**ENGLISH**

**VISITOR GUIDE** FOR THE ARTISTIC PROJECT "ONE"

Welcome to the Church of Holy Magdalene!

To mark the tenth anniversary of the charity YOT, the visual artist Geert Bisschop has brought an art project to this church.

The key work YES HERE NOW is the centre piece, with new installations in situ and existing pieces shown in this church context especially for the occasion.

More information about the charity YOT can be found on the info panel (at the back) and at www.yot.be

**INTRODUCTION**

The project connects past and future. It opens the way to a new understanding of the Biblical message. It brings healing at a pivotal point in (church) history of which the church in Bruges in 2010-2011 was at the epicentre due to an abuse scandal. It invites people, whether churchgoing, religious or not, to penetrate to the core of human existence: love. That’s why a number of exhibits refer to the church as a house, as a place for living and life, not just once a week or for special occasions, but where all aspects of life can be fully lived.

In this way the church becomes ‘a house of spiritual union’ (quote from Huub Oosterhuis) for everyone in search for meaning. ‘ONE’ offers the visitor zone of meaning to be explored. That a cloud of centuries old dust is disturbed in this process of becoming meaning-ful(l), re-sourcing, re-sacralisation, healing and sanctification is not explicitly the intention. It is however an invitation to alternative experience and to saying ‘yes’.

|  |
| --- |
| The artworks are numbered. **PLEASE DO NOT TAKE this guide pamphlet home**. You can download it at www.yot.be. Please do feel free to take the leaflet with you. |

**ONE' – 'YES HERE NOW'**

***FROM FRAGMANTATION TO UNITY***

**1. 'Putting a spin on things changes their meaning’**

Readymade : traffic sign ‘C1: No Entry for any vehicles.’

*By turning the traffic sign 90° it becomes an invitation.*

*The horizontal white stripe becomes a vertical ONE, the title of the project, also a phallic symbol, the male organ, being coloured white. The red circular background represents in its holistic form the female organ, also red in colour.*

*Together they are ONE.*

*This logo also contains both a ‘1’ and a ‘ 0’, elements of the binary (computer)language with which everything can be said .*

*They also form a ‘10’ together, a reference to YOT’s having been set up ten years*

**2. 'Hidden risks of a wireless society’ by Karel and Caroline Van Huffelen.**

A copy of the book and a mobile phone from the now defunct mobile producer Siemens with front cover in the form of human DNA, in a church display case mounted on a pedestal nearby: the control panel from a mobile phone installation, abundant in just about every church.

*It is thought bus some that mobile technology is very harmful not least for the spiritual wellbeing. Paradoxically churches are frequently used for antennae.*

**3. No title.**

Readymade : traffic sign 'Follow the arrow.'

**4. 'YES HERE NOW'**

Fluorescent tube lamps in armature mounted on wood, dangling in thin air. YES: 13 green, HERE: pink red, 21, NOW: 18 blue.

*A spiritual adage that forms the core of many traditions: ' the Kingdom of God ' in the Judeo-Christian, the ' nirvana ' in the East, ' the void ' in Zen, etc. If man is fully present in the here and now the boundaries of time and space disappear and a dimension of ' eternity '*

*occurs.*

**5. 'The message of water is love'.**

Table made from a (fragile) glass table top bearing the word ‘love’ in many languages printed using the silkscreen process, on MDF, pinewood chipboard, moveable on silver coloured legs. 'Nikken PiMag Waterfall gravity powered running water system’, 'Nikken PiMag Sport Bottle'*, vase of flowers, incense, candle, white frame with greeting*  'PLACE TO BE'.

*Emoto, a Japanese man, who is world famous for his photos of ice cristals that show that water can register and transmit a message when it is ‘programmed’ e.g. by*

*placing a word on the bottle containing the water or even by speaking to it. This demonstrated the effective functioning of spirituality. On the other hand there is this high-tech device that purifies regular tap water making it mineralized thereby correcting the acidity. A mobile alternative is the ' Nikken PiMag Sport Bottle ' which works according to the same principle. Good drinking water is essential to our health, ideally 1.5 litres per day. By way of a welcome you will be offered a glass of water. YOUR GOOD HEALTH! (If you are interested in these products, the attendant can give you more details.) It is no coincidence that this installation is sited beside the holy water fonts in which according to Roman Catholic tradition ‘holy water’ having been blessed by the priest is used by the faithful to make the sign of the cross when entering the church.*

**6. ' The Merciful Jesus. '**

Picture of ' the Merciful Jesus ' in fluorescent green frame on MDF, pinewood chipboard of format A1.

*The image is a reproduction of a painting that is located in Krakow in Poland. We see a radiant, 'illuminated ' Jesus; a pink red and blue white beam emanating from his heart. This is in contrast to the painting above of the ghostly white, scourged, suffering Jesus. The light sculptures ' YES ' in 1998-1999 and ' HERE ' & ' NOW ' in 2000, including the colours, were realized before artist Geert Bishop had ‘viewed’ this work. When that actually occurred however the artist recognized the identical use of colour ....*

**7. 'Worn by Mary'**

Beechwood 'readymade' chest with glass cover, image of Mary’ Queen of Peace’ from Medjugorje (Bosnia), medaillon with photo of the artist as a child that was worn by his mother, positioned where Mary of Medjugorje has a cross round her neck.

*The artist has had a great devotion for the personage of Mary since childhood and is still captivated and fascinated by he, feeling supported by her as if she was always by her side. He remembers his first mystical experience, ‘avant-la-lettre’, as a toddler during a pilgrimage to shines devoted toin the month of May, Mary’s month. His mother was called Maria, as is his current partner(!)*

*The first apparition of Mary in Medjugorje occured on the 24th of June 1981, the artist’s birthday around the time of his birthday…*

**8. 'YES'**

Mini Fluorescent tube lamps (of 288 mm) with a green filter in armature mounted on MDF, pinewood chipboard A 0 (1189 x 841 mm) size, placed against wall in Mary’s Chapel.

*Based on the Bible fragment of the ' Annunciation ' in which the Angel brings the message to Mary that she will be the mother of Jesus the Christ, while this seems impossible to her because she has yet to ‘sleep with a man’. Yet she says Yes; "YES", to the divine will: ' Fiat Voluntas Tua ' in Latin, ' your (Divine) will be done (and not mine) '. Refers to the female principle of the surrender.*

An exact copy of this light sculpture can be rented, e.g. for (wedding) celebrations and other events. They also exists in a larger version with fluorescent tube lamps of 60 cm mounted on 3 250 cm high x 125cm MDF, pinewood chipboard OSB cm wide. More info at www.yot.be.

**9.1- 9.11 ' PARADISE** – Nenzinger Himmel/Austria-Lichtenstein (stone or light) '. 11 photos printed with ink-jet printer on canvas, mounted between wooden sticks, hung up on the 11 free walls under 14 stations of the cross , each 841 mm wide x 1400 mm high (foto1200 mm)./

*The presentation of the photos refers both to the classic Japanese and Chinese landscape drawing and painting in which nature is afforded a sacred place, to Buddhist ' meditation ' which is both artistic expression as tanka-objects are, as to the geographical maps from the child and youth years of the artist spured him on to dream of faraway places and travel, which he also (partially) has achieved, including in the form of ritual walking tours, eg. in his so-called. ' Paradise-project '. During a week, a full time unit of seven (the number of completeness) days, he moved to foot in a physical ' paradise ', i.e. a place that the word 'paradise ' (or equivalent, in this case ' Himmel ' – German for ' heaven ') bears his name, to a State of inner ' paradise ' to reach, by nature, sleeping on the Earth in a tent or under the open sky and – exceptionally, as in this case (due to extreme rain again) – inside, meditating and walking.*

*The photos come into existance when there is a connection between "outside" and "inside" and try to grasp the related energy. They are taken vertically, standing up, to emphasise the spiritual dimension and the connection between heaven and Earth to emphasise, entirely against the romantic tradition in art and photography, where panorama-an image within a elongated vertical rectangle-the form is par excellence.*

*The presentation under the stations of the cross is both a symbolic reference to it as a neutralisation and transformation of it.*

**10. ' Look for the key in the Church '**

Confessional to the fore: wedding photo of the parents of the artist. In the confessional where the penitents sit: portrait photos of the parents of the artist, made at the end of their life by the village photographer. In the confessional in the confessor/priest’s place: closed pharmacy cabinet without key with a sandblasted mat glass door with bright recesses in a cross shape behind which a diamond-shaped object is visible: packaging in the ‘Marian' colours white and blue with condom the brand ' Durex '.

*This is an autobiographical work. The artist was a so-called 'accident', an unwanted child, due to the lack of birth control using anti-conception because of a church ban that was pronounced by the then parish priest.*

**11. ' The reunification of table and bed '**

Painting by Jan De Wachter, used in a previous YOT-project under this title.

*Artist Geert Bisschop has with his project ' ONE ' focused on 10 years YOT-operation and integrated this painting because of next work of art.*

**12. ' The reunification of table and bed – part 2 '**

double bed with sheets (designed by ' fashion King ' Georgio Armani) in grey and purple colors, printed with the (Episcopal) Japanese character for ' hope ' and the English word ' HOPE ', and three pillows including in the mliddle a small one in shiny fluo-green material flanked by two larger ones in a shade of gray.

*' When I saw the painting by Jan De Wachter, I immediately thought of the biblical words of Jesus: "where two or more congregate in my name, I am in their midst." So I was greatly surprised to hear that the presence of this painting in the Church had caused commotion. I immediately decided to install a real bed with three pillows in the Church. For me this artwork is about on the (re-) sacralisation of sexuality in a culture that has either denied it and edged it out or over accentuated and marginalised it , on the one hand, either to a zone of purely biological reproduction, on the other hand, to a zone of pornography, instead of a zone of meaning(fulness). The presence of a bed in a church may perhaps be uncommon, but it does belong here place if the Church is againto be a 'house for ensouled connection" (Huub Oosterhuis) where all aspects of life can be disscussed ' (Geert Bisschop)*

The second work is complementary: a glass table (fragile) on which the word "love" is screen-printed in white in many languages, mounted on MDF board, pinewood chips that are pressed together to form a unit, moveable on silver-colored legs. On it is a purple pillow on which a white string lies that is used to ' connect ' partners during marriage rituals.

**13. ' A place for healing/healing '**

Massage table with massage appliance.

*You are cordially invited to sit on this unit and let yourself be massaged. (Should you be interested in this product please speak to the attendant.)*

**14. 'Jezus & Mary magdalene'**

Two framed images mounted on MDF chipboard, A0 format: one of Madonna with child, one of Jezus Christ.

*'Objets trouvés (' found objects '): two reproductions of paintings of Jesus and Mary Magdalene (my interpretation, the artist) in gold-coloured frames, ' found ' at a ' flea market’ near Stenay in Northern France, stopping place of the Merovingian kings, who according to some theories would have been the descendants of the bloodline of Jesus and Mary Magdalene who -still according to those theories- would have been life partners and had children.*

*These objects found me (not the other way around), in an almost miraculous way. When I saw the image of the Madonna, I knew intuitively that this could have been none other than Mary Magdalene. The image of Jesus was given to me by a simple village woman when I told that. So this ' marriage ' was consummated, beyond my control.*

*The composition is no ' composition trouvée ' (' found ' composition) but wanted: Jesus looks at Mary, the woman is placed higher than the man. The configuration is similar to the work 'I AM ' in the ‘****feather room*** *' that lies behind the door above which the work is suspended.*

**15. ' Room for the homeless '**

Beds consisting of slat bases and mattresses, varying in number.

*This installation in a back room of the Church refers to the problems of the homeless and asylum seekers, for whom the Government is often too little beds (on time) provides. These beds and mattresses, albeit slightly soiled by the bad weather conditions in which they were transported ( the artist sustained some crushed ribs in his conscientious preparation of this project ...), are still in perfectly usable state, while they were to have been dumped by a well-known internationally renouned hotel chain ; a reference to the disposable society. Spirituality is also politics!*

**16. ' The caress of a butterfly in chaos '**

Projection of picture on framed screen.

*This key work is like an icon. It shows the hand of the artist, ‘ visited’ by a butterfly, which he caressed for an hour (!). The quality of that encounter was such that the wing beat of the butterfly was audible. According to 'chaos theory ' of modern physics the wing beat of a butterfly on one side of the world can cause a hurricane on the other side of the world. What then causes the caress of a butterfly in a place called ' chaos ' somewhere in southern France, while at the same time parliamentary elections take place in Belgium, after which the predicted overwhelming success of a party which campaigned with a picture of a closed hand in a boxing glove-against all the odds and forecasts-does not materilise?*

*Upon seeing this picture a female doctor (= healer) once spontaneously cried out to the artist: ' you're a healer on the level of civilization! '*

**17. 'De hemel op aarde'.** **One of the exhibits in this spiritual art project is called** “Heaven on Earth” and was created using fragments of the ceiling from the choir area of the church which have been arranged together in unity, the form of a circle.

You are welcome to take a piece of heaven with you!

In exchange please consider making a contribution and thereby supporting this groundbreaking project. (Use the slot on the right of this info board.)

Recently restoration workers removed pieces of the paint layer which as you can see is flaking off the ceiling. This exposed the original neo-gothic pigment layer: heavenly blue with golden stars.

It symbolises what the charity YOT has been experimenting with for ten years now in this church: exposing and unraveling dusty words from behind a layer of paint in order to discover pathways to what is best in our Jewish/Christian tradition. This spiritual tradition has examined the connection between heaven and earth for centuries. By taking a *piece of heaven* with you, you are symbolically participating in this age old question.

Would you like a piece of heaven? Then go to the YOT information board on the rear wall.

*Fragments of the old church fall down. Pieces of the sky become visible and are united. At the request of the artist three of the older priests of the Diocese of Bruges laid the debris together as a unit. One of the priests says that this is what he has tried to do throughout his life as a priest: to put the title of this work of art in the practice.*

**18. ' Jesus & Mary Magdalene illuminated '**

Existing sculpture of priest-artist Omer Gielliet (Breskens, The Netherlands) in petrified oak of thousands of years old, lightfitting with three LED lights, round mirror with gold edge.

*This work is an integration and interpretation of an existing work “The illumination” of a fellow artist which is already on display in the Church. Have been added: the lightfitting with three LED lights, round mirror with gold edge. The interpretation is the 'illumination', consisting of a three-in-one of (energy-efficient and therefore ecological) light. The mirror refers to the ' flipside ' of each other in a relationship of ‘twin’ souls, which Maria-Magdalena and Jesus were in the artist’s opinion.*

**19. ‘ Search “Mary Magdalene" on internet '**

Table with semi transparent glass (fragile) tabletop with legs on wheels, computer with internet connection, filed under pulpit.

*Formerly the ' truth ' was preached from the pulpit, nowadays we find all our information on the internet. Curious as to what a search for ' Mary magdalene ' would reveal ... Certainly not what was told about her from the pulpit. Her figure remains controversial and elusive.*

**20. The order of the ‘Brothers of Love '**

 Outside the confessional: ' death card ' crushed between two thick transparent glass plates and screwed, hung on a black silk thread. Brochure of ' the bishops and higher superiors of Belgium '' ' Hidden grief-towards a global approach to sexual abuse in the Church ' (January 2012). Inside the confessional, in Confessor/priest’s place: ' yoni-lingam ' sculpture: presentation of the fusion of the male and female organs in the form of a sculpture that the masculine (phallus) and female genitals (vagina) unite. The sculpture is in its cultural context (India) used as an object of sacral ritual.

*This is an autobiographical work. My youngest brother, two years younger and just as 'unwanted ' as myself, was literally and figuratively a ' difficult delivery' and ' a spoiled brat’. Our mother died almost at childbirth, thereafter my mother and brother were ‘inseparable'.*

*At the age of twelve he was raped by a member of the order of the ’Brothers of Love ', the responsible cleric of the boarding school. He was not believed by my parents and accused of telling lies. He never recovered from this trauma. After a very difficult existance, he took his own life at the age of 46, in 2005.*

**21. ' Vessica-Piscis' Levitation**

Two circles consisting of white and red carrara marble debris placed on MDF chipboard, 'floating ' above the ‘symbolic plane’ of the water surface'.

*The "vessica piscis ' is an ancient figure from sacral geometry, with numerous meanings, including that of the 'holiness of marriage': consider the wedding rings.*

**22. ‘Our Holy Lady’**

Statue, left behind by artist Babette Degraeve.

*This artist organizes “apparitions” by placing her sculptures in churches etc. Most of the times they are taken away – but here it is integrated becoming ‘ONE’ with the project.*

‘ONE’ is an initiatieve of the charity YOT, the project for the het church reappraisal project in the Church of the Holy Magdalene in Bruges. Each summer YOT presents a project at the meetingpoint of heritage, art and spirituality. Info [www.yot.be](http://www.yot.be) - info@yot.be - 050/33.48.81

This project came about thanks to a collaboration between YOT and ‘artist in residence ' Geert Bisschop. Thanks to the many volunteers.

You can take home a **piece of heaven** in return for a free contribution to the financing of this project and the groundbreaking project YOT. To contribute go to the INFO WALL at the back of the Church.

With the support of the Department of Culture, city of Bruges, UNESCO world heritage site.

