

Paul Gees: Tension

22.05.2026 – 02.10.2026

It is a privilege for El Principal de Còrsega to present, for the first time in Barcelona and, indeed, in Spain, the work of Belgian artist Paul Gees. Curated by Veerle Wenes, founder and director of *valerie_traan* gallery and Gees' representing gallerist, the exhibition also marks the first official collaboration between El Principal de Còrsega and another European apartment-gallery, in this case from Antwerp.

The exhibition revolves around one of the fundamental concepts in Gees' practice since the 1980s: tension. Hence its title, *Paul Gees: Tension*. More than a thematic motif, tension constitutes the structural principle that articulates his sculptural and spatial practice, and the axis from which the artist has developed a body of work of remarkable coherence, rigour and singularity.

Born in Aalst in 1949 and trained as an interior architect at Sint-Lukas Brussels, Paul Gees has, since the 1970s, developed a practice situated at the intersection of sculpture, architecture and space. His early works belong to the fields of performance and installation, in dialogue with movements such as Fluxus, Arte Povera and Minimal Art. From the 1980s onwards, his research has focused on sculptures and spatial objects conceived through minimal, precise and carefully constructed interventions.

In Gees' work, tension does not operate as a metaphor, but as a material and physical reality. His works render visible concrete relationships of pressure, balance, weight, resistance, rhythm and gravity. Through predominantly horizontal and vertical structures, the artist activates a field of forces in which materials confront, support, contain or challenge one another.

Wood—flexible, alive and vulnerable; stone—dense and corporeal; iron—rigid and resistant: each material appears in his work through its specific properties and its capacity to generate contained energy. The result is a body of work of great formal clarity and notable intensity, in which stability and risk coexist in a balance that is always measured, always demanding.

Paul Gees' practice stands out for its consistency and for a formal refinement that does not renounce complexity. His sculptures condense a sustained reflection on the relationship between matter, construction and space, placing the viewer in direct encounter with form, force and proportion.

With this exhibition, El Principal de Còrsega reaffirms its commitment to presenting internationally relevant artistic proposals in Barcelona and to establishing curatorial collaborations capable of generating new dialogues between scenes, contexts and sensibilities. The presence of Paul Gees in our space represents not only the introduction of a key figure in contemporary Belgian sculpture into the Spanish art scene, but also the opening of a line of exchange between European galleries that share the same intellectual and exhibition standards.



Paul Gees. Biography



Paul Gees was born in Aalst (Belgium) in 1949 and lives and works in Schoonaarde. He trained as an interior architect at the Sint-Lukas School in Brussels and began his artistic trajectory in the 1970s in the fields of performance, installation and spatial intervention. Since the early 1980s, he has developed a deeply coherent sculptural practice centred on the exploration of concepts such as tension, balance, risk and stability.

His work forms part of major public and private collections, including M HKA – Museum of Contemporary Art Antwerp, S.M.A.K – Museum of Contemporary Art Ghent, the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, the National Bank of Belgium, KBC Bank, AZ Alma Hospital and the Staatsgalerie Stuttgart. Several of his works are also installed in public spaces in Belgium. Over the course of his career, he has exhibited in institutions such as the aforementioned M HKA, the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium and Z33 – House for Contemporary Art, Design and Architecture in Hasselt.

In 2019, *Paul Gees – tension, balance, risk, stability* was published, an extensive volume dedicated to more than five decades of his work.

About valerie_traan gallery

Founded in Antwerp by Veerle Wenes, valerie_traan gallery is an internationally recognised space known for its cross-disciplinary programme, situated at the intersection of art, architecture and design. Since its inception, the gallery has developed a distinctive line of work attentive to practices that exceed conventional classifications and that find in the domestic space a specific mode of exhibition, relation and thought.

More than a place of display, valerie_traan has established itself as a platform for research, production and dialogue, where artists, designers and architects coexist, sharing a common sensitivity towards material, space and experience. Its collaboration with El Principal de Còrsega arises from this underlying affinity and from a shared understanding of the gallery space as a site for encounter, experimentation and excellence.

About our international network of apartment-galleries

Paul Gees: Tension marks the first official collaboration between El Principal de Còrsega and another European apartment-gallery, and forms part of a broader intention to weave an international network of domestic spaces dedicated to contemporary art. This constitutes a strategic line of work for El Principal de Còrsega, which understands the apartment-gallery not only as a distinctive exhibition format, but as a model capable of fostering a closer, more qualitative and meaningful relationship between artwork, space and visitor.

Through these alliances, El Principal de Còrsega reinforces its vocation to connect Barcelona with other international art scenes, generate new opportunities for the circulation of artists and projects, and consolidate itself as a reference platform for a discerning form of collecting, a carefully considered mediation, and an experience of art grounded in proximity, rigour and the singularity of context.

