

1000 - Franc note Constant Permeke

Between the two wars, expressionist art found fertile ground in our country. It was dominated by Constant Permeke, who is honoured on the 1000-franc note.

Security

The 1000-franc note is protected by a number of effective security features enabling anyone to check that a note is genuine; examples are areas of raised print, the security thread, the watermark, the optically variable devices...

Code in raised print

In the top left-hand corner of the note, near the portrait, a group of bars in relief forms a code which can be identified by the visually handicapped. This indicates the value of the note:

*“|” represents hundreds,
“||” represents thousands,
“|||” represents tens of thousands;
the horizontal bars multiply these by: 1 (“—”), 2 (“=”) or 5 (“≡”).*



Actual measurements: 154 mm x 76 mm

On the cover a detail of the 1000-franc note in front of "The Harvest", Tate Gallery, London © SABAM

Ways to identify a genuine banknote

1. Exclusive paper



When you handle a banknote you can feel the special quality of the paper and hear the crackle it produces. These features enable a preliminary identification of the note.

2. Raised (intaglio) print



Several areas on the front (including the portrait) can be perceived by touch. The engraving and the thickness of the ink raise the wording and the bar feature perceptibly, which helps visually impaired people to identify the note by touch.

3. Anti-copying features



The grey motifs are specially designed to change when reproduced.

The green colour in the design changes if the note is copied.

4. *Optically variable feature*



The figure 1000 on the back of the note sparkles in the light and looks coppery or green when viewed from different angles.

5. *Watermark and thread*



The watermark is of a finely drawn portrait of Constant Permeke with his very distinctive signature. Anything which appears dark when the watermark is held to the light, becomes light when the note is placed on an opaque surface.



On the back, the security thread looks like a broken silver line. When held to the light it seems black and continuous; the figure “1000 F” is repeated over its whole length.

6. *Printing in register*



The accuracy of the printing can be checked by looking at the picture of the Permeke museum against the light. The coloured areas on the face fit exactly with those on the back.

7. Hidden image



In the rectangle, the figure 1000 appears when the note is brought up to eye-level and then tilted towards the light. It becomes lighter or darker depending on the way the note faces.

8. Micro-lettering



On both sides of the note, a magnifying glass reveals words in minute lettering on the border of the white band of the watermark.

Elsewhere, one can see the denomination and the name of the central bank.

9. Under an ultraviolet lamp



Under ultraviolet light, some features on the back of the note stand out clearly in green and yellow. The security thread is also green, and additionally, red, green and blue fibres appear scattered throughout the paper.



Constant Permeke and Flemish Expressionism



Self-portrait (1940) C. Permeke Museum

Constant Permeke was born in Antwerp on 31 July 1886. His father, who was also an artist, was his first teacher; Ensor was a friend of the family. After studying at the Bruges and Ghent academies, Permeke spent time at the village of Laethem-Saint-Martin, where a group of Flemish artists – Minne, De Saedeleer, Van de Woestijne and Servaes – had developed their own particular anti-naturalist and symbolist style. This was where Permeke and his companions Gust De Smet and Frits Van den Berghe went on to develop their own vision in the form of *Flemish Expressionism*. Their interest in the psychic dimension of social life led them to a free interpretation of reality.

After going to live in Ostend, Permeke worked to give free rein to his spontaneity and to enhance the expressiveness of his style, but it was in England during the First World War that he achieved a genuinely personal treatment of reality. He visited the great London galleries and fell in love with Turner's work. At Chardstock, in 1916, he produced his most impressive works with their distorted but monumental images.

When the artist met his friends De Smet and Van den Berghe again after the war, he found that their style had developed along the same lines. The twenties were their great years. Permeke began to enjoy success, and a major exhibition of his works was held at the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels in 1930.

A feeling for nature was central to all his works, expressed by a primitive and rudimentary rendering which marks all his major figures. He also worked hard to produce a large number of vast compositions halfway between drawing and painting. One example is *Maternity* (1929), which also illustrates his almost organic approach to the subject.

Despite the crisis which followed the 1929 crash, Permeke stayed in the limelight. In 1934, he added a wing for work and display to the house "The Four Winds" which he had built at Jabbeke.

There he threw himself into sculpture. During the Second World War he concentrated on large drawings of nudes and sculptures from nature.

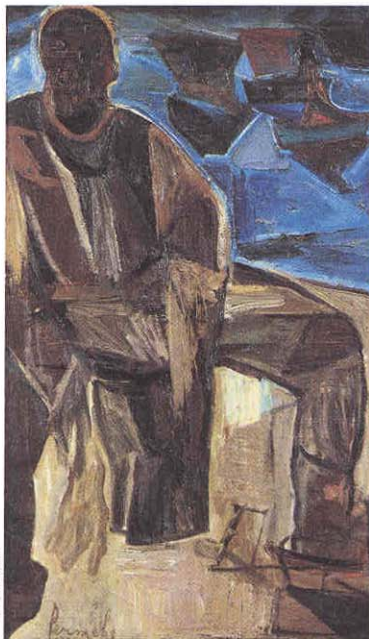
The critics were deeply divided. The occupying Nazis called his works *degenerate art* and banned the artist from showing them. Despite this, Permeke went on working undeterred. In the mid-forties he began work on *Niobé*, which in 1950 became one of his major sculptures as a remarkable monumental combination of art and nature.

The retrospective exhibition held in Brussels, Amsterdam and Paris in 1947-48 was the crowning recognition of his art, but his joy was marred by the death of his wife in 1948.

In 1951, his friend Maurice de Vlaminck suggested a visit to Brittany, where he was enchanted by the countryside, the sea and the people. On his return he produced some magnificent works combining all three. People also continued to be his inspiration; with *The Daily Bread* (1950) he reached an almost mystical peak.

Although his work had a monumental and almost cosmic dimension, it still retained its firm foundation in the life of ordinary people, which Permeke himself had shared.

He died at Ostend on 4 January 1952.



Fisherman from Ostend (1920) C. Permeke Museum

Willy Van den Bussche
Chief Conservator
Constant Permeke Museum (Jabbeke)
Museum of Modern Art (Ostend)

What you should do if...

... you have a note which is withdrawn from circulation?

All banknotes of more than 100 F issued by the National Bank of Belgium since 1944 can be exchanged at its counters.

... you have a damaged note?

Take care when bringing it to the National Bank not to forget any fragment. The note will be passed on to experts who will check it free of charge and estimate its value.

If you want to know anything more...

... about the long history of the currency or the origin of banknotes, you can arrange a free guided tour of the Musée de la Banque Nationale (☎ 32/2/221.22.06), rue du Bois Sauvage 9, 1000 Brussels.

... about the work of Constant Permeke, the best thing to do is to visit the house designed by the artist in Jabbeke (between Bruges and Ostend), which now contains the Constant Permeke museum. Here you can see not only mementos of the artist himself but also a large collection of his drawings, sculptures and paintings. In addition, most of our fine-art museums offer an interesting survey of his work.

Constant Permeke Museum, Gistelsteenweg 341, 8220 Jabbeke (☎ 32/59/50.81.18). Open every day except Monday.