

# MACS

Musée des Arts Contemporains  
Grand-Hornu

## Matt Mullican Representing the Work

16.02 > 18.10.20

PRESS RELEASE



Matt Mullican, *Untitled (Yellow Monster - Performance at Tate)*, detail, 2018. Photo: Roberto Ruiz/Courtesy ProjecteSD, Barcelona.



**“Both my parents are artists. (...) I grew up in a house of artists, and we travelled. My mother is Venezuelan, my father is from Oklahoma. I lived in Rome, I lived in Venezuela, in Caracas, in Santiago de Chile. I lived in New York and I lived in L.A.**

**I went to CalArts right out of high school at the age of twenty and studied with John Baldessari in his famous class called ‘Post Studio Art’ and became friendly with a lot of artists that you would know. James Welling was the first person I met on the first day of school. Both of us were waiting for a Jack Goldstein class called ‘Temporary Structures’. Jim didn’t have any shoes on. He wore a cap like a hippie. I have known him that long. That was almost 50 years ago. So the ‘Pictures Generation’ is my group.”**

**Matt Mullican**



Exhibition view *Matt Mullican. The Feeling of Things*, HangarBicocca, Milan, 2018.



Exhibition view *Matt Mullican: Representing the Work*, NC-arte, Bogota, 2019. Photo: Oscar Monsalve/Courtesy NC-arte.

The MACS is organising the first monographic exhibition of work by Matt Mullican in a museum in Belgium. Born in 1951 in Santa Monica, the American artist who now lives and works in New York and Berlin was marked by his studies with John Baldessari in the early 1970s at the California Institute of the Arts. Since the 1980s, his work has been exhibited regularly throughout the world, including at major collective events such as Documenta (1982, 1992 and 1997) and the Venice Biennale (2013), along with solo exhibitions, notably his immense retrospective at the HangarBicocca in Milan (2018).

Having developed historically from the Pictures Generation, Matt Mullican's obsessional, encyclopaedic work is a response to conceptual art through the way it places importance on the image, sensation and subjectivity. Drawing on the world around him for the raw material of his creation, the artist points out, "*Everything that I have to catalogue is actually found where I live. When I say 'where I live', I am speaking of both the physical and the psychological world.*"

Beyond this body-mind dualism, Matt Mullican in fact extends his presentation of the universe to five worlds, represented by five colours: green symbolises nature, blue represents daily life, yellow signifies art, black relates to language and red evokes subjectivity. This cosmology, which found its first expression during his childhood, along with his two principal artistic developments in 1973 and 1983, constitute the veritable driving force of a fundamentally existential work which applies his graphic principles (colour chart, pictograms, lists, etc.) to a broad array of supports: books, flags, posters, stained-glass, an architectural pavilion, noticeboards, tapestries, light boxes, virtual spaces, etc.

Added to this diversity of media are his numerous 'talks', in which he recounts the history of his work, and his on-stage 'performances under hypnosis', when he turns into someone he calls that person, an alter-ego who interprets, often in a caricatural manner, the various situations that he is presented with. During his first experiment under hypnosis, *Entering the picture: Entrance to Hell* (1976), Matt Mullican was seated facing a painting by Piranese into which he entered through thought to create a real-time, detailed description of it to his audience. Since then, he has regularly repeated this technique, enabling that person to appear, a sort of subjective double, who experiences emotions or even creates works of art that are different to those of Matt Mullican.



Matt Mullican was born in Santa Monica (United States) in 1951. He lives and works in New York and Berlin. He is the son of the modern artists Luchita Hurtado and Lee Mullican. Considered as one of the pioneers of digital art, he belongs to the “Pictures Generation”.

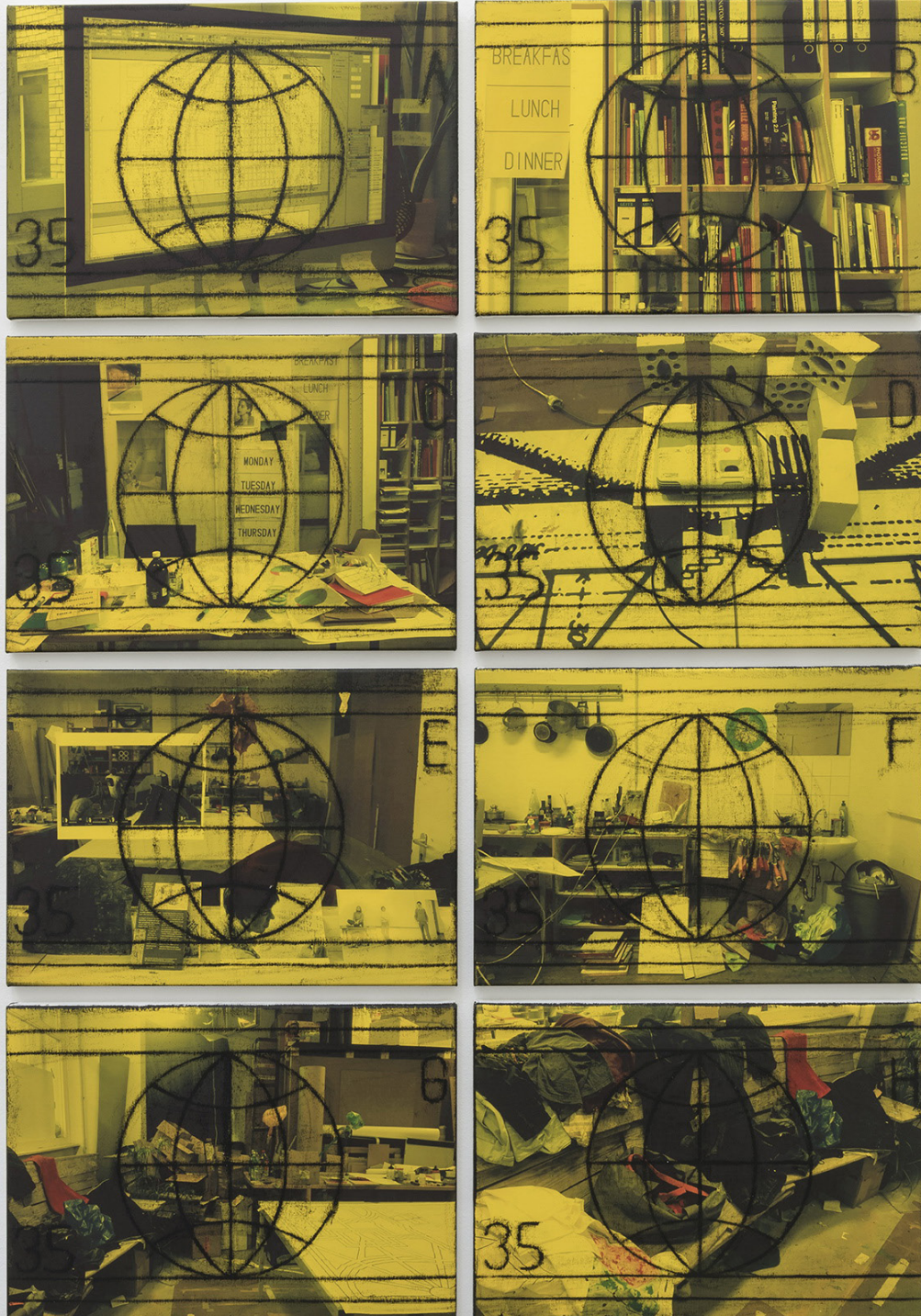
Since 1973, Matt Mullican has had a number of monographic exhibitions around the world, in both museums and galleries. He also took part in the documenta 7, 9 and 10 in 1982, 1992 and 1997.

In 2019, he exhibited his work at NC-arte in Bogota; in 2018, he took over the immense space of the HangarBicocca in Milan. In 2010, the 12 by 2 exhibition at the IAC in Villeurbanne confronted the works of Matt Mullican with those of *that person* the individual who emerges when Matt Mullican is hypnotised and in 2005, the Ludwig Museum in Cologne organised a solo exhibition of works created by him, *Learning from That Person's Work*.

His work is found in numerous international public and private collections, notably the MoMA in New York, the Tate Modern in London, the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam, the Haus der Kunst in Munich, the Centre Pompidou in Paris and the MACS.

In 1987, the American artist pursued this to-and-fro between real and imaginary worlds, when he created an imaginary city through the intermediary of super-computers. Here he was subconsciously prefiguring the virtual spaces of present-day video games, whose landscapes are formed as the player advances through them. Likewise, the specific symbols of his cosmology are also reminiscent of the icons and pictograms on our smartphone screens, which lends a truly visionary dimension to his work: *“I think my work has a close connection with contemporary life, with what is happening in the world today and what people are having to deal with, what children have to cope with and what my children are facing nowadays, when you think about the internet and the way in which their world could be defined.”*

The exhibition *Representing the Work* is arranged around several major series by the artist, which reflects its retrospective nature. Following the narrative line suggested by the museum's architecture, Matt Mullican invites the spectator to discover the principal chapters of his work until his emblematic series of Rubbings, and includes the *M.I.T. Project*, the pavilion representing a three-dimensional cosmology which he invented in the 1980s along with a vast series of works on paper, not forgetting *The Meaning of Things* and *Yellow Monster*, two series based on images taken from the internet and his performances under hypnosis. The highpoint of the exhibition is the installation-mosaic which gave its name to the exhibition, *Representing the Work*, a series of 64 bedsheets which present iconographic plates detailing his entire oeuvre, from his early experiments in John Baldessari's class at CalArts, to his gigantic installation at the HangarBicocca, and includes his performances under hypnosis and rubbings.



Untitled (Yellow Monster - Studio), 2018. Photo: Roberto Ruiz/Courtesy ProjectsSD, Barcelona.

# Exhibited works

## **88 MAPS (2010)**

Published in an edition of twenty copies, *88 Maps* was developed by Matt Mullican and presented in 2010 by Three Star Books. It is a sort of catalogue of the vocabulary invented by the artist since the 1970s. Each page was hand-made using the technique of rubbing, applying a graphite pencil specially designed for the artist.

## **EDITION SOLWAY 1 & 2 (1988 & 1993)**

Working with the Carl Solway Gallery, Matt Mullican created two portfolios of screen prints, in 1988 and 1993.

## **NOTATING THE COSMOLOGY (2008)**

Pinned to the wall, these 123 sheets, hand-written by the artist, are extracts from the notebooks he used regularly for more than three decades (1973-2008). They put into context the path and gradual comp-lexification of his mental images, from their premises to the modelling of his personal cosmology.

## **PERFORMANCES SOUS HYPNOSE (1978-2020)**

Hypnosis occupies a major place in Matt Mullican's research, notably for exploring the boundaries between the objective world and subjective experience. He used hypnosis for the first time in 1978, during a performance at The Kitchen in New York.

## **M.I.T. PROJECT (1990-2020)**

Designed as a pavilion in which the visitor can move around, the *M.I.T. Project* is an architectural work that reflects the artist's cosmology in three dimensions. In it, he uses his personal lexicon to compile and classify various types of objects, according to the division into five worlds established in his cosmology. For each exhibition, Matt Mullican proposes a different version of this work, depending on the host site.

## **THE MEANING OF THINGS (2014)**

Comprising over 600 paper collages, owing to its repetitive nature, the installation is reminiscent of his performances under hypnosis, which enables "that person" to reveal himself through the body of the artist in a trance. On each numbered sheet, an image is glued in the centre and framed with organic interlacings of "that person".

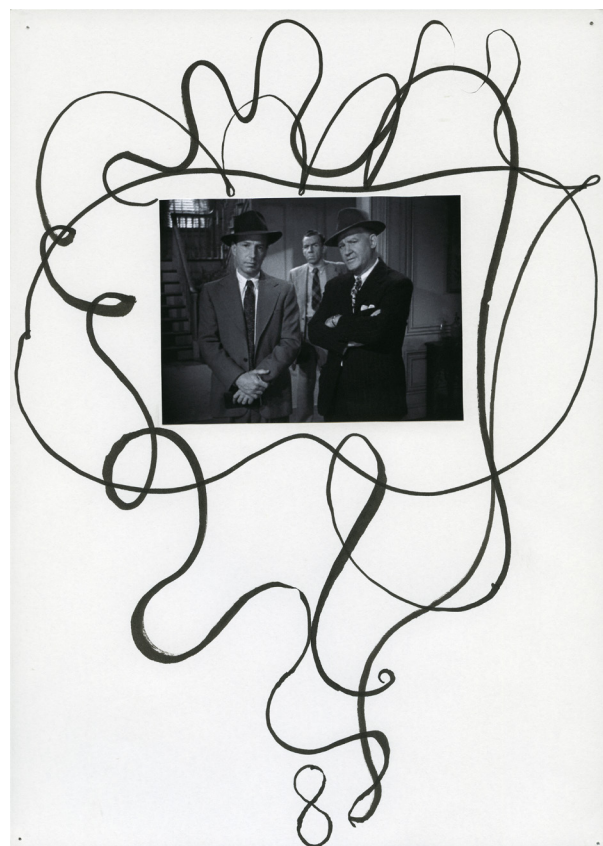


### **UNTITLED (YELLOW MONSTER) (2018)**

The *Yellow Monster* are systematically made up of eight paintings. The title of the whole refers to its monumentality and dominant yellow colour. Close to *The Meaning of Things*, the series presents images that are also taken from the internet, but exposed through signs (notably the symbol representing the “unframed” world in Mullican’s universe) which, when applied in oil pastel on their surface, operate like an abstract, symbolic frame of reference.

### **REPRESENTING THE WORK (2018-2019)**

*Representing the Work* is a series of 64 bedsheets on which Matt Mullican has arranged the principal chapters of his work, like iconographic illustration plates. Installed so that they form long corridors which the visitor has to make their way through, the single or double bedsheets are numbered and succeed one other in a precise order. The visitor discovers the entire scope of Matt Mullican’s oeuvre here in a panorama that extends from his early experiments in John Baldessari’s class at CalArts to his recent exhibition at the HangarBicocca



*The Meaning of Things*, details, 2014. Photo: Roberto Ruiz/Courtesy ProjectsSD, Barcelona.

in Milan, and also includes his cosmological diagrams, his performances under hypnosis, rubbings, image collections and working notes.

**BERLIN STUDIO RUBBING ARCHIVE (2012-2020)**

The last exhibition space contains a series of rubbings by the artist. The technique of rubbing is one of the oldest forms of reproduction and printing, dating back some 1,800 years to China, where it was used to reproduce Confucian texts in order to disseminate them. It consists of applying a support onto a sculpted relief, the die (in stone or any other hard material), which enables the main contours to be revealed when rubbed with a pencil, ink or, in Matt Mullican's case, oil paint in a stick, or acrylic gouache.



Exhibition view *Matt Mullican: Representing the Work*, NC-arte, Bogota, 2019. Photo: Oscar Monsalve/Courtesy NC-arte.

# Exhibition Catalogue

## **Matt Mullican. Representing the Work**

Editors: MACS/Museum of Contemporary Arts at Grand-Hornu and MER. Borgerhoff & Lamberigts, Ghent

Authors: Denis Gielen, Matt Mullican

Bilingual - French/English

120 pages

64 illustrations

330 x 290 mm

Price: 39 €



**"Matt Mullican's art has been based on the physicality of the symbol, by casting the elements of his language, principally his cosmology, in a number of materials, like a sort of "conceptual smelter". The signs, colours and diagrams on which they are based, in the primary form of drawings, are incessantly reiterated on various supports. In short, each project thus becomes the opportunity for the artist to experiment with the effects of the material used for communication on the meanings of his signs."**

**Denis Gielen, curator**



*Representing the Work*, detail, 2018-2019. Photo: Roberto Ruiz/Courtesy ProjecteSD.

# Agenda of activities

Information and reservation:  
+32 (0)65 613 902 / reservations@grand-hornu.be

## >> KIDS <<

### OPENING FOR KIDS

15th February - 5pm

Discover the exhibition *Matt Mullican. Representing the Work* accompanied by a guide during the preview evening for budding art lovers.

Visit • Activities • Treats  
Public preview at 6pm  
Reservation requested

### FAMILY THURSDAYS

Thursdays 27th February / 9th, 16th April / 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd, 30th July / 6th, 13th, 20th, 27th August

Every Thursday during the school holidays, enjoy a family day out at the museum and take part in workshops and guided or narrated visits.

Discover the activities according to the season  
By reservation only

### WORKSHOPS

From 14th to 17th April | 9-12 years  
From 13th to 17th July | 3-5 years  
From 3rd to 7th August | 6-8 years  
From 17th to 21st August | 9-12 years

### NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

24th April

Programme: visit of the exhibition, Escape Game, meal, screening of the film and nap in the museum rooms.

By reservation only

### ATELIERS BAZ'ART

Sundays 1st March, 5th April, 3rd May, 6th September, 4th October  
2 > 4.30pm

Discover an artist's work during a practical workshop and visit of the exhibition.

From 8 to 12 years  
5€ / workshop  
By reservation only

## >> ENCOUNTERS <<

### CONFERENCE • MATT MULLICAN

April

### GUIDED VISIT BY MARIE JOSÉ BURKI

10th May - 2pm

### MASTER CLASS

« Faut-il avoir peur du big data ? »

15th May - 7pm

7pm: guided visit of the exhibition  
8.30pm: masterclass by Technocité

### GUIDED VISIT + CONFERENCE • DENIS GIELEN

12th June - 7pm

### PERFORMANCE BY MATT MULLICAN

September

**GUIDED VISIT  
BY KOEN BRAMS**

6th September - 2pm

**ENCOUNTER •  
LUC DERYCKE**

4th October - 3pm

Luc Derycke shares his experience as an editor and his various collaborations with Matt Mullican.

**GUIDED VISIT  
BY DENIS GIELEN**

18th October - 2pm

**>> FESTIVITIES <<**

**NATIONAL DAY**

21st July

**APÉRO BOTANIQUE**

15th August

**JOURNÉES  
DU PATRIMOINE**

12th & 13th September

**>> ART SHUTTLES <<**

€18 / adult  
€8 / child  
By reservation only

**BOTANIQUE > MACS**

29th March - 10am > 5pm

The Botanique and the MACS will take you on a discovery of the exhibitions *Sébastien Bonin. Documenti*, *Yoann Van Parys. Support Act : La Clé des champs* and *Matt Mullican. Representing the Work*.

**MACS > BOTANIQUE**

19th April - 10am > 5pm

The MACS and the Botanique will take you on a discovery of the exhibitions *Matt Mullican. Representing the Work* et *Sébastien Bonin. Documenti*.

**MACS > MUSEUM OF  
FINE ARTS IN TOURNAI/  
TAMAT**

24th May - 2 > 6pm

The MACS, the Museum of Fine Arts in Tournai and Tamat will take you on a discovery of the exhibitions *Representing the Work* and *Plis*.

**BOTANIQUE > MACS**

14th June - 10am > 5pm

The Botanique and the MACS will take you on a discovery of the exhibitions *Stephan Balleux & Cédric Dambrain* et *Matt Mullican. Representing the Work*.

**MACS > BOTANIQUE**

21st June - 10am > 5pm

The MACS and the Botanique will take you on a discovery of the exhibitions *Matt Mullican. Representing the Work* et *Stephan Balleux & Cédric Dambrain*.







#### **COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT:**

##### **Maité Vanneste**

+32 (0)65/61.38.53

maite.vanneste@grand-hornu.be

##### **Florence Dendooven**

+32 (0)65/61.38.82

florence.dendooven@grand-hornu.be

#### **PRESS CONTACT:**

##### **Club Paradis**

Micha Pycke

+32 (0)486.68.00.70

micha@clubparadis.be

## **Practical Information**

### **THE MUSEUM**

The MACS is housed in the former colliery premises at Grand-Hornu, an outstanding example of European industrial heritage, listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2012. Since it opened in 2002, the museum has received over a million visitors, produced more than 85 exhibitions and promoted numerous artists from the Wallonia-Brussels Federation. Thanks to major international artists, including Anish Kapoor, Christian Boltanski, Giuseppe Penone and Tony Oursler, who have presented their first major exhibitions in Belgium here, the reputation of the MACS now reaches far beyond our national borders. Inspired by the unique architectural and historical context of Grand-Hornu, its collection has developed according to themes that connect with the preoccupations of many contemporary artists, including memory, technology and community.

### **LOCATION AND TICKETS**

#### **Address:**

Site du Grand-Hornu

Rue Sainte-Louise, 82

B-7301 Hornu (near Mons) Tel : +32(0)65 65 21 21

Fax: +32(0)65 61 38 91

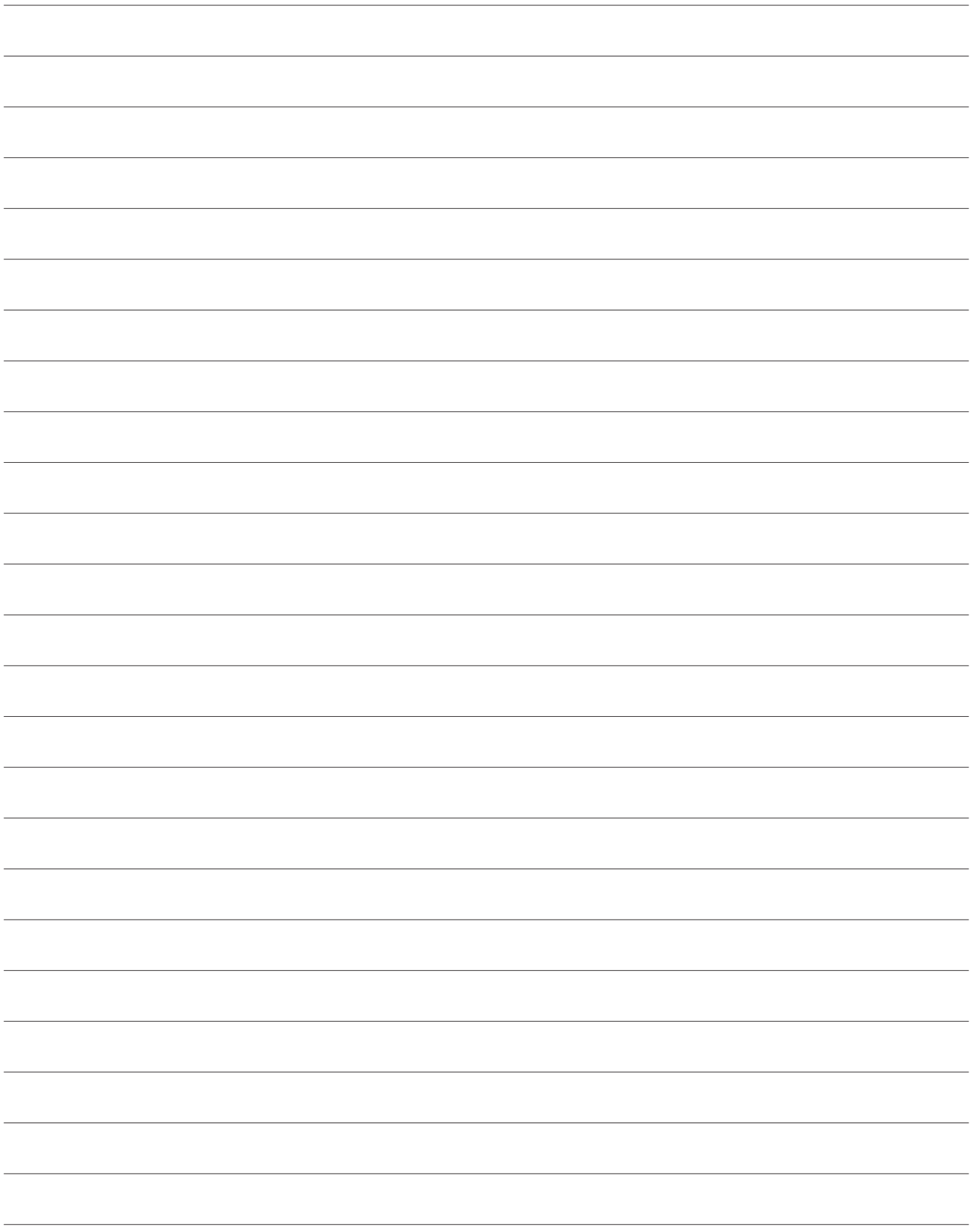
E-mail: [info.macs@grand-hornu.be](mailto:info.macs@grand-hornu.be)

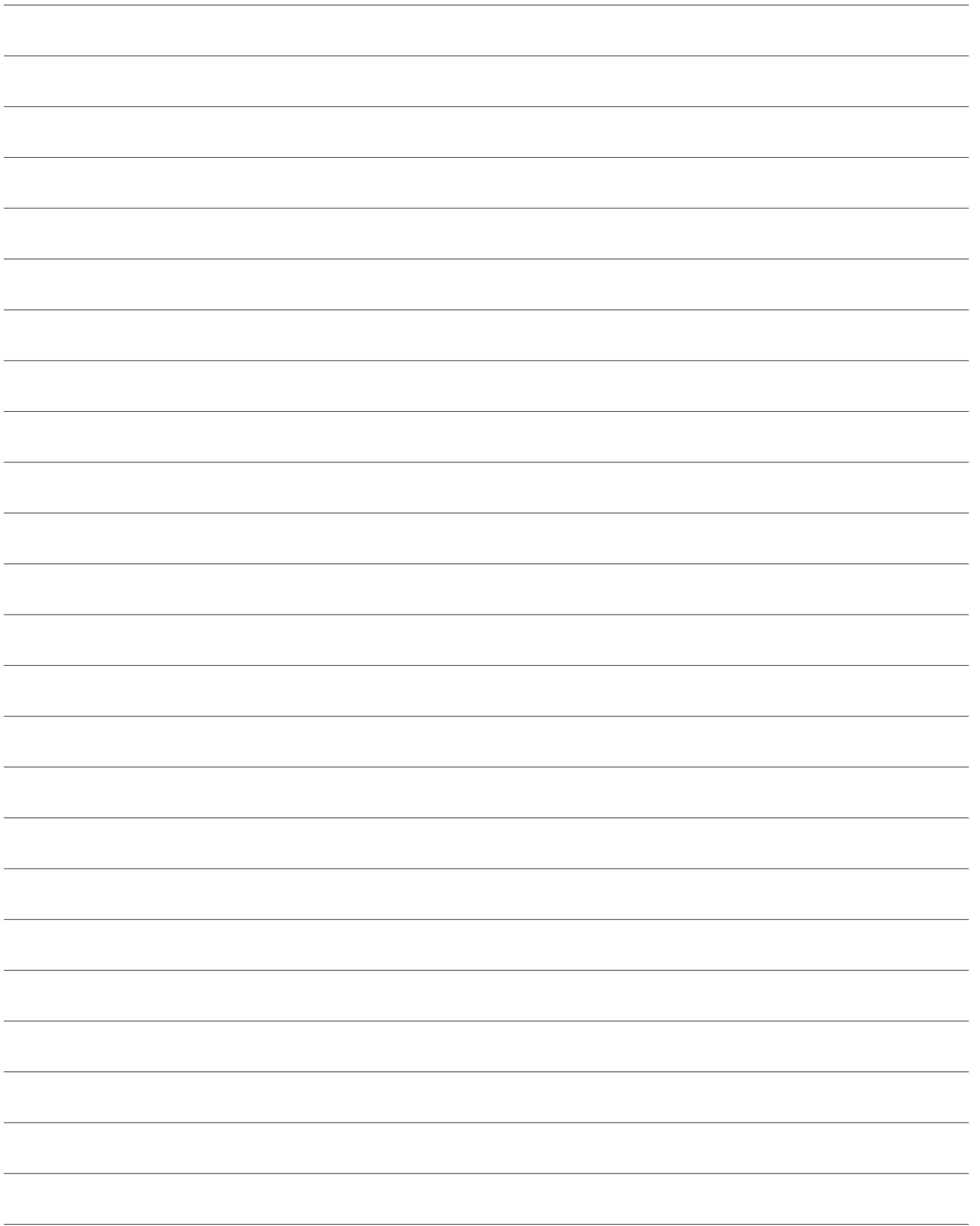
#### **Opening times:**

Every day from 10am to 6pm, except Mondays, 25/12 and 01/01.

#### **Entrance fee:**

- Combined ticket for the Grand-Hornu site / MACS / CID: €10
- Reduced / group price (minimum 15 people): €6
- School group: €2
- Free for children under 6 and adults accompanying school groups





# MACS Musée des Arts Contemporains Grand-Hornu

