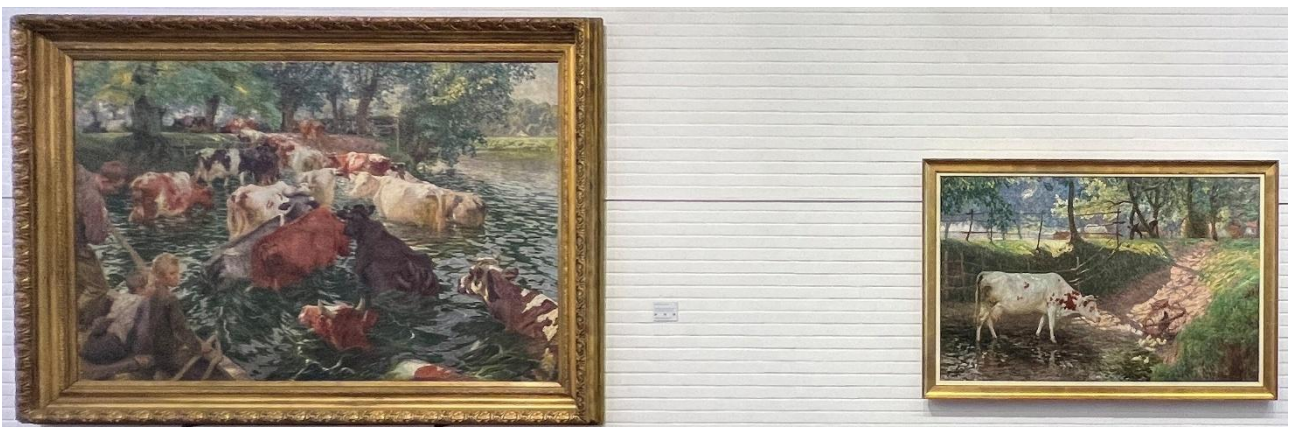
Like a film director, Claus continues with *After the Crossing* the story he began with *Cows Crossing the Lys* (RMFAB Brussels, inv. 3584). Both masterpieces show the rhythm of rural life on the banks of the Leie, without explicit symbolism. In 2024-25, they were displayed side by side in the acclaimed exhibition *Emile Claus. Prince of Luminism* (MuDeL, Deinze).

Exhibition:

1956, Ghent, *Exhibition Scaldis*, cat. 20

1997, Ostend, *Retrospective Emile Claus*, cat. 87

2024, Deinze, MuDeL, *Emile Claus. Prince of Luminism*, cat. 79



Deinze, MuDeL, 2024-2025: *Emile Claus. Prince of Luminism*



Jenny MONTIGNY (1875-1937)

Summer, c. 1905

Oil on canvas – 39 x 59 cm

Signed : JMontigny

Summer marks a key period in Montigny's artistic evolution, shortly after joining *Vie et Lumière* and settling in Deurle in 1905. The work reveals her independent voice and her gradual emancipation from Claus's influence. Presented together with *The Lys at Deurle* (1934), this painting anticipates the major retrospective devoted to Montigny by the **Museum of Fine Arts Ghent (MSK)** in 2026.

Provenance:

Private collection, Belgium (first appearance on the art market!)



Emile Claus & Jenny Montigny in her studio, Deurle, c. 1912

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Albert SAVERYS (1886-1964)

Trees and Villa Zonneschijn (Sunshine), 1918

Oil on canvas – 81 x 81,5 cm

Signed and dated lower right: ALB. SAVERYS 1918

In *Trees and Villa Zonneschijn*, Saverys pays **tribute to Emile Claus**. As in Claus's *Rayon de soleil* (1899, Musée d'Orsay), the same artist's residence emerges between the trees, bathed in trembling light and misty air. Saverys honours the master of Lys light while asserting his own voice through a more vigorous touch and a modern composition.

Provenance:

Private collection, Belgium (new to the art market)



Emile Claus, *Rayon de soleil (Villa Zonneschijn)*, 1899

© RMN-Grand Palais (Musée d'Orsay, inv. RF 1313)



Hubert MALFAIT (1898-1971)

The Horse and Cart, 1930

Oil on canvas – 85 x 77 cm

Signed : HMALFAIT

With *The Horse and Cart*, Hubert Malfait gives form to **pure Flemish Expressionism**.

Working from Astene, where he settled in 1927, he drew **inspiration from village life**, translating it into bold, angular shapes and vivid, earthy tones.

The painting reflects a distinctive style rooted in the Lys Valley yet unmistakably Malfait's own.

Provenance:

Galerie Le Centaure, Brussels

Veiling Le Centaure, Brussel, 25 October 1932, no. 465

Madeleine Ittner, Brussels

Exhibitions:

1930, Brussels, Galerie Le Centaure, *Hubert Malfait*, no. 10 (*L'Attelage du marchand de bestiaux*)

1931, Brussels, Palais des Beaux-Arts, *Cycle des Expositions de l'Art Vivant*, no. 31

2004, Deinze, MuDeL, *Hubert Malfait*, no. 41



Emile Claus, *Rhododendrons at Villa Zonneschijn*, 1902



Valerius De Saedeleer, *Interior of 'Tempelhof'*, 1903



Valerius De Saedeleer, *Etikhove*, 1929



Gustave De Smet, *Lady near the pond*, 1910



Leon De Smet, *Golden Hour*, 1912



Frits Van den Berghe, *Garden view*, 1920



Constant Permeke, *Village of Jabbeke*, 1928



Gustave De Smet, *Landscape with church*, 1930