

Museum Nicolaas Rockox (non-profit)
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Press release
Exhibition

Ydáñez en Amberes: Santiago Ydáñez and the old masters
Antwerp, Snijders&Rockoxhuis, 17 October 2025 - 18 January 2026

What happens when a contemporary artist does not oppose the past, but looks it straight in the eye? When he does not try to renew, but to connect? At the Snijders&Rockoxhuis in Antwerp, these questions get a powerful answer this autumn, with the exhibition of Spanish artist Santiago Ydáñez (Jaén, °1967) as part of the EUROPALIA arts festival.

Ydáñez is no stranger to Belgium. His work is steeped in impressions gained during countless visits to churches, monasteries and museums. He observed, absorbed and transformed. The result is a body of work that carries echoes of the Baroque but does not imitate them. Instead, he uses them as a sounding board for his own raw imagery: expressive, physical, sometimes uncomfortable, but always intense.



Santiago Ydáñez, A-E-I-O-U, 2025.
Oil on canvas. [Collection of the artist]

In this exhibition, thirteen artworks by Ydáñez enter into dialogue with the permanent collection of the Snijders&Rockoxhuis. Not as illustration, but as confrontation. His portraits and sculptures not only look back to Rubens, Van Dyck, Snijders and Breughel... they also look at us. They ask questions about identity, about the role of the image, about what stays and what disappears. About how we look, and what we want to see.



Santiago Ydáñez, Untitled, 2024.
Oil on canvas. [Collection of the artist]



Santiago Ydáñez, Untitled, 2009.
Oil on canvas. [Collection of the artist]

The salons of the museum - once the home of mayor and art collector Nicolaas Rockox and animal painter Frans Snijders - provide a charged backdrop. Here the baroque counts not as a past time, but as a living presence. Ydñez plays with that tension. His works are large, sometimes monumental and very present. Yet there is no overwhelm. On the contrary: the dialogue is subtle, layered, and invites reflection.



Santiago Ydñez, Lamentation, 2025. Oil on canvas. [Collection of the artist]

The EUROPALIA arts festival, which has been building cultural bridges for decades, resolutely chooses Spain this year - a country that regained its democracy 50 years ago and was once the focus of the festival 40 years ago. That historical context makes the exhibition extra meaningful. Because Ydñez's work is also about transition: from religion to introspection, from tradition to expression, from canon to confrontation.

Or as stated by curator Hildegard Van de Velde: *"At a time when originality is often confused with innovation, Ydñez reminds us that the past need not be a burden, but a source. That heritage is not static, but dynamic. And that art, old or new, can always be a mirror. If only we dare to look."*

What makes this exhibition so special is that it not only shows art, but also questions the museum itself. What is a museum today? A place of preservation? Of admiration? Or of exchange? Ydñez seems to opt for the latter. His works are not endpoints, but starting points for conversations, interpretations, and new meanings.

Voor meer informatie en afbeeldingen:

Dr. Maarten Bassens / Hildegard Van de Velde, conservatoren Museum Snijders&Rockoxhuis en commissarissen van deze tentoonstelling.

+32 485 69 81 16 / +32 499 96 53 34

Maarten.bassens@kbc.be / Hildegard.vandevelde@kbc.be

[Snijders&Rockoxhuis - Pers \(snijdersrockoxhuis.be\)](https://snijdersrockoxhuis.be) : persartikel en afbeeldingen (Gebruikersnaam: pers; Paswoord: rockox)