



centre for innovation
and design
at Grand-Hornu



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press
release

DAMIEN GERNAY. MIMESIS

Curator and scenographer: Damien Gernay

14.06.26 → 18.10.2026

INTRODUCTION

CID Grand-Hornu is pleased to present *Mimesis*, a solo exhibition by designer Damien Gernay, offering an overview of two decades of work that explores nature, materiality, and craftsmanship. Through his hyperreal representations and enigmatic surfaces, Gernay draws viewers into a space where perception oscillates between the familiar and the uncanny.

Staring into the sea — the deep blue water shining and reflecting across a wavy surface. Walking through a forest where darkness and light collide, revealing fleeting contours and indistinguishable sounds of the wilderness. Touching a surface whose origin, substance, or authenticity resists definition. Such sensory moments resonate throughout Damien Gernay's practice, where encountering his work can be puzzling and surprising, intriguing and spectacular. No words are needed to appreciate the intuitive and mystifying impressions his pieces evoke.

Aristotle once argued that mimesis — imitation — is a natural human activity and a way of understanding the world. Gernay observes, re-enacts, and recreates reality in similarly curious and intelligent ways. With a heightened perception of nature's wonders and a keen sensitivity to the possibilities of contemporary technology, he produces works that are at once relatable and unsettling. They instinctively give rise to questions: What is this? Is it real? How was it made?

Although the final outcome of Damien Gernay's work is highly aesthetic — often even mesmerizing — it is the stages of conceptualization and making that truly define his design practice. Trained in industrial design at the École Supérieure des Arts (ESA) in Saint-Luc Tournai, known for its workshop-based curriculum, he developed there both a conceptual approach and a pragmatic methodology focused on materials, at the crossroads between art and design.

Gernay grew up in France before rooting his life and practice in Brussels. In his atelier, certain works — such as the stoneware vases — take shape directly under his hands, while others are produced in external workshops in collaboration with skilled specialist artisans. A craftsman himself, Gernay remains closely involved in the entire production process.

Instinct and sensation drive his creative approach. Guided by a vivid imagination, strong curiosity, and a desire to test and direct the potential of materials, Gernay pushes his work to its limits — in construction, scale, and refinement. His process unfolds as a continuous conversation between control and chance, always aiming toward the precise aesthetic he envisions.

Mimesis offers an immersion into the elemental: fire, water, air, rock, and forest. Damien Gernay's poetic sensibility is evident in the way he captures traces of time, movement, and making across each piece. The exhibition encourages viewers to look more closely, question what they perceive, and experience the space where reality meets its re-imagining.

EXTRACTION, vase

© photo Eline Willaert



FROISSÉ, wall-mounted cabinet

© photo Bruno Timmermans



TEXTURED, sideboard

© Photo Nico Neef



BLANC CASSÉ, table

© Photo Bruno Timmermans



GYP SUM DISORDER

© Photo Julien Renault



BLANC CASSÉ, mirror

© Photo Bruno Timmermans



AMALGAME, sideboard

© Photo Alexander Popelier



OCEAN SUNSET

© Photo Bruno Timmermans





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OPENING TIMES

Every day from 10 AM until 6 PM, except Mondays.
The Grand-Hornu is closed on 24, 25, 31st December and 1st January.

The office can be reached during weekdays from 8 AM to 4.30 PM.

ADMISSION FEE

- Combined ticket for the Grand-Hornu site / CID / MACS: €10
- Discount: €2 or €6
- Group rates (minimum 15 ppl.): €6
- School groups: €2
- Free for children under 6
- Free entry on the first Sunday of the month
- Free guided tour from Tuesday to Friday at 3.30 PM, Saturday at 11 AM and 3.30 PM, Sunday at 3 PM and 4.30 PM
- Audio-guides for the historic site: €3
[FR / DUTCH / GERMAN / ENGL / IT / SP]

Free guided tours for individuals

- From Tuesday to Saturday at 11 AM for the historic site, at 3:30 PM for the design exhibition
- Sunday at 3 PM for the historic site, at 4.30 PM for the design exhibition.

BOOKING NUMBER

Advance reservation required for guided tours (by appointment) of exhibitions and/or historic site [FR / DUTCH / GERMAN / ENGL].

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CATERING

Run by Olivier Devriendt, former second-in-command to Sang Hoon Degeimbre at L'Air du Temps, **Rizom** offers a cuisine that is a cross between cultures.

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