

Marek Wolynski

Expanded Sculpture — Hybrid Museum

How does a MOUSEION visit differ from a typical gallery one? In keeping with Nick Ervinck's whimsical sculptures, his virtual museum offers a tantalising, sensual experience through a dialogue with traditional forms of art and architecture. MOUSEION invites viewers on an interactive journey through time and space—quite unlike that of historical institutions and conventional retrospectives—shaping future-oriented conversations and exchanges between art history and digital potentiality.

Ervinck's practice, rooted as it is in unbounded imagination and the skilful application of advanced technologies, has contributed to expanding the definition of three-dimensional art. His sculptures examine the tensions between internal and external forms, highlighting phenomenological experience and embodiment of space. Although Ervinck's exhibitions, including shows at the Adornes estate – Jerusalem Chapel in Belgium, and Häme Castle in Finland, have previously instigated compelling dialogues with historical and cultural contexts, the sculptures awaited an unorthodox venue that would do justice to their unrivalled scale and originality. In *Spaces of Experience*, a fascinating study of art gallery interiors, Charlotte Klonk aptly articulates that contemporary shows need to provide active, participatory alternatives for the gallery visitor. With the creation of MOUSEION, exhibition-goers have finally been presented with a space that eschews constraints of the real, thus recognising and unleashing the untapped potential of Ervinck's work.

In his renowned critical essay collection *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space*, Brian O'Doherty emphasises the spectator's agency in the experience and interpretation of art. Ervinck does not shy away from taking the initiative to apply pioneering solutions in order to transform a digital display into a gallery that, in turn, becomes a participatory playground. The artist has boldly remodelled the exhibition space boundaries, addressing the gap between the physical world and human ingenuity. MOUSEION is underpinned by a desire to examine our recent history and forecast evolutionary development. Exploring novel modes of engagement, it brings together Ervinck's existing and virtual sculptures alongside historical pieces by the likes of Henry Moore, Barbara Hepworth, Hans Arp, and Bernard Meadows, to name a few. As a result, the virtual museum envelopes visitors in multi-layered references of material, cultural and historical provenance.

“The digital logic largely determines my artistic thought and method,” declares the artist. In fact, Ervinck’s immense passion for technological innovation is complemented by his fascination with cabinets of curiosities and the physicality of objects of natural origin. MOUSEION draws from the universal world of art and resonates with André Malraux’s concept of the *musée imaginaire* – an ideal collection of artworks and artefacts self-curated in the mind’s eye. The sheer scale, openness, and heterogeneity of the virtual exhibition also echo Malraux’s advocacy for boosting public access to the arts. Thanks to the meticulous design and editing process, this publication offers an extension of the virtual visit to MOUSEION, amplifying the artist's capability to generate wonder through his signature cross-pollination between the digital and physical.

Dynamic and transformative, MOUSEION opens a revealing chapter in the broader history of experiencing and interacting with art. It emerges as a sanctuary of expanded sculpture – Ervinck’s computational structures that elevate the potentialities of materials, formats and concepts. MOUSEION functions as a virtual art vessel and a testimony to the artist’s unwavering commitment to engage audiences on multiple levels.