

GALERIE
OSCAR DE VOS



G U S T A V E V A N D I E S W I C H E S T Y N E

Eucharistic Christ

Circa: 1907

1907

Oil on canvas

55 x 40 cm

Framed: 95 x 78,5 cm

Signed and dated top right: GUSTAVE / VAN DE WOESTYNE 1907

In an undated letter to his friend Louis Scharpé, Van de Woestyne describes his work :
"The painting is pale, very pale in tone. Jesus hangs on the cross, with joy one would say,
and 'tis very early in the morning. The four fountains of salvation of His Blood sprouting
from the wounds of His hands, feet and sides and 'it falls down into golden cups. 'Tis still
fountains of purity upon it and behind Him an orchard standing in flower in the Spring".

It is the interpretation of the Lamb of God sacrificed for humanity.

At Latem, Gustave became acquainted with the Leuven professor, Louis Scharpé,
Germanic philology. Albijn Van den Abeele, town clerk, painter and writer invited
him. As such, he longed for a literary assessment of his literary inspirations. We may say
that the professor was hoping for a meeting with Karel Van de Woestijne?

From the meeting with the Latem artists resulted a re-invitation. The two fellow painters
Valerius De Saedeleer and Gustave Van de Woestyne accepted the request to visit the
Dijle city. The atmosphere of the Benedictine monks on the Keizersberg must have
encouraged the pious Gustave to try his hand there in 1905. His spiritual aspirations were
short-lived. After a few months, he returned to his familiar Leie bends to develop his
pictorial talent. The delay as a postulant left its mark on the spiritual painter. The
reading of the mystic Bernardus Van Clairvaux satisfied his disposition so that his themes
are religiously motivated.

The Lamb of God motif is a familiar image to a Ghent native and refers to the retable in
the cathedral painted by Hubert and Jan Van Eyck. The Eucharist, a thanksgiving
through the sacrament of altar, takes place in a front garden. In the centre, the
innocent, meek lamb looks at the Saviour. Its flowing locks of hair lean towards the Art
Nouveau style. Imaginatively, the bloody crown of thorns drips onto the downward,
graceful wavy hairdo. They evoke the shoulder number, He who bears the burdens of
humanity. Very curious are the hands of the crucified Christ. "Vertically " facing the sky
as if the Son of God, His Father wildly emphasising that His task is done.

Symmetrically, two by two symbolic attributes are lined up. Two leaping fountains, the
source of life, spiritual power, allude to communion during the sacrifice of Mass.

A few steps lead to the background, the world with the blossoming orchard. The spring
image implies magnanimity, compassion in dealing. The theme proclaims a message of
salvation.

History:

Initially, in Latem, the painter sold his work to René Van Herrewege, architect,
contractor, living in De Porteneerstraat in Ghent. As a maecenas, he supported his
contemporaries and owned an extensive collection.

Exhibitions

- 1929, Bruxelles, Palais des Beaux-Arts, Gustave Van de Woestyne, O2-24/03/1929, cat.no.

7.

- 1953, Gent, Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Schilderijen uit Gentse Verzamelingen,

28/03-31/05/1953.

- 1960, Laren, Singer Museum, Vlaamse schilderkunst 1850-1950. Van realisme tot expressionisme, 02/07-04/09/1960, cat.no. 112.
- 1961, Sint-Martens-Latem, Gemeentehuis, *Latems kunstleven omstreeks 1910*, 03-25.06.1961, cat.no. 33.
- 1967, Mechelen, Cultureel Centrum, Gustave Van de Woestyne, 02/09-15/10/1967, cat.no. 10.
- 1970, Sint-Martens-Latem, Gemeentehuis, *Gustave Van de Woestyne 1881-1947*, cat.no. 13.
- 1981, Antwerpen, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Gustave Van de Woestyne 1881-1947, 13/06-13/09/1981, cat.no. 6.
- 1986, Brussel, Galerij ASLK, Religieuze thematiek in de Belgische kunst (1875-1985), 16/01-23/03/1986, cat.no. 47.
- 1988, Brussel, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten van België, De eerste groep van Sint-Martens-Latem, 28/10-31/12/1988, cat.no. 52.
- 1997, Deinze, MuDeL, Gustave Van de Woestyne 1881-1947, 27/09-14/12/1997, cat.no. 7.
- 2001, Gent, Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Een zeldzame weelde. Kunst van Latem en Leiestreek 1900-1930, 17.06-23.09.2001, cat.no. 77.
- 2010, Gent, Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Gustave Van de Woestyne, 27/03-27/06/2010, cat.no. 8.
- 2012, Deinze, MuDeL, Ecce Homo : de Heilige Bloedprocessie van Meigem, 18/02-15/04/2012.
- 2020, Gent, Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Van Eyck. Een optische revolutie, 01/02-30/04/2020, cat.no. 19.9.

Literature

- Borchert, T.-H., J. De Smet, J., M. Martens e.a., Van Eyck. Een optische revolutie (Gent: MSK/ Hannibal, 2020), 456-457, 497, cat.no. 19.9 (ill.).
 - Boyens, P., Sint-Martens-Latem. Kunstenaarsdorp in Vlaanderen (Tielt: Lannoo, 1992), 265-266.
- Boyens, P., Een zeldzame Weelde. Kunst van Latem en de Leiestreek 1900-1930, tent.cat. (Amsterdam/Gent: Ludion, 2001), 24-25, 69, 211, cat.no. 77 (ill.)
- Boyens, P., Symbolisme in Vlaanderen. De eerste generatie kunstenaars in Sint-Martens-Latem, tent.cat. (Den Bosch: Noordbrabants Museum, 2022), 70, no. 60 (ill.).
 - De Geest, J. e.a., Gustave Van de Woestyne 1881-1947, tent.cat. (Deinze: MuDeL, 1997), 107, cat.no. 7 (ill.).
 - Gepts, G., Gustave Van de Woestyne 1881-1947, tent.cat. (Antwerpen: KMSKA, 1981), 76, cat.no. 6 (ill.).
 - Haesaerts, P., L'Ecole de Laethem-Saint-Martin (Bruxelles: Editions Formes, 1945), 162.
 - Hoozee, R. & C. Verleysen, Gustave Van de Woestyne, tent.cat. (Gent: Museum voor Schone Kunsten, 2010), 62-63, cat.no. 8 (ill.).

- Langui, E., Gustave Van de Woestyne, tent.cat. (Mechelen: Cultureel Centrum, 1967), cat.no. 10.
- Pauwels, H. e.a., De eerste groep van Sint-Martens-Latem 1899-1914, tent.cat. (Brussel: Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten van België, 1988), 101, 176, cat.no. 52 (ill.).
- Pauwels, P.J.H., Als een fonkelenden spiegel (Sint-Martens-Latem: Galerie Oscar De Vos, 2019), 178 (ill.).
- Schoonbaert, L., Religieuze thematiek in de Belgische Kunst 1875-1985, tent. cat. (Brussel: Galerij ASLK, 1986), 147, cat.no. 47 (ill).
- Stubbe, A., De Vlaamse schilderkunst van Van Eyck tot Permeke (Brussel/Amsterdam: Elsevier, 1953), 364-365.
- Van de Woestyne, M, R. Van den Abeele, J. D'Haese, e.a., Gustave Van de Woestyne 1881-1947, tent.cat. (Sint-Martens-Latem: Latemse Kunstkring, 1970), 24, cat.no. 13.
- Van de Woestyne, K., Gustave Van de Woestyne, tent.cat. (Brussel: Palais des Beaux-Arts, 1929), 3, cat.no. 7.
- Van den Abeele, R., G. Chabot & H. Caspeele, Latems kunstleven omstreeks 1910, exh. cat. (Sint-Martens-Latem: Gemeentehuis, 1961), no. 33.
- Van den Abeele, R., Albijn Van den Abeele (Gent: Snoeck Ducaju & Zn., 1993), 187 (ill.).
- Vanbeselaere, W., Vlaamse schilderkunst 1850-1950. Van realisme tot expressionisme, tent.cat. (Laren: Singer Museum, 1960), 39, cat.no. 112.

Artist description:

In his youth, Gustave Van de Woestyne studied at the Ghent Academy for the Fine Arts. Nevertheless, he was the brother of the painter Karel, who introduced him to the Ghent artistic and intellectual environment to which he had access. At the side of his brother, Van de Woestyne received an intellectual education that ushered him, already at a young age, into the world of literature, classical music and sculpture.

Then in 1900, barely 19 years old, Van de Woestyne went to Sint-Martens-Latem in the company of his brother. The inexperienced academy student was confronted with the sophisticated intellectualism of George Minne. With Valerius De Saedeleer and Jules de Praetere, they formed the nucleus of the so-called first Latem group that was characterised by its symbolist aspirations.

As young artist, Van de Woestyne was noticed quite quickly, and in the years before the First World War, he was able to participate in important international exhibitions in Amsterdam, The Hague and Venice. He was also a guest of the Brussels' avant-garde group La Libre Esthétique.

Van de Woestyne lived in Latem until 1909. At that moment, the so-called first-symbolist-group had disbanded. Nostalgia for the Latem years caused him to follow Valerius De Saedeleer to Tiegem, where he lived until 1913. Nearby, in Ingooigem, resided another friend, the writer Stijn Streuvels, for whom in 1909 he illustrated the rewriting of the medieval beast epic Reynard the Fox. In 1913, he visited Firenze with De Saedeleer.

He fled, together with the De Saedeleer family, at the beginning of the war, and via Sint-Anna-ter-Muiden, Ostend and London ended the journey in Wales. He lived for some time in the seaside town of Aberystwyth. Afterwards he lived in Llandiloes, the village in which George Minne also spent his exile. Wales, however, was unable to seduce him; in 1915 and 1916, he regularly travelled to London. He finally moved to the British capital in 1917. These London connections brought with them relative well-being. Especially his contacts with the Dutch couple Jacob De Graaff-Bachiene were of

decisive importance. This friendly relation and the success he enjoyed in Great Britain even caused him to doubt returning to Belgium at the end of the war.

Back in Belgium, he spent a number of years at the Rozenhuis in Waregem. Modest Huys had also previously stayed in the house of the De Sutter family; after Van de Woestyne, Jules De Sutter took up residence there. He lived in Mechelen from 1925, where he was appointed as general manager of the Academy for the Fine Arts. In the same year he became a painting teacher at the National Higher Institute for the Fine Arts in Antwerp; from 1928 to 1931, he taught monumental painting at the Higher Institute for Decorative Art of Ter Kameren in Brussels.

These official assignments, however, did not prevent Van de Woestyne from remaining a part of the avant-garde. Thus, in 1925 he was the guest of the Brussels modernistic gallery Le Centaure. In 1929, was he was the solo guest of the newly opened Brussels Centre for Fine Arts. In 1926, he also was part of the artistic circle Les 9 that included among others Gustave De Smet and Frits Van den Berghe. Ten years later, together with this group, he became a member of the high-profile circle Les Compagnons de l'Art. Internationally, he was also considered part of the avant-garde. Thus, he was a notable participant in the exhibition L'Art Belge in Grenoble in 1926. On the other hand, from 1928 Van de Woestyne enjoyed the patronage of the Brussels couple David and Alice van Buuren. Their visionary collection today constitutes the most important collection of Van de Woestyne's work in the public domain, on display at the van Buuren Museum in Uccle.