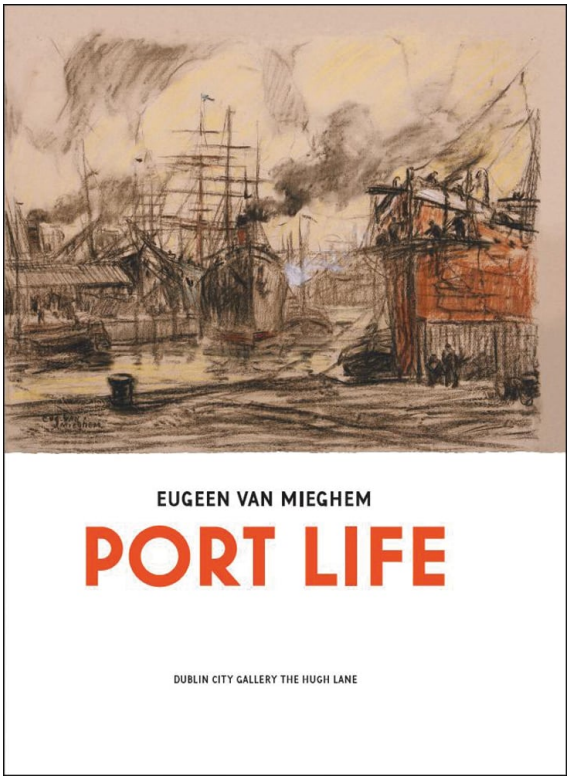
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Eugeen van Mieghem

Port Life

Exhibitions International

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- Antwerp artist Eugeen Van Mieghem (1875-1930) documents the pulsating life around the port of Antwerp at the turn of the twentieth century
- Mieghem's oeuvre alongside that of his Irish peers, proving yet again how vital are ongoing migrations of culture and people in illuminating and understanding our contemporary society

Antwerp artist Eugeen Van Mieghem (1875-1930) documents the pulsating life around the port of Antwerp at the turn of the twentieth century. Dockers, sack sewers, passengers, local communities and general labourers are the subjects of his lifelong fascination with Antwerp port. His affinity with his subjects makes his work direct and sincere and is unique in the genre of social realism. The port is one of the great gateways to the city, facilitating the constant movement of goods and people – migrations that are essential for the economy as well as for the evolution of people and society. Ports also are scenes of human tragedy, witnessing the forced emigration of families and communities fleeing persecution and poverty, as immortalised in the paintings and drawings of Eugeen Van Mieghem.

Antwerp has strong associations with Irish artists from the late nineteenth century. Many of these artists – including Roderic O'Conor, Walter Osborne and Norman Garstin – were attracted by the pioneering developments in art practice on the Continent, and travelled to Antwerp to study at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts. The result was light-filled fleeting images painted out of doors, en plein air – a radical departure from the official teachings of the established art academies.

It is not known if Van Mieghem and any of those Irish artists ever came into contact with each other, but this exhibition shows for the first time Van Mieghem's oeuvre alongside that of his Irish peers, proving yet again how vital are ongoing migrations of culture and people in illuminating and understanding our contemporary society.

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