



Cat. 1 Father Spilliaert's Laboratory 1899

Edited by
Anne Adriaens-Pannier and Edouard Derom

Interiors & Still Lifes

Léon
Spilliaert

PATRICK DEROM GALLERY
HANNIBAL





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Foreword

Patrick Derom Gallery is pleased to present *Léon Spilliaert: Through Half-Open Doors*, an exhibition and accompanying publication devoted to a more discreet yet essential aspect of Spilliaert's practice. Bringing together a carefully curated selection of works, this project seeks to shed new light on the artist's singular vision through his depictions of interiors and objects. The exhibition includes a number of masterpieces, many of which have not been shown publicly for many years, and some of which are presented to the public for the very first time. We extend our sincere gratitude to the many lenders whose generosity has made this project possible.

Far from anecdotal, these works reveal the depth of Spilliaert's gaze and his remarkable ability to transform everyday surroundings into spaces of contemplation. Empty rooms, familiar corners and modest objects are rendered with a striking economy of means, yet they resonate with a profound sense of presence. In these compositions, silence prevails. The absence of the human figure intensifies perception, allowing the viewer to enter a world in which the visible becomes charged with introspective meaning.

This exhibition follows the gallery's highly successful 2024 exhibition and publication *Léon Spilliaert: Wanderer Through Silence*, which presented an exceptional group of works from the collection of Johan van Rossum, the artist's grandson. Together, these initiatives reflect the gallery's continued commitment to the study and promotion of Spilliaert, an artist who has occupied a central place in its programme since its foundation in 1986.

With this museum-level exhibition and the present publication, which brings together essays by leading scholars, we hope to contribute to the further recognition of Spilliaert's work and to the discovery of lesser-known aspects of his oeuvre. We would like to thank Stefan Huygebaert of Mu.ZEE and Marie-Noëlle Grison of KU Leuven for their insightful and enriching contributions. Their texts offer new perspectives and highlight the continued relevance of Spilliaert for a younger generation of scholars.

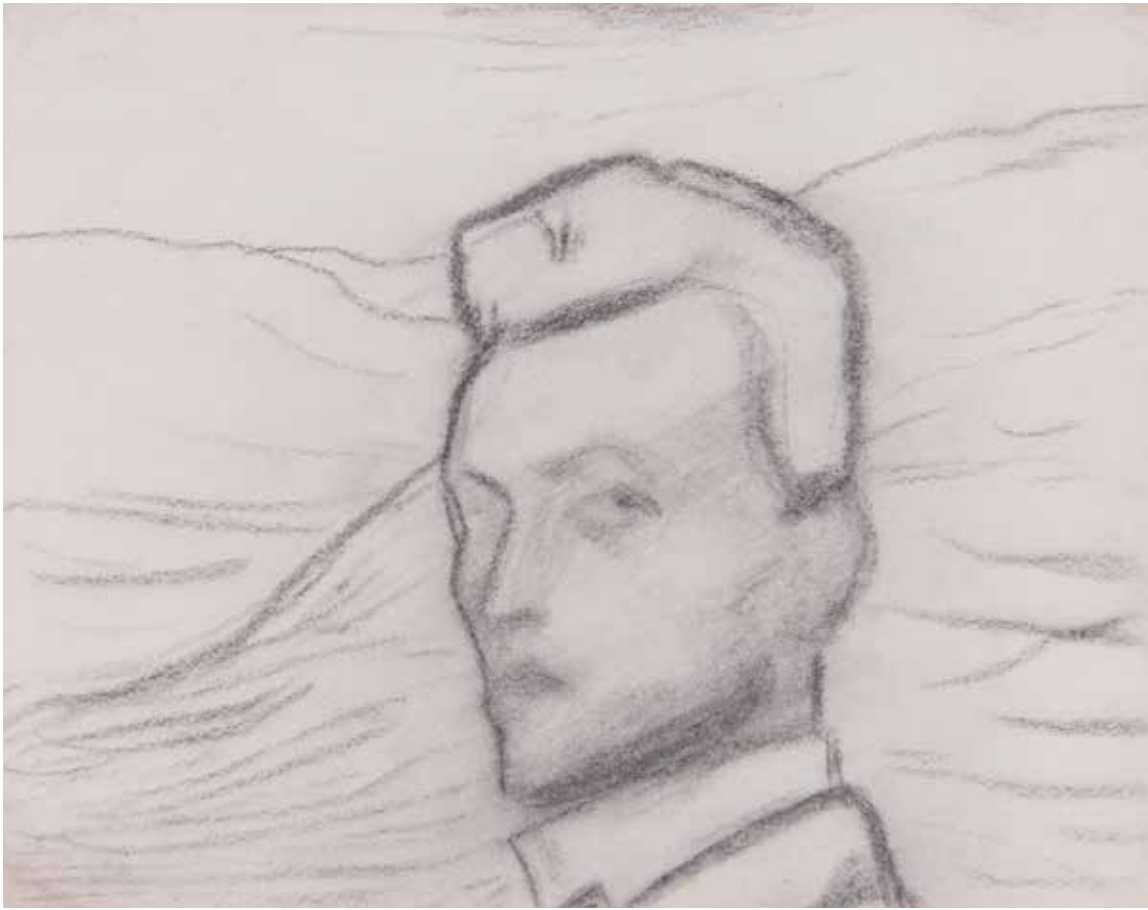
While this exhibition is the result of a curatorial collaboration between Anne Adriaens-Pannier and Edouard Derom, its origins lie in the series of thematic exhibitions that Adriaens-Pannier had envisioned for the Spilliaert Huis. It is an honour to work with Adriaens-Pannier, whose discerning eye, knowledge and dedication to the artist are exceptional. Without her generosity and her sustained commitment of time and energy, this project would not have been possible. We look forward with great anticipation to the forthcoming publication of the artist's catalogue raisonné, on which she is working with her husband, Patrick Adriaens.

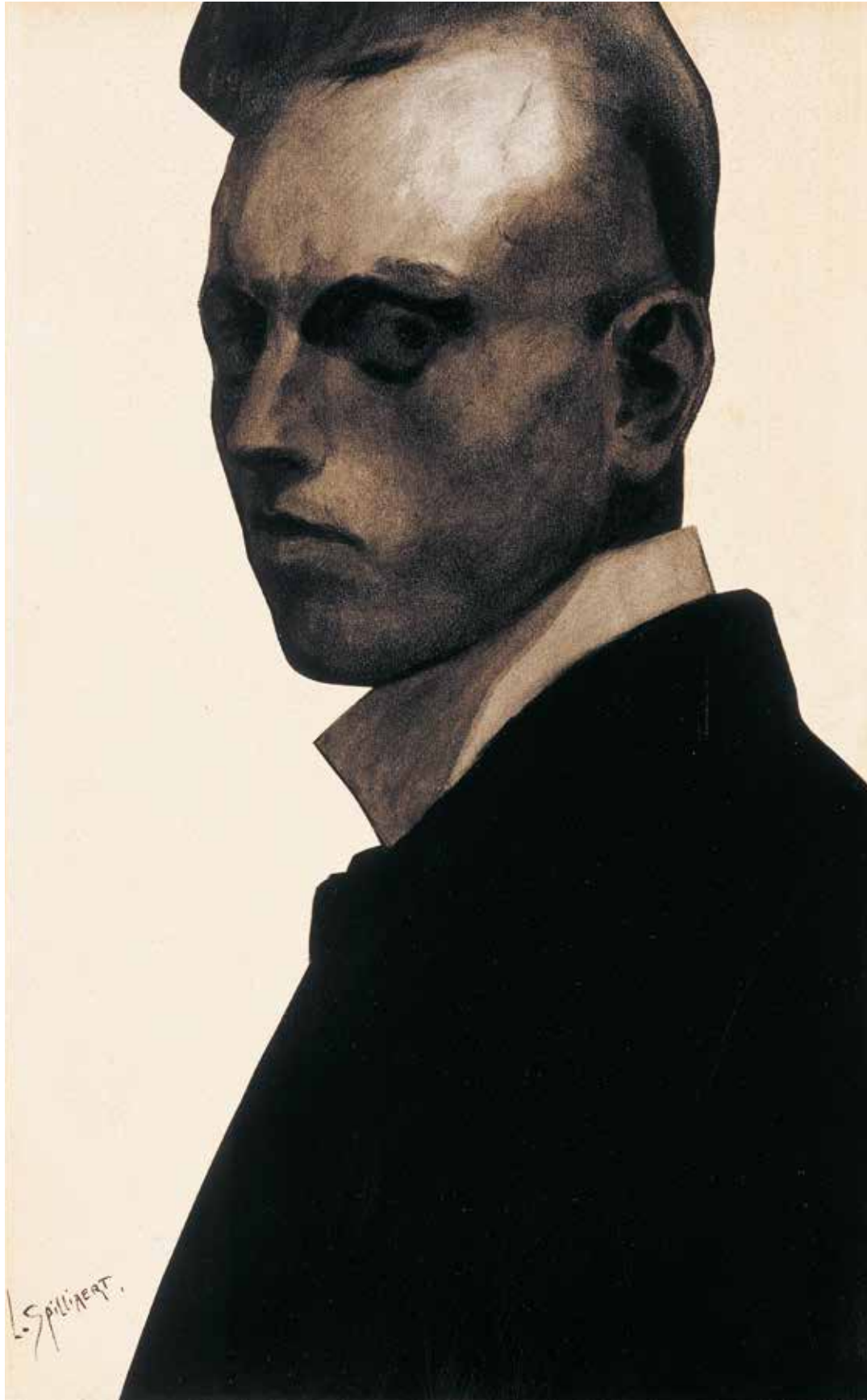
This project takes place within a broader context of renewed international interest in Spilliaert's work. We are particularly enthusiastic about the concurrent exhibition *Close to Léon Spilliaert. Dialogue with Contemporary Art*, curated by Adriaens-Pannier, which explores the resonance of Spilliaert's oeuvre in the work of contemporary artists such as Michaël Borremans, Dirk Braeckman, Berlinde De Bruyckere, Antony Gormley, Hans Op de Beeck, Luc Tuymans and Koen van den Broek, among others. Looking ahead, we note the forthcoming museum exhibition in the United States, co-organised by the Drawing Institute of the Menil Foundation and the Philadelphia Museum of Art in 2027 and 2028, the itinerant exhibition in Japan in 2029, and the major retrospective exhibition by Mu.ZEE and KBR (Royal Library of Belgium), presented in the reopened Mu.ZEE in Ostend (the artist's birthplace) and curated by Stefan Huygebaert and Daan van Heesch in 2030–2031, on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the artist's birth.

We warmly thank Hannibal Books, Gautier Platteau and his entire team for the enthusiasm with which they embraced this project and for their contribution to this splendid publication. Our gratitude also goes to Melissa Hughes for her expertise in the conservation of these delicate works on paper.

Finally, we would like to thank the entire gallery team – Christine de Schaetzen, Alessio Palmeri and Susana Ribeiro Henriques – whose dedication made this project possible.

Patrick Derom
Edouard Derom





The Interior as a Self-Portrait: Absence and Subjectivity in Spilliaert

Edouard Derom

The exhibition *Through Half-Open Doors* brings together a particularly remarkable group of interiors, illuminating the importance of this corpus within Spilliaert's oeuvre. When one thinks of Léon Spilliaert, it is most often his self-portraits and seascapes that come to mind. These are unquestionably among the artist's masterpieces. But why are his interiors so rarely discussed, and why do they feature so seldom in major museum collections? They are by no means a secondary theme. Created at the same time as the self-portraits and seascapes, they enter into close dialogue with them, sharing the same artistic inquiry and the same moment of creative intensity. It is therefore difficult to appreciate fully any one of them without considering the others. The interiors unquestionably extend the preoccupations of the self-portraits and seascapes into an enclosed, intimate and silent space. From a technical standpoint, they are every bit as accomplished.

As is often the case with Spilliaert, these are works on paper, executed in a highly personal technique that he developed as a self-taught artist. Marie-Noëlle Grison's analysis in this publication is particularly illuminating in this regard – not least for her understanding of the subtle blend of dry and oil-based materials that Spilliaert employs with such frequency and singularity. As in the self-portraits and seascapes, the interiors are characterised by a striking economy of means and compositional rigour. The objects, few in number but carefully chosen, become the protagonists of a mental space suspended, as it were, in time – where the presence of things is at once tangible and mysterious. These interiors are marked by a strange, at times unsettling, atmosphere reflective of Spilliaert's own character. He endows his works with a dark and melancholic quality that, although particularly pronounced between 1903 and 1913, would never truly dissipate. Artists such as Xavier Mellery and Georges Le Brun – Belgian Symbolist painters – also chose the bourgeois interior as their setting, one in which silence seems to inhabit objects and invests them with an almost spiritual presence. But it is particularly in keeping with the style of the Danish painter Vilhelm Hammershøi – whose works are



[Fig. 6]



[Fig. 7]

imbued with the same unsettling tranquillity – that Spilliaert’s interiors find their place. Even the occasional presence of a human figure is never enough to dispel the sense of solitude that pervades these spaces (fig. 6). Admittedly, the light is different, often lighter and more diffuse, yet numerous elements unite their works: the silence that inhabits objects, the spiritual weight of the compositions, the half-open doors, and the complex interplay of spaces *enfilade*, structured by a rigorous play of lines (fig. 7).

Far from limiting himself to a mere description of reality, Spilliaert constructs a world in which the visible becomes the vehicle for an inner reality that betrays his temperament – one inclined towards introspection and solitude. Tormented, anxious, ill – around 1907 he suffered from stomach ulcers – Spilliaert made his interiors, seascapes, night scenes and self-portraits the stage for his existential questioning. This was nourished by his reading of Symbolist literature and the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche, to which he makes direct reference in one of his early self-portraits.

As Stefan Huygebaert observes, Spilliaert uses the same settings for his interiors and self-portraits. *White Sheets, 2 November* (fig. 16) and *Self-Portrait, 2 November* (fig. 17), for example, depict identical interiors but with one difference: the presence of the artist. This is also the case with *Honesty Pods* (cat. 34) and *Self-Portrait* (cat. 35), in which the artist depicts himself in front of the same mirror and the same vase of honesty. Elsewhere, the relationship between the interior and the self-portrait differs, yet the same architectural elements are present: in *Self-Portrait with Painter’s Easel* (fig. 8), for example, the same side wall from *The Glass Roof* (cat. 12) can be recognised at the top of the composition, with its black panel flanked by two windows. The interiors may therefore be read as self-portraits *in absentia*.

THE PATERNAL LABORATORY

Spilliaert’s earliest interior drawing dates from 1899. It is one of the earliest known works by the artist, made when he was just eighteen years old. His highly distinctive style is not yet fully recognisable, nor is the mastery of watercolour and Indian ink wash that we admire in his later work. Yet this piece, *Father Spilliaert’s Laboratory* (cat. 1), is already arresting. Highly descriptive as it is, certain elements disturb the viewer’s reading of it – not least the oversized mortar and pestle in the foreground, which we shall encounter again in other works in the exhibition. The longer one looks at it, the more the details – sometimes difficult to make out – reveal themselves, lending the whole a decidedly uncanny atmosphere. In the foreground, bottles and flasks are arranged on and beneath the table. The half-open door draws the eye into an attic room, at the centre of which stands an empty chair, its shadow cast by the light flooding



[Fig. 8]

Fig. 6
Vilhelm Hammershøi, *Interior in Strandgade, Sunlight on the Floor*, 1901, oil on canvas, 46.5 × 52 cm, SMK, Copenhagen.

Fig. 7
Vilhelm Hammershøi, *White Doors. Interior, 30 Strandgade*, 1899, oil on canvas, 42.5 × 39.5 cm, Ordrupgaard, Charlottenlund.

Fig. 8
Self-Portrait with Painter’s Easel, 1908, Indian ink wash, coloured pencil, coloured chalk and pastel on paper, 645 × 485 mm (day), KMSKA, Antwerp.





Hall of Mirrors, Rear Building, Enigma.

Towards a Reconstruction of Spilliaert's Living Environment

Stefan Huygebaert

Two of the more than 110 unique works by Léon Spilliaert at Mu.ZEE in Ostend always seem to have referred to one another: *Self-Portrait with Red Pencil* (fig. 12) and *Plants, Inkwell and Mirror* (fig. 13), both from 1908. The connection lies in the repetition of a specific motif: two plant pots stacked one above the other on rounded corner shelves. During his exceptionally productive and inventive period between 1907 and 1909, Spilliaert produced many of his most memorable interiors and his most enigmatic self-portraits, dominated by a complex play of mirrors. It has long been suspected that the setting depicted in these self-portraits and interior scenes is the family home, where the artist is thought to have lived permanently until the age of 35 – apart from a few short stays and trips to Brussels and Paris. This house at 2 Kapellestraat, in the commercial heart of Ostend, housed the shop and display window of the Grande parfumerie Spilliaert-Jonckheere, owned by his father Léonard (1851–1928). To the right of the door, at number 4, was a barber's shop that also belonged to the family business; to the left was the corner of the town hall on Wapenplein. Number 2 Kapellestraat came into the possession of Léonard, the artist's father, in 1890.¹ Nothing of the house remains, and the surviving visual record is unfortunately limited to two photographs of the façade (fig. 14; fig. 28) The German bombing raids on Ostend in late May 1940 destroyed not only Kapellestraat but also the neighbouring town hall. The building also housed the Museum voor Schone Kunsten (Museum of Fine Arts) which held works by Ensor, Khnopff and Spilliaert, among others – all lost in the destruction, along with the archive of all building applications and plans.² Reconstructing the space in which Spilliaert produced what is essentially the core



[Fig. 12]



[Fig. 13]



[Fig. 14]

Fig. 12
Self-Portrait with Red Pencil, 1908,
 Indian ink, gouache and pastel on paper,
 850 × 690 mm, Mu.ZEE, Ostend.

Fig. 13
Plants, Inkwell and Mirror, 1908, water-
 colour, gouache, coloured pencil and
 Indian ink on paper, 640 × 490 mm,
 Mu.ZEE, Ostend.

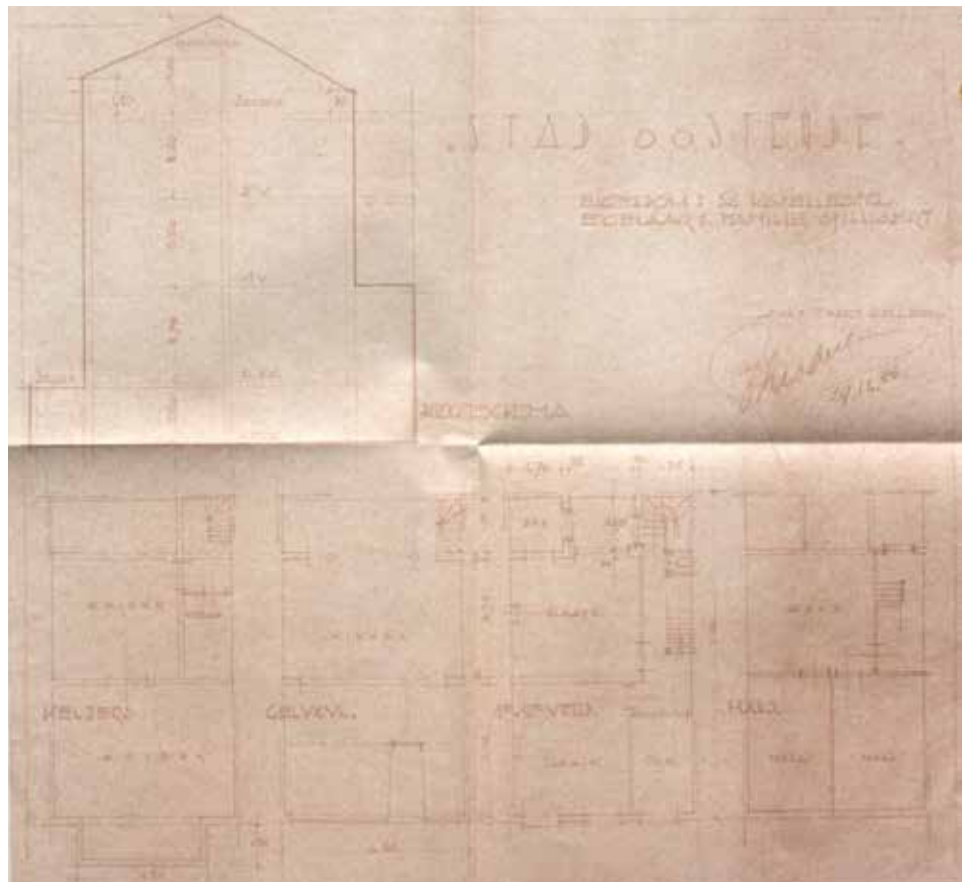
Fig. 14
 Anonymous, photograph of the Grande
 parfumerie Spilliaert-Jonckheere, c. 1890.

Fig. 15
 Bruges, State Archives, Rechtbanken
 voor Oorlogsschade West-Vlaanderen
 (West Flanders War Damage Tribunals),
 MB0001, box 3238, file 3057304:
 reconstructed plan by Theo de Lee,
 29 December 1946, with details:
 Elevation and Ground Floor.

of his psychologically charged oeuvre is therefore a near-hopeless undertaking. This scarcity of sources and the resulting lack of clarity have for decades contributed to the enigma surrounding Spilliaert's interiors, self-portraits and oeuvre as a whole.

Recent research, however, has brought new documents to light. After the war and the artist's death, his family submitted a file on 2 Kapellestraat to the Rechtbanken voor Oorlogsschade West-Vlaanderen (West Flanders War Damage Tribunals). The file also contains an architectural plan (fig. 15), albeit of limited use. It emerges that shortly before the war, in 1936–1937, the family had the entire house extensively renovated by architect Sylvain Smis (1909–2003), in all likelihood with a view to letting it out. In the process, the layout of the rooms, the staircase and even the cellar was altered. Nevertheless, the post-war plan – drawn up in December 1946 by architect Theo de Lee (1910–1967) on the basis of statements from the family, as well as a plan by Smis dated 2 December 1937, and a site visit after the rubble had been cleared – reveals that the building was 6.5 metres wide and 11 metres deep, with a ground-floor height of 3.7 metres. That is not much to go on for a reconstruction, but – as this article argues – Spilliaert's own oeuvre can tell us considerably more.

It is a commonplace to describe visual artists in general, and Spilliaert in particular, as keen or 'relentless' observers.³ Yet it is worth emphasising in the context of his interiors and self-portraits. What

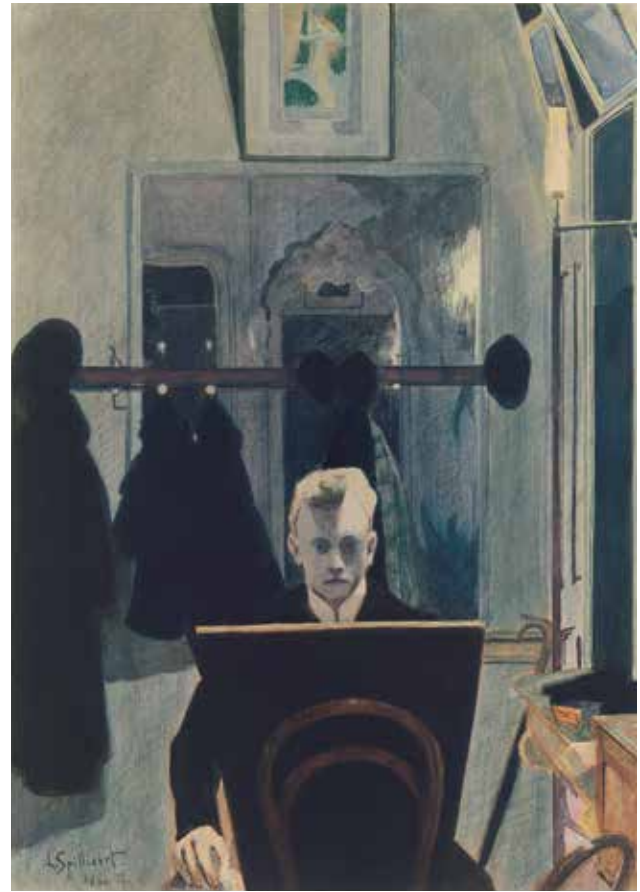


[Fig. 15]

the actual rear building with its glass roof and the room with the round table, just as the console with its elegant support and the small clock in front of the mirror did on the opposite side. The north-western wall is also visible in the red-suffused *Self-Portrait, September 1908*. The two plants from *Self-Portrait with Red Pencil* and *Plants, Inkwell and Mirror* were most likely arranged one above the other in the northern corner of the room. *Interior with Green Plant* at first glance seems difficult to place within the sequence of interior elements, although the flowerpot and the marble panel with brass knobs are recognisable. Mirroring the work changes the picture entirely and makes the space considerably more legible: from left to right, the marble panel with brass knobs and the rounded console; next to it, and slightly further back in the frame, the plant that also appears in *Self-Portrait with Red Pencil*, there with the blue cylindrical pot just visible in *Wall-mounted Cabinet with Cup and 'Le Carillon'*. Mirrored, the location of the reflected trio of windows from *The Glass Roof* falls convincingly into place.

Finally, the north-eastern or 'back' wall, directly opposite the doorway between the rear building and the perfume shop, features the Rococo cabinet with a marble top and two large, elegantly framed mirrors: one, on the left, with a simple undulating frame; the other, on the right, with an ornate gilded design – as seen in *Interior with Green Plant, Interior with Flower Bulb* and, to complete the circle, *The Glass Roof*. The wall also supported at least two slender gas wall lamps. In *Self-Portrait with Drawing Board* (fig. 18), Spilliaert portrayed himself looking into the ornate mirror on the right – the right-hand mirror and part of the left-hand one reflected once more in the plain rectangular mirror flanking the doorway, behind the artist.

Alongside the sequence of eighteen works, Spilliaert's oeuvre contains a dozen depictions of a living-room corner with a round table and, beside it, a Leuven stove whose mantelpiece bears a clock under a glass dome. In contrast to the self-portrait focus of the eighteen works discussed above, most of these twelve works depict other figures. Eight of the twelve form part of a sketchbook (figs 1–5). Each depicts one or more figures gathered around the hearth in the living room: sometimes his mother sitting beside a sketching Spilliaert, at other times his father reading or his sister leaning on a Thonet chair – a study for *The Wait* (December 1908, New York, Hearn Family Trust). In addition to these eight sketches, there are also *Boxes in Front of a Mirror* (fig. 22), *Portrait of Maurice Spilliaert*, *Interior with Green Plant and Glass Globe* (cat. 11) and *Interior with Green Lampshade* (cat. 8), all from 1907.⁹ Might these twelve works also refer to the rear building? It seems unusual to have the living room – which one would expect on the *bel-étage* (first floor) – situated behind the shop. Yet several similarities appear to support the idea. We may be looking at the western corner of the room, diagonally opposite *The Glass Roof*, on



[Fig. 18]

the left as one enters. The round table is the same as the one described above. The sketchbook drawing in which Spilliaert depicts himself seated at a table shows the shop doorway. *Interior with Green Plant and Glass Globe* links the stove and mantelpiece to the marble panel with brass knobs. In *Interior with Green Lampshade*, a coat on the coat rack may be discernible in the reflection, and the leaning picture frames from *Self-Portrait with Drawing Board* can also be made out. Even the red-and-white chequered tablecloth links this sequence to works such as *Self-Portrait with Sketchbook* (cat. 48), in which the shop doorway is visible.

According to Robert Hoozee, all these depictions of his own interior reveal Spilliaert's attachment to a familiar, well-known environment.¹⁰ This attempt at reconstruction, far from expressing his idiosyncrasy, demonstrates Spilliaert's loyalty to that environment while also revealing something of his personality and artistic practice. In the words of Franz Hellens (1881–1972), one can only truly understand the artist by visiting this – now lost – place:

‘Shortly afterwards, I met Spilliaert in Ostend, at his father’s perfumery, and it was in that setting that I came to understand his art better. Spilliaert is one of those people who look far ahead, yet are nonetheless inspired by the most everyday objects in their surroundings.’¹¹

The author would like to thank Anne Adriaens-Pannier, Enzo Albrecht, Johanna Dams, Edouard Derom, Mieke Mels, Ilse Roosens, Mieke Van Steen and Bruno Verbergt.

1 Bruges, State Archives, *Rechtbanken voor Oorlogsschade West-Vlaanderen* (West Flanders War Damage Tribunals), MB0001, box 3238, file 3057304.

2 Stefan Huygebaert, ‘De Spilliaertcollectie van Mu.ZEE’, on leonspilliaert.be (published 24 December 2024).

3 Bernard Dewulf, *Toewijdingen*, Amsterdam: Atlas Contact, 2014, p. 67.

4 Anne Adriaens-Pannier, ‘L’Isolée entre la terre et la mer (...) Le cheminement de la perception de la femme. de la femme chez Léon Spilliaert’, in Marie-Claire Adès and Isabelle Moijca (eds.), *Léon Spilliaert. Œuvres de jeunesse*, exh. cat., Paris, Musée-Galerie de la Seita, 1997, p. 33.

5 Denis Laoureux, ‘Een inktzwarte nacht: de nachtstukken van Léon Spilliaert’, in Anne Adriaens-Pannier and Michel Draguet (eds.), *Léon Spilliaert. Een vrije geest*, Ghent: Ludion, 2006, p. 75.

6 Letter from Léon Spilliaert to Paule Deman, 31 December 1904, Brussels, AACB, inv. 558 (photostat): ‘Faites des morceaux de nature, paysage ou intérieur, sans rien retrancher ou ajouter. Rendez les choses les plus fidèlement possible, réellement, sincèrement.’

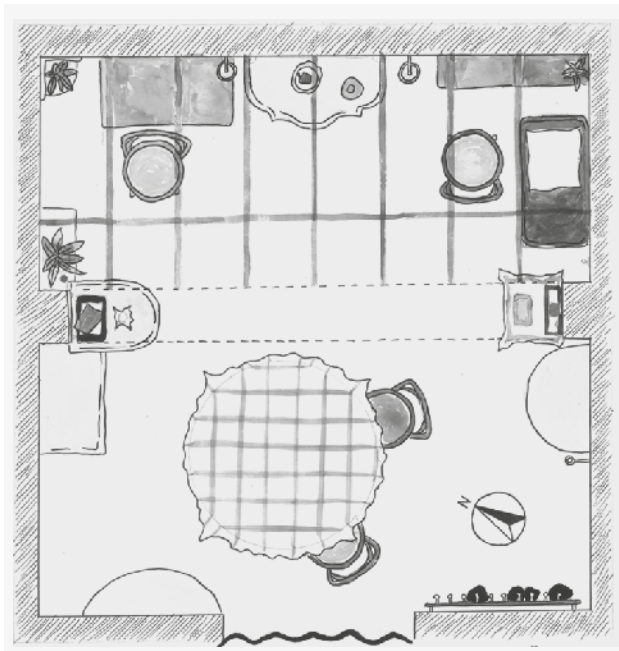
7 Letter from Léon Spilliaert to Edmond Deman, 14 June 1908, Brussels, AACB, inv. 561 (photostat): ‘J’ai fait beaucoup de choses nouvelles cet hiver, entre autres des natures-mortes et intérieurs que j’espère avoir le plaisir de vous faire voir lors d’un prochain passage à Bruxelles en septembre prochain.’

8 The term ‘*acberbuis*’ (rear building) was previously used by Bernard Dewulf in 1998. Bernard Dewulf, ‘Als de dingen koorts krijgen’, *De Morgen*, 23 January 1998.

9 *Self-Portrait with Mirror*, 1908 (Mu.ZEE) does feature a clock under a glass dome, but the interior otherwise differs considerably from the other works in these twelve.

10 Robert Hoozee, ‘Spilliaert and Late Symbolism’, in Anne Adriaens-Pannier and Michel Draguet (eds.), *Léon Spilliaert. A Free Spirit*, exh. cat., Brussels: RMFAB, 2006, p. 10.

11 Franz Hellens, ‘Léon Spilliaert’, in *Sélection, Chronique de la vie artistique*, Brussels, vol. 1, no. 3, (15 October 1920), p. 1: ‘J’ai rencontré peu après Spilliaert à Ostende, dans la boutique de parfumerie de son père, et j’ai mieux compris son art dans ce milieu. Spilliaert est de ceux qui voient loin et qui s’inspirent toutefois aux objets les plus familiers de leur entourage.’



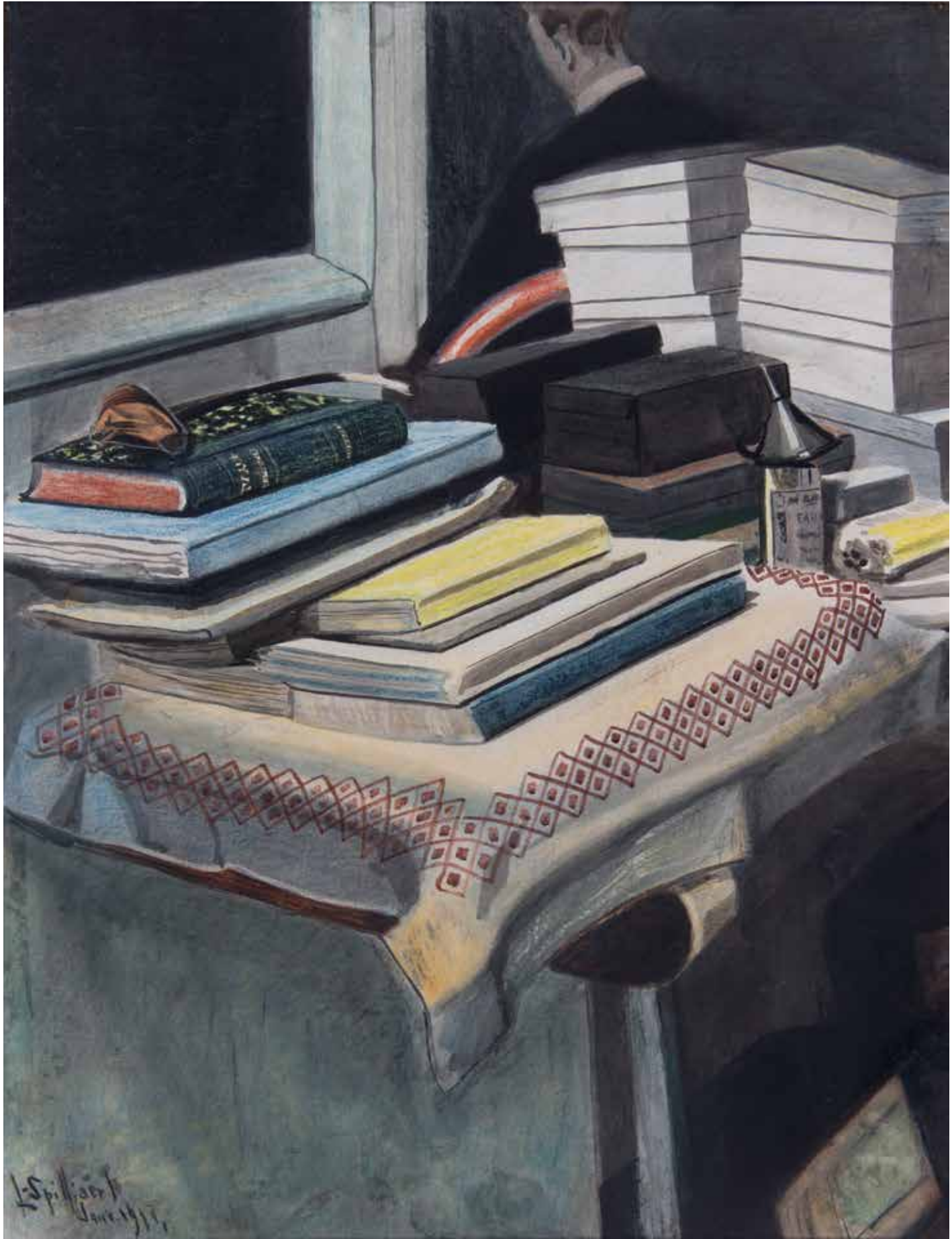
[Fig. 19]

Fig. 18
Self-Portrait with Drawing Board, 1907, Indian ink, watercolour, coloured pencil on paper, 530 × 380 mm, The Metropolitan Museum, New York, Gift of William S. Lieberman, in honor of A. Hyatt Mayor, 1980.

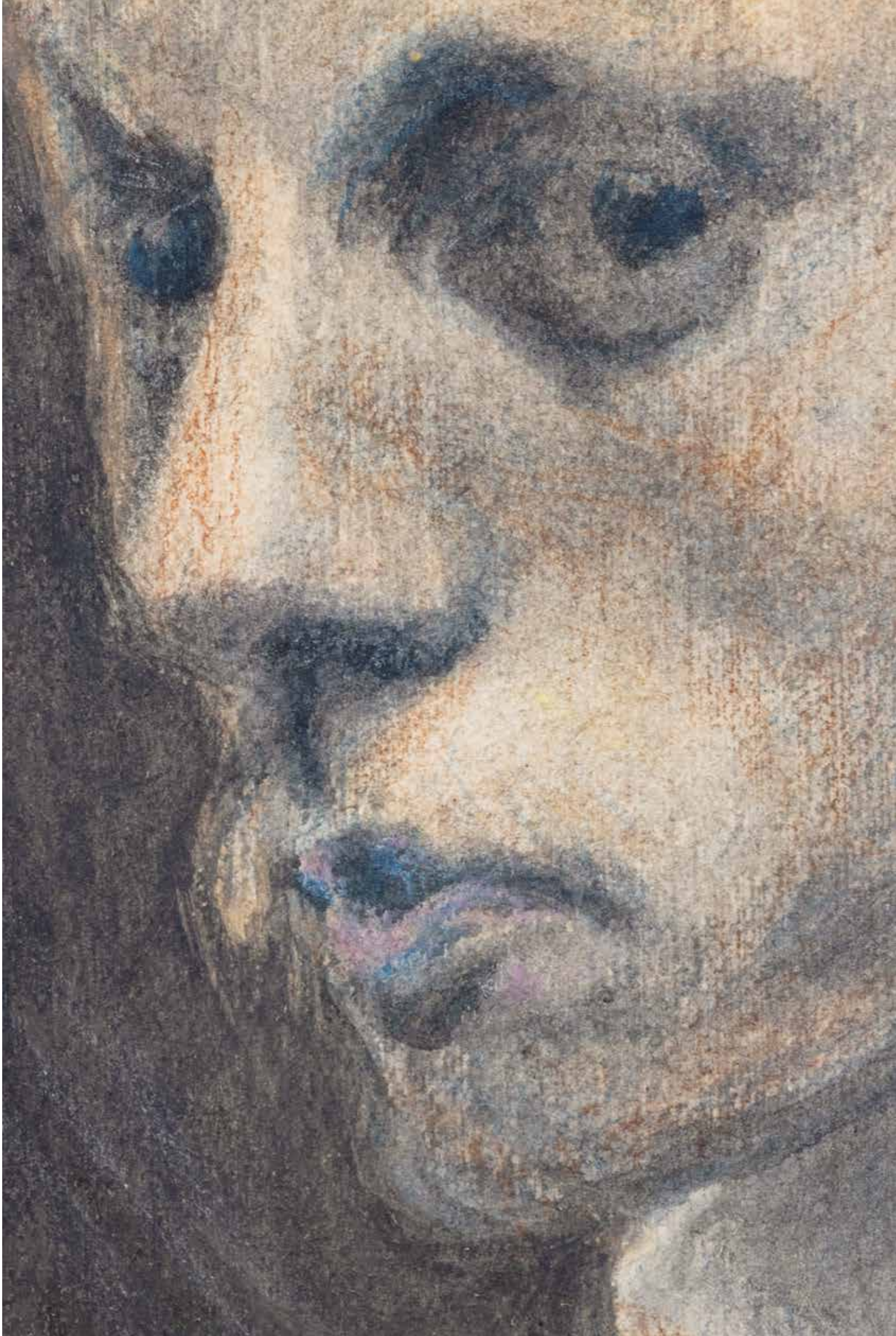
Fig. 19
Tentative reconstruction of the floor plan of the rear building at 2 Kapellestraat in Ostend (Stefan Huygebaert, May 2026).

Interiors & Still Lifes





Cat. 7 Wall-mounted Cabinet with Books and Boxes, Figure Seen from Behind January 1907



Vanities...

Anne Adriaens-Pannier

It is well known that still lifes as a genre have long served to disguise messages – generally conventional ones. A skull, an extinguished candle, a sealed box or an empty chair: each stands as a reminder of the brevity of human existence. Such objects are known as ‘vanities’. Over the centuries, the genre adopted objects representative of material wealth and juxtaposed them with elements signifying the triumph of death. Spilliaert, over time, developed a highly distinctive iconography around the theme.

From his teenage years onwards, influenced by his reading of Lautréamont and Edgar Allan Poe, Spilliaert displayed a curious fascination with the macabre and the morbid. With the carefree audacity of a young provocateur, he does not hesitate to depict the consequences of sudden death. In his youthful sketchbook from 1898, he wanders through seaside cemeteries (fig. 29), pausing in sympathy over grief-stricken widows collapsed upon a grave. He draws, with remarkable assurance, a procession of hearses casting their dead from the clifftop, where a cohort of scythe-bearing skeletons stands in wait (fig. 30). To express this anxiety – this unease that belongs to a supernatural world – he sketches, in graphite, bodies devoid of substance, topped by emaciated yet carefully modelled skulls: from life, one might say. Even in death, Death grimaces and thrusts forward a ravenous jaw. Might these early attempts have echoed in his mind when, years later, the deeply autoscopic self-portrait series of 1908 confronted that same deathly dread – of seeing himself from outside himself? The same treatment of his almost disembodied form, the same black shadows in eye sockets devoid of gaze. In his vision, the image of death and the life of the image seem to feed off one another in an unbearable confrontation. Unlike the traditional *vanitas*, which accepts the inevitable end with self-abnegation, in his self-portraits Spilliaert exposes the full horror ‘from skull to skull’, allowing himself to be pervaded by death.¹

The terrible episode of the First World War would, in a sense, change the game. In 1914, brought face to face with the chaos of the conflict through his involuntary service as a civil guard protecting the citizens of Ostend, Spilliaert soberly returned to the study of the skull (fig. 31).

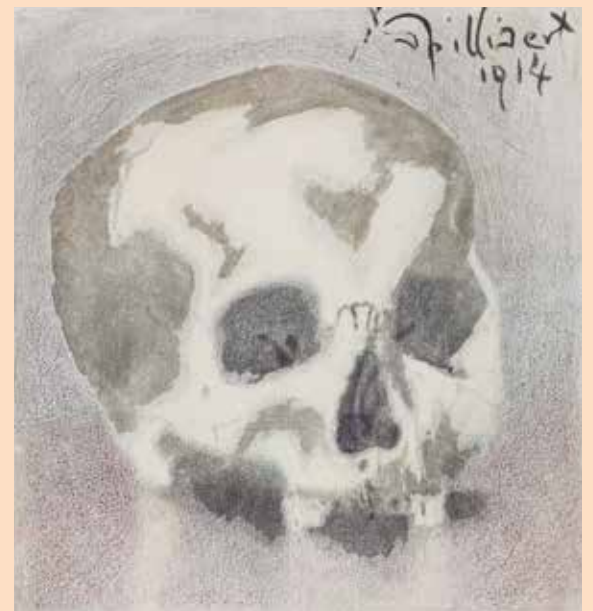
In 1917, the skull then appears in a more studied setting – as an object of fascination, a serene witness to inevitable acceptance. Placed alone on a precious black Chinese lacquer box, against a backdrop of artfully folded fabric, the skull gleams and emits a ghostly glow (cat. 37). Equally solitary, set upon an anonymous box that might evoke the urns of today, the skull is joined by two companions with disembodied forms, as in a *sacra conversazione* (cat. 38). With a touch of tenderness, Spilliaert sets a horsetail frond swaying in the background – a motif he would later have unfurling within mysterious greenhouses in a cycle of illustrations for Maeterlinck. In another work, heightened by colours with funereal undertones, the skull rests snugly on a lace cushion edged with a shimmering garland of dried white-petalled flowers (fig. 32). But now, the promise of a happy life brought by the arrival of a little girl into his home dismissed all macabre thoughts and every temptation of death.



[Fig. 29]



[Fig. 30]



[Fig. 31]

Fig. 29
Youth Sketchbook 1897–1898,
 pencil on paper, 211 × 170 mm, The
 Phoebus Foundation, Antwerp, p. 1.

Fig. 30
Youth Sketchbook 1897–1898, pencil
 on paper, 211 × 170 mm, The Phoebus
 Foundation, Antwerp, p. 23.

Fig. 31
Skull (1914), pencil, Indian ink wash,
 coloured pencil on paper, 188 × 178 mm,
 KBR, Print Room, Brussels.













List of Works



Cat. 1
Father Spilliaert's Laboratory
 1899, pencil, Indian ink wash, brush, pen, watercolour, varnish on paper, 299 × 277 mm (day), signed and dated upper right: LEON SPILLIAERT99, private collection



Cat. 2
Self-Portrait in the Dunes
 (1903), charcoal on paper, 225 × 286 mm, not signed or dated, private collection



Cat. 3
Self-Portrait
 (1903), pencil, Indian ink wash, brush, pen, gouache on paper, 198 × 142 mm (day), initials and date lower middle: LSp 2 FEVRIER 1902, private collection



Cat. 4
White Box, Bottle, Shells and Books
 (1904), pencil, Indian ink wash, brush, coloured pencil, pastel, gouache on paper, 275 × 415 mm, double signed lower left: L. Spilliaert, private collection



Cat. 5
My Father's Workshop
 November 1907, Indian ink, brush, pastel, coloured pencil on paper, 498 × 352 mm (day), signed and dated lower left: LEON Spilliaert / Nov 07, private collection



Cat. 6
Boxes and Files in the Workshop of Father Spilliaert
 December 1907, pencil, Indian ink, brush, wax pastel, watercolour, coloured pencil on paper, 650 × 500 mm, signed and dated lower left: L. Spilliaert / Déc. 07, private collection



Cat. 7
Wall-mounted Cabinet with Books and Boxes, Figure Seen from Behind
 January 1907, Indian ink wash, brush, coloured pencil, pastel, coloured chalk, gouache, black chalk on paper, 634 × 481 mm (day), signed and dated lower left: L. Spilliaert / JANV. 1907, private collection



Cat. 8
Interior with Green Lampshade
 December 1907, Indian ink wash, brush, coloured pencil, watercolour on paper, 628 × 480 mm (day), signed and dated lower right: L. Spilliaert / Déc. 07, private collection



Cat. 9
Wall-mounted Cabinet with Cup and 'Le Carillon'
 1908, Indian ink, brush, watercolour, wax pastel on paper, 734 × 522 mm (day), signed and dated bottom left: LSpilliaert / 08, private collection



Cat. 10
Interior with Green Plant
 1907, Indian ink wash, brush, coloured pencil on paper, 485 × 550 mm (day), signed upper right: L. Spilliaert, signed and dated lower, towards left: L. Spilliaert 07, private collection



Cat. 11
Interior with Green Plant and Glass Globe
 (1907), Indian ink wash, brush, coloured pencil, pastel, wax pastel, gouache on paper, 486 × 638 mm, signed upper right: L. Spilliaert, private collection



Cat. 12
The Glass Roof
 1909, Indian ink wash, brush, coloured pencil on paper, 643 × 502 mm, signed and dated upper left: L Spilliaert 09, private collection, courtesy Patrick Derom Gallery



Cat. 13
Hothouses I
 1917, Conté crayon, Indian ink, brush, pen, coloured chalk on brown paper, 661 × 498 mm (day), signed and dated lower right: L. Spilliaert 1917, private collection



Cat. 14
Interior with Flower Bulb
 1909, pencil, Indian ink wash, brush, watercolour, pastel on paper, 648 × 497 mm, signed and dated upper left: L. Spilliaert / 09, private collection



Cat. 15
The Hairdresser's Salon
 1909, Indian ink wash, brush, coloured pencil on paper, 641 × 492 mm (day), signed and dated lower left: L. Spilliaert / 09, private collection



Cat. 16
Crucifix and Globe
 (1908), Indian ink wash, brush, watercolour, gouache, coloured pencil on paper, 491 × 637 mm (day), signed lower left: L. Spilliaert, private collection, Antwerp



Cat. 17
The Piano
 1909, Indian ink wash, brush, watercolour, black chalk on paper, 638 × 494 mm (day), signed and dated upper right: L. Spilliaert 09, private collection



Cat. 18
Mortar, Pestle and Rag
 (1907), Indian ink wash, brush, coloured pencil, watercolour, black chalk on paper, 363 × 245 mm, signed lower left: L. Spilliaert, Tom Gerits



Cat. 19
Mortar and Pestle
 (1907), Indian ink, brush, watercolour, gouache, wax pastel on paper, 363 × 245 mm (day), signed lower left: L. Spilliaert, private collection



Cat. 20
Teapot, Small Stove and Plate
 (1909), pencil, Indian ink wash, brush on paper, 222 × 292 mm (day), signed lower right: L. Spilliaert, dedication lower left: offert à Madame Deutsch / L. Spilliaert, private collection



Cat. 21
Cup, Small Stove and Saucepan
 (1908), Indian ink wash, brush on paper, 220 × 292 mm, signed lower left: L. Spilliaert, Vandenabeele-De Bruyn Collection



Cat. 22
Water Carafe on Bedside Table
 (1909), pencil, Indian ink wash, brush on paper, 292 × 222 mm, signed lower right: L. Spilliaert, private collection



Cat. 23
The Alarm Clock
 (1909), Indian ink wash, brush, watercolour, gouache on paper, 345 × 442 mm, signed lower right: L. Spilliaert, FIBAC, Antwerp



Cat. 24
Palm Plant, Mirrors and Seascape in the Background
 1914, watercolour, gouache on paper, 346 × 242 mm (day), signed and dated lower left: L. Spilliaert / 1914, private collection



Cat. 49
Self-Portrait
1908, Indian ink wash, brush,
black chalk, wax colour crayon,
gum arabic on paper mounted on
light cardboard, 275 × 228 mm,
signed and dated (barely legible)
lower left: L. Spilliaert / 08,
private collection



Cat. 50
The Open Door. Waiting
1946, pencil, watercolour,
Indian ink, brush, pen on paper,
495 × 347 mm, signed and
dated lower right: LSpilliaert /
1946, private collection



Cat. 51
The Flasks
(1909), Indian ink, brush on
paper, 486 × 635 mm (day),
signed and dated upper right:
L. Spilliaert / 1909, private
collection



Cat. 52
Self-Portrait
(1907), Indian ink, brush,
watercolour, coloured
pencil, wax crayon on paper,
352 × 248 mm (day), signed
lower left: L. Spilliaert, private
collection







Authors

Anne Adriaens-Pannier was Head of Department at the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium (RMFAB) in Brussels and curator of the works-on-paper collection at the Museum of Modern Art from 1974 until 2011. She has curated numerous monographic and thematic exhibitions, including: *The Avant-Garde in Belgium*; *Pierre Alechinsky*; *Cobra*; *Walter Leblanc*; and *Line and Colour in Drawing*. In 1989 she began her PhD on Léon Spilliaert, which was awarded by Ghent University in 2003. *Léon Spilliaert: Le regard de l'âme* was published in 2006 (published in English as *Léon Spilliaert: From the Depths of the Soul* in 2019) on the occasion of the Spilliaert retrospective at the RMFAB in Brussels. As Artistic Director of the Spilliaert Huis in Ostend (2016–2021), she organised eight thematic exhibitions. She is working on the Spilliaert catalogue raisonné, and is overseeing the annotated edition of the artist's correspondence. Internationally, she has curated Spilliaert exhibitions in London (2020), Paris (2021), Lausanne (2023), and Neuss (2024). She is collaborating on a Spilliaert retrospective in Houston and Philadelphia (2027–2028) and is preparing, with the Royal Academy of Arts in London, a touring exhibition in Japan for 2029. She is the author of numerous articles and books on the artist.

Marie-Noëlle Grison is an art historian and curator. She gained an MA in art history from Paris-Sorbonne University (Paris IV). In 2016–2017, she was appointed Junior Curator of Prints and Drawings at the Fondation Custodia (Paris) and the Rijksmuseum (Amsterdam) as part of an apprenticeship programme co-organised by both institutions. Since 2022, she has been conducting doctoral research at KU Leuven within the FRIABLE project. Her research focuses on the art-technical investigation of modern friable drawing media in Belgian art, with case studies highlighting Léon Spilliaert's studio practice. Deeply interested in artistic techniques and the materiality of artworks, she is also a practising printmaker.

Edouard Derom has co-run the Patrick Derom Gallery since 2024 alongside his father, who founded it in 1986. Initially trained in law at KU Leuven, he began his career at Linklaters before pursuing an MBA and an MA at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. He has held positions at leading museums in the United States, Europe and China. Derom received his PhD from the Institute of Fine Arts at New York University, where his research focused on the ZERO group and its eponymous artist magazine. He co-curated the ZERO retrospective at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York in 2014. His expertise ranges from early twentieth-century art (especially Léon Spilliaert) to contemporary art, and he is currently organising an Ai Weiwei exhibition in Belgium to be held in the autumn of 2026.

Stefan Huygebaert has been a curator at Mu.ZEE, Ostend since 2022. Previously, he was a Research Foundation – Flanders (FWO) pre- and post-doctoral researcher at Ghent University and at the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florence. He researches, teaches and publishes on nineteenth- and twentieth-century art, with a focus on legal iconology, symbolism, Léon Spilliaert, picture post-cards, and art in Bruges. In recent years, Stefan has co-curated exhibitions including: *Albert Baertsoen* (Ghent, MSK, 2022); *Anna Boch. An Impressionist Journey* (Ostend, Mu.ZEE, 2023); *Rose, Rose, Rose à mes yeux. James Ensor and Still Life in Belgium (1830–1930)* (Ostend, Mu.ZEE, 2023–2024); and *Statuettes. Small Sculpture at Home* (Ostend, Venetian Galleries, 2026–2027). He also coordinates the website leonspilliaert.be, launched at the end of 2024.





L. Spilliaert
09

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Cat. 52 Self-Portrait (1907)

Colophon

This book was published on the occasion of the exhibition *Léon Spilliaert: Through Half-Open Doors*, at the Patrick Derom Gallery, Brussels, from 3 June to 14 August 2026.

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Front cover image

Léon Spilliaert, *The Glass Roof*, 1909

Back cover image

Léon Spilliaert, *Red Flask*, (1909)

