

# Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker and Steven Fillet

## *As you wish*

5 – 14 February 2026

Press Release

Live performances by Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker and pianist Alain Franco will take place as part of the exhibition on the following dates:

- 5, 6, 7 February
- 12, 13, 14 February

Registration will open in January 2026

Since 2015, Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker has been bringing dance from the black box into the white cube: from opening *The Tanks* at Tate Modern with *Fase*, *Four Movements to the Music of Steve Reich*, and *Work/Travail/Arbeid* at WIELS, Centre Pompidou, Tate Modern, and MoMA, to *Dark Red* at Fondation Beyeler and Neue Nationalgalerie, *Forêt* at the Louvre, and many more. From 5 to 14 February 2026, De Keersmaecker will present the exhibition *As you wish* at Xavier Hufkens together with visual artist Steven Fillet—the first in a series of collaborations between the two artists. The exhibition will feature collaborative paintings and works on paper, accompanied by a series of solo performances entitled *Insomnia* by De Keersmaecker.

On canvas and on paper, echoes can be heard of *The Goldberg Variations*, *BWV 988*—De Keersmaecker's 2020 solo inspired by J.S. Bach's composition. More than a musical score, Bach's work is a blueprint for De Keersmaecker's entire oeuvre: a system of repetition and differentiation, in which choreographic labour unfolds as a continuous circling around the same (meta)physical questions and (ma)thematical figures.

Geometry, long central to De Keersmaecker's research, is more than a visual concern for her. The line appears in her work not as representation; it is choreography in its most concentrated form—the bearer of time and space. The fourteen canvases that form the heart of the exhibition *As you wish* arise from the geometries of the dance floor. Here, lines unfold—precise and affirmative—as chromatic trajectories through space. The result is an abstract geometry that is at once functional, referential, and poetic.

Steven Fillet introduces a quiet restlessness. His oeuvre is one of freedoms bound up in contradictions. Like a chameleon, he slips between positions. Forms refuse conclusion; they linger in hesitation. In the encounter between the two artists, a shift takes place. The certainty of form gives way. What appears is a temporary instability. Geometry shifts from a closed system to an open field. What happens when order begins to waver?

Two shifts emerge. The first appears technical: the rotation from horizontal to vertical. Yet this movement signals an epistemic rupture—a change in how we see and interpret. The floor is the realm of labour, co-existence, and co-creation; lifting the canvas onto the wall situates the work within the tradition of painting. Horizontal experience transforms into vertical representation. This pivot becomes a hinge moment: a movement from action to contemplation, an attempt to let the geometry itself speak. At the same time, a second gesture

emerges—intentionally accidental. The figures fragment according to the logic of their support, no longer aligned with their origin. They press against the frame, spill over its edges, while weathered canvases fray along the boundary of the recognisable. They act like imprints—reminiscent of the Shroud of Turin: traces of an absent body, images that preserve only a hint.

In the basement, a series of new, small drawings is displayed. They are not meant to be seen from a distance; they demand closeness and intimacy. For De Keersmaeker, drawing is an immediate, bodily form of thinking, where thought and gesture converge—a sensory reasoning in which hand tremor, movement, and the resistance of paper remain visible and tangible. Though private in nature, the drawings form both a key link in the creative process and an autonomous pictorial entity within the oeuvre. For this series, De Keersmaeker collaborated again with Steven Fillet. The drawings act as a companion score to the structure of the *Goldberg Variations*: compact yet layered fields, dense with texture and meaning.

The collaboration between De Keersmaeker and Fillet finds a performative echo in *Insomnia*, realised with pianist Alain Franco—a site-specific project that responds to the architecture of Robbrecht & Daem. Initially, De Keersmaeker presented her *Goldberg Variations* in a classical, frontal arrangement. The presentation in the Medina of Tunis (2023) transformed the work profoundly: outdoors, surrounded by spectators, a direct, fluid relationship arose between dancer and audience. “The circle is the democratic form par excellence, because each viewer has the same proximity,” De Keersmaeker said. This living experience is echoed in the gallery.

Despite these transformations, geometry remains the quiet foundation. Viewing the body as moving architecture, De Keersmaeker organises movement along horizontal and vertical axes, in time and space, in the now and the not-yet, in dialogue with the surrounding canvases, along parallel lines. For De Keersmaeker, these parallel lines take on a poetic charge: lines that stubbornly run side by side in our world, each on its own path, yet she holds to the idea that, beyond our sight, they may one day meet—a suggestion that nothing exists without touching something else.

Running in parallel with the physical exhibition, Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker and Steven Fillet also present an online exhibition showcasing how closely life and work are intertwined in the practice of both artists. The online exhibition explores how their immediate surroundings resonate in their artistic process—both on a micro level, in the impressions and gestures of daily life, and on a macro level, in the larger rhythms of nature.

Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker: (b. 1960) began her career in 1980 after studying at Maurice Béjart’s Mudra School in Brussels and NYU Tisch School of the Arts. She created her first choreographic work, *Asch*, and later premiered *Fase, Four Movements to the Music of Steve Reich* in 1982. In 1983, she founded the dance company Rosas in Brussels, creating the landmark work *Rosas danst Rosas*. De Keersmaeker’s choreography is known for its rigorous exploration of the relationship between dance and music, drawing from geometry, numerical patterns, the natural world, and social structures. Her work spans various musical eras, from early music to contemporary and popular idioms.

From 1992 to 2007, Rosas was in residence at the Brussels opera house La Monnaie/De Munt, where De Keersmaeker directed several operas and large ensemble pieces. Iconic works from this period include *Drumming* (1998) and *Rain* (2001), both created with the Ictus contemporary music ensemble. In 1995, she founded the school P.A.R.T.S. (Performing Arts Research and Training Studios) in Brussels. In 2020, she created together with Ivo van Hove a new choreography for *West Side Story* on Broadway. Since her groundbreaking project *Work/Travail/Arbeid*, first presented at WIELS in Brussels in 2015, she has also continued to explore the possibilities of dance within the white cube,

presenting projects at Tate Modern, London, MoMA, New York, Fondation Beyeler, Basel, Neue Nationalgalerie, Berlin, the Louvre, Paris and Hangar Bicocca, Milan, among others. De Keersmaecker's extensive contributions to dance are documented in *A Choreographer's Score*, a three-volume monograph offering insights into her creative process. In 2019, at the invitation of Collège de France, she set out to distill her artistic journey and guiding principles into a concise treatise, later published as *Incarner une abstraction*.

Steven Fillet: For over forty years, Steven Fillet (b. 1966) has worked in the quiet margins of the institutional art world—a deliberate choice to safeguard his artistic autonomy. His oeuvre moves fluidly between figuration and abstraction, between the intimate and the monumental, never yielding to the disciplining logic of style or medium. The material contingency of his work—his preference for provisional, modest materials such as roofing felt—is not a matter of aesthetic caprice, but reflects a nomadic logic: an open, ever-shifting attitude toward form and meaning. Like nature itself, which in his work serves not as a motif but as a model, Fillet grounds his practice in a steadfast refusal of fixation.

Alain Franco: (Belgium, 1964) graduated in piano and music theory in Belgium and Israel and obtained a post-master degree in 20<sup>th</sup> century Musicology at the Ircam-Ehess institute of Paris. His genuine interest for contemporary music and art, both as pianist and conductor, resulted in collaborations with leading ensembles and musicians like Ensemble Modern (Frankfurt), Ictus ensemble (Brussels), the Liege Philharmonic Orchestra, the Lyon Opera Orchestra, the Chamber Music Ensemble of La Monnaie (Brussels) and the Oh Ton ensemble (Oldenburg). In addition to that—and as an aesthetic and artistic extension to his practice—he progressively developed an original and overall reflection on representation and performance. This led to artistic collaborations with performers, choreographers and theater directors such as Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker, Meg Stuart, Thomas Plischke, Katrin Deufert, Jan Lauwers, Romeo Castellucci, Isabelle Schad, Benjamin Vandewalle, Arkadi Zaides, Daniel Linehan and Karim Bel Kacem.

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