

Portrait of one of the greatest artists of the twentieth century

# James Ensor

ERIC MIN

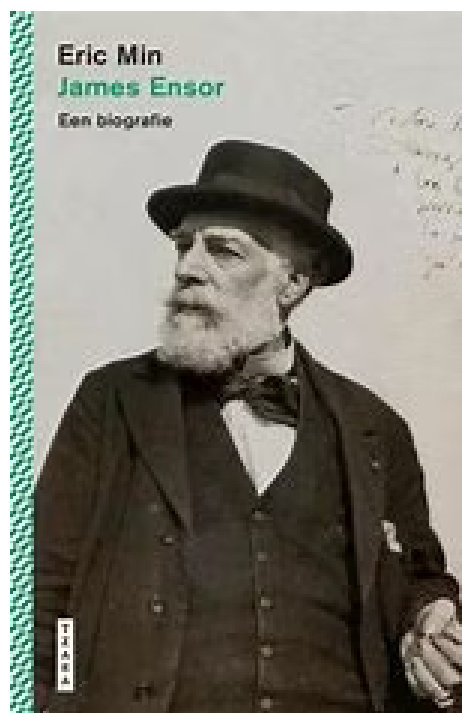
James Ensor (1860–1949) was everything in one: cocky and solitary, baron and bohemian, a misunderstood bourgeois, a *peintre maudit* who surveyed the world from his ivory tower in Ostend and sought refuge in the salons of Brussels. The storm in his head rendered up a claustrophobic but polyglot oeuvre, a painted world of masks and skulls. As a critical witness, Ensor helped to create the hurricane that shook the art world to its foundations in the final quarter of the nineteenth century.

**A magnificent style – scholarly but vivid and punchy**

ONS BRUSSEL

Eric Min has worked his way through letters and speeches, as well as everything written by contemporaries or local newspapers. He concludes that Ensor manipulated information about his own life as if it were a painting. Min peels away the mask of the mythmaker to create a wonderful portrait of this enigmatic and multi-faceted painter.

To avoid any possibility of oversimplification, Min builds up his biography like a collage of prose passages and a montage of panoramic images. He brings to life the spectacle on the sea dyke in Ostend and the artistic milieu of Brussels with brightly coloured touches, with the result that the reader's experience is akin to watching a film.



## AUTHOR



**Eric Min** (b. 1959) graduated in literature and philosophy and published his work in a number of literary magazines. Since 1989 he has worked as a critic and essayist for an important Flemish newspaper, reporting on photography, art and literature. He has written essays for overview works by various artists and photographers, and curated an exhibition on Belgian surrealism. He published a biography of fauvist artist Rik Wouters and of Henri Evenepoel.

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