

Philippe Van Snick | *Déjalat*

Keteleer Gallery presents *Déjalat*, the first-ever exhibition of a series of previously unseen works on paper by Philippe Van Snick (1946–2019, Belgium), offering an intimate glimpse into the artist's world of living and thinking.

Van Snick is regarded as one of the most important Belgian artists of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Starting from a strict decimal system (0–9), he developed a coherent and multifaceted body of work in which painting, works on paper, photography, installation, and sculpture converge. His characteristic ten-color palette, expanded in 1984 with the duality of day and night, forms a visual grammar in which system and sensitivity remain in constant balance. Although his practice is often associated with minimal and conceptual art, it transcends these categories through its poetic and deeply personal dimension.

The works in *Déjalat* originate from a specific place: a remote site in the Dordogne, acquired by Van Snick and his wife Marijke Dekeukeleire in 1991. This former plum barn, later known as *Le Bos Nord*, evolved into a place of solitude and concentration, where the artist could detach himself from the urban rhythm of Brussels. For a long time without electricity or running water, reduced to the essentials, the site became a laboratory for a way of living and working centered on attention, observation, and stillness.

The idea of *cultiver la paresse* — cultivating idleness as a deliberate freeing of the mind — was central to Van Snick's time there. In line with the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze, this attitude gains meaning as a subtle form of resistance to the compulsive logic of productivity and efficiency. Looking at the horizon, slowly shaping the landscape, pruning hedges to open sightlines: these are acts aimed not at output, but at intensity and attentiveness. Within this slowing down, space emerges for a nomadic and open form of thinking, in which new connections and sensitivities can arise. Nature functions not as a backdrop, but as an active interlocutor that nourishes this concentrated receptivity.

The exhibition includes, among other works, the four-part series *L'arbre tombé* (2006), created in response to a fallen apple tree that Van Snick had planted at the birth of his daughter Laura. In addition, a series of fourteen works on paper is presented under the title *Untitled (Déjalat)* (2003). These works are directly connected to his daily experiences in the landscape: walks with a stick through rough terrain, gazing at the horizon, observing natural phenomena such as rising air bubbles in a spring, or the rhythm of the seasons.

In this context, Van Snick's practice shifts toward a concentrated use of means: paper becomes the support for interventions in pencil, watercolor, acrylic, and occasionally tape. This focused and precise choice of materials intensifies his exploration of time, space, and perception, while the foundations of his thinking remain subtly present.

Déjalat reveals an artist who, far removed from any form of spectacle, arrives at an essence. It is a small exhibition about attention and slowness, about the merging of life and work, and about the possibility of developing a universal visual language through the simplicity of a place.

The visual essay *à la rencontre de l'intensité* — realized by Griet Teck in collaboration with Marijke Dekeukeleire and the Philippe Van Snick Estate — stems from a shared desire to reveal the traces of the moments that preceded and followed the creation of the artworks. Images of Van Snick's studio in Brussels are interwoven with footage of his immediate surroundings, the garden, and the remote landscape of *Le Bos Nord* in France.

The filmic essay opens up the usually private world of artistic practice and intertwines it with memories and interpretations from those involved, including Chris Dercon, Heide Hinrichs, Noor Mertens, Philippe Van Cauteren, and Jacques Vieille, and at moments also with the presence of the artist himself. The result is a layered portrait that makes the inner dynamics of his oeuvre tangible in a different way.

Koen Leemans, 2026

Van Snick exhibited widely in Belgium and internationally. His work is held in major public collections, including S.M.A.K., M HKA, Middelheim Museum, Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), and the Museu de Arte Contemporânea de Serralves. In 2017, he was awarded the Flemish Ultima for Visual Arts.

The exhibition will be on view 14May - 20 June, 2026.