



**H U B E R T   M A L F A I T**

Man with the accordion

Circa: 1927

1927

Oil on canvas

100 x 80 cm (39 <sup>3</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" x 31 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>" )

Framed: 119.5 x 99.5 cm (47" x 39 <sup>1</sup>/<sub>8</sub>" )

Signed above right: HMalfait

In the period 1925-1927, Hubert Malfait painted a small series of works of monumental figures with an extremely sculptural structure. From this series, The *Man with the accordion* is a highly convincing composition in space with a cubist construction of the character with the musical instrument. With this, the painter was related to the primitivism of the international avant-garde. Malfait seasoned these elements with mild

humor, which set him apart from Permeke and Van den Berghe and took his own place in Flemish expressionism. The figure is shown in close-up and the body is deformed. The accordion and furniture also have a strong sculptural character. The man with the accordion is a painting, the composition of which is kept strict with a figure shown frontally. The differentiated color is always endearing by the soft tones, the fresh and dark colors that effectively illustrate the contemporary atmosphere with light shades. Compared to his earlier work, he no longer applied the paint crustily, but flatter and thinner. The composition and colors have become lighter, while the pictorial and structural tensions have been preserved. Malfait created the volumes on the basis of large areas of color and nuances them by including shadows. These meaningful and spontaneous contributions give this painting a totally responsible construction, a primal form in balanced harmony, loaded with a lively spontaneity. The synthetic color areas and cubic area divisions are related to the contemporary work of Gust. De Smet who, together with Malfait, had been under the spell of André Lhôte's cubism since 1925. This work speaks through its evasive and poetic storyline reminiscent of the work of Marc Chagall, who met Malfait in 1926. Later in the 1920s Malfait exhibited in prominent art circles such as Kunst van Heden, Cabinet Maldoror and Le Centaure.

### Exhibitions

- 1927, Brussels, Galerie Le Centaure, *Hubert Malfait – A. De Kat*, 07-14.05.1927, no. 12.
- 1930, Venice, *XVIIe Esposizione Biennale Internazionale d'Arte*, no. 59.
- 1931, Brussels, Palais des Beaux-Arts, *Delvaux, Malfait, Van Overstraeten. Cycle des Expositions de l'Art Vivant*, 05-16.12.1931, no. 47.
- 1976, Ell-bij-Weert, Atelier De Fuus, *Het landelijk leven in het Vlaams expressionisme*, 01.05-27.06.1976, no. 17.
- 1976, Deurle, Museum Leon De Smet, *Schilders van Latem en de Leiestreek*, 13.11.1976 - 28.11.1976, no. 13.
- 1977, Vinkem-Beauvoorde, Sint-Audomaruskkerk, *Vlaams Expressionisme*, 16.07-15.08.1977, no. 40.
- 1977, Marke, Ontmoetingscentrum, *Aspekten van het Vlaams Expressionisme*, 22.10-05.11.1977, no. 56.
- 1981, Bourges, Crédit Agricole Mutuel du Cher, *Peinture Flamande XIXe-XXe siècle d'Ensor à Permeke*, 09.05-03.06.1981, no. 29.

### Literature

- 17. *Esposizione Internaitionale d'Arte della città di Venezia: catalogo*, 2. ed. (Venice: 1930), p. 243, no. 59 (as 'L'uomo e l'accordatore').
- De Ridder, A., *Hubert Malfait*, exh. cat. (Brussels: Le Centaure, 1927), 580 (as 'Accordéoniste'), p. 629 (ill.).
- De Ridder, A., *Jeune Peinture Belge – Malfait, De Sutter, Guiette* (Brussel: Cahiers de Belgique, 1928), p. 218 (as 'Joueur d'accordéon').
- Van Hoogenbemt, A., *De nieuwe generatie – Hubert Malfait* (Gent: Kunst, 1934), pp. 64-68 (as 'Harmonikaspeler').
- D'Haese, J., *Schilders van Latem en de Leiestreek*, exh. cat. (Deurle: Museum Leon De Smet, 1976), no. 13 (ill.).
- D'Haese, J., *Aspekten van het Vlaams Expressionisme*, exh. cat. (Marke: Kunstkring Joost De Clercq, 1977), p. 27, no. 56 (cover color ill.).

- Malfait, S. & P. Vanrobaeys, *Hubert Malfait Oeuvre-catalogue* (Tielt: Lannoo, 1986), pp. 47, 102, no. 50 (ill.).