

BRAM DEMUNTER

Ancient Alligator Swimming from the Sea to the River
2 September – 9 October 2021



Tim Van Laere Gallery presents its first solo exhibition by Bram Demunter, *Ancient Alligator Swimming from the Sea to the River*.

Anaximander drew one of the first world maps based on a subdivision by water. Since then, our worldview has continued to change, but the seas, oceans, and rivers have always played an important role. The mystical value of water and all the secrets of its unknown depths have inspired many stories, myths, and sagas. For this show, Bram Demunter was also inspired by different stories about the sea, the ocean, and its rivers. Demunter understands the lure of the sea and regularly looks at the seas of Ensor and Turner (who never ventured offshore). As in any good epic or hero's tale, the sea plays a major role, though hardly a positive one. Herman Melville's sea teaches us about evil, pride, and punishment, while the incredible floods in the Gilgamesh epic and later in the Bible make us shudder just thinking about the sea.

At the centre of the exhibition is the work *Ancient Alligator Swimming from the Sea to the River*, which depicts several islands with all kinds of human activities. All the other canvasses, with different islands and populations, spring from this work. Bram Demunter's oeuvre is about us, humankind, and the place we occupy in the world, the myths we create about ourselves, the stories and visual cultures that spring from us, and the changes we bring about in nature and our world view. Demunter digs through our history, making new connections that reach out from obscure stories, forgotten symbolism, Christian iconography, myths and sagas, to contemporary events and marginal anecdotes from literature. For this, he doesn't just look back at the past but also links these elements with our present and his own environment. Through this synthesis of past and present, he arrives at a unique new visual language that is very much his own. A visual language that has echoes of artists such as Rogier Van der Weyden and the Flemish Primitives, but also Matthew Paris and James Ensor. With these elements, Demunter has developed his own universe, in which different stories from his investigations, collections, and passions take on new meaning.

Bram Demunter (b. 1993) lives and works in Temse, Belgium.