

Revolutionary Flemish artist Jef Geys dies

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Flemish conceptual artist Jef Geys died on Monday in Genk (Limburg) at the age of 83 as a result of illness, it was reported on Tuesday.

Geys was considered one of the most influential post-war Belgian artists. He received the Flemish Culture Prize for Plastic Arts in 2000 and the Plastic Arts Prize of the Province of Antwerp in 2008.

Geys was born in 1934 in Leopoldsburg, Limburg. He studied at the Antwerp Arts Academy before settling in Balen, in De Kempen, where he taught art for over 30 years in a girls' school.

He practiced a rebellious art, following in the footsteps of Marcel Duchamp, the icon of the Dadaist movement, known for his idea that something becomes art if the artist has decided it. Daily life occupied a central place in Geys' works. Since 1958, he kept many images, texts and objects that bore testimony to his life in Balen, and he maintained a detailed inventory of his works in his archives.

Jef Geys represented Belgium at the Sao Paulo Art Biennial in 1991 and the Venice Art Biennial in 2009. In Belgium, his works were exposed in recent years at the Museum of Contemporary Art Antwerp (2011), the Royal Museums of Fine Arts Belgium (2012), the Wiels Contemporary Art Centre (2013) and the Municipal Museum of Contemporary Art, Ghent (2015). A few weeks before his death, he was still active, collaborating with galleries such as Air de Paris, Essex Street (New York) and Max Mayer (Dusseldorf).

The Flemish artist, who was a widower, had one daughter and two grandchildren. He will be buried in private, but a public ceremony will be organized in his honour.

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