

**Who was Marcel Hastir?** Marcel Hastir (22/3/1906 – 2/7/2011) was born in Brussels and died there at the age of 105. He was an artist and painter, and a member of the Belgian resistance during WW2. He lived here, at 51 rue du Commerce, from 1935 until his death. 1935 was when he set up on these premises his workshop and studio, which was also used as a venue for young musicians to perform.

To this day, the Royal Academy of Belgium awards two prizes bearing his name (one for music and one for sculpture). He studied painting with Constant Montald, Emile Fabry and Jean Delville, and sculpture with Victor Rousseau.

**The Resistance years:** In 1940 he managed to obtain authorisation from the German Occupying forces to give drawing and painting classes in his workshop. But this art school was in reality a cover which enabled young people to meet in relative safety. Three of them, the brothers Alexandre and Youra Livchitz plus Jean Franklemon, among their other resistance activities, devised a most daring plan: to hold up a train convoy departing people to Auschwitz. Youra, Jean and their friend Robert Maistriau carried out the plan successfully during the night of 19 April 1943, at Boortmeerbeek. A book about their venture was written by Marion Schreiber under the title “Stille Rebellen” (“Quiet rebels”). It is on sale at the Atelier.

**Painter and restorer of paintings:** When the war ended, Marcel Hastir returned to his work as painter, especially of portraits, but also as teacher of painting and drawing as well as to the restoration of paintings. He published a work on a non-invasive technique for restoring old works of art.

**Organiser of concerts:** At the same time, he and his wife Ginette van Rijckevorsel van Kessel (they married in 1946) began to host numerous musical, literary, theatrical and intellectual events at the Atelier. This led to the creation of a non-profit organization called “Maison des Arts Coordonnés, asbl” on 1 April 1949.

**Uncovering talent:** The range of arts on display at l'Atelier has always been wide. The Hastirs helped several performers to reveal their talents to the world: Charles Trenet, Jacques Brel, Barbara, Maurice Béjart, Lola Bobesco, Carlo van Neste among them. “L'Atelier” also provided a platform for thinkers and men of action like Lanza del Vasto, father Dominique Pire and l'Abbé Pierre.

Many anecdotes relating to this thriving cultural life are to be found in Marcel Hastir's biography, “Une Vie”.

**Threatened eviction:** The house being situated in the Léopold neighbourhood which was under constant threat from developers, and Marcel Hastir still being merely a tenant, he had to combat for years attempts to remove him from his home and place of work. The last attempts took place in 2002 (the house was threatened with demolition) and 2004 when he was served an eviction order. Both were successfully defeated thanks to action by citizens to support the aged painter, promoter of culture and veteran of the resistance.

**Foundation:** In 2005 Marcel Hastir instructed his supporters to set up a foundation named after his Atelier, the “Fondation Atelier Marcel Hastir” to which he bequeathed all his works of art.

**Centenarian:** On Marcel Hastir's 100th birthday, 22 March 2006, the City of Brussels awarded him Honorary Citizenship and the Brussels region listed the Atelier among Brussels' buildings of historic and cultural interest.

**Mensch:** On 24 April 2008 the Brussels Secular Jewish Community Centre (CCLJ) awarded Marcel Hastir the title of “Mensch of the Year” (Mensch = “person of integrity” in Yiddish) in recognition of the help he gave to his Jewish fellow citizens during the war. Later that year the Belgian State represented by Laurette Onkelinx, Deputy Prime Minister, announced its decision to support the “Fondation Atelier Marcel Hastir” in its efforts to acquire title to the building at 51, rue du Commerce.

**Heritage and memorial:** Thanks to this support, the City of Brussels purchased the building in February 2010. With effect from 1 October 2010 the “Fondation Atelier Marcel Hastir” has a long-term lease of 99 years in respect of the whole building. All the work of Marcel Hastir, in all its aspects, is now preserved and is in the hands of the volunteers who run the Atelier.

**It is still running:** The Atelier hosts many activities: classical music, jazz and folk events, plays, film shows and lectures, plus music, drawing and dancing classes.

**Membership:** You are welcome to join our association (annual membership 15 or 30 euros) payable to the account of ASBL Atelier Marcel Hastir, BE 90 0016 3550 0832

**Website:** Upcoming events are listed on: [www.ateliermarcelhastir.eu](http://www.ateliermarcelhastir.eu)



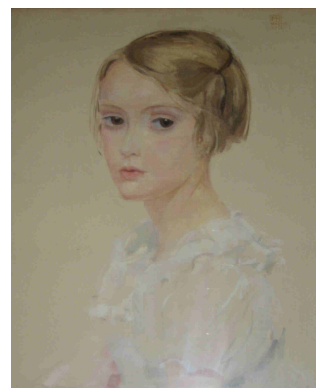
Marcel and Ginette



Concert by Krupnik



Juan Soya, orphan from the Spanish Civil War



The Meyer's daughter deported in 1942

The Atelier is a multifunctional space. It hosts art classes, shows and concerts and can be used for meetings. The atmosphere in this house, which has been there for almost 100 years, is quite special.

The space is open for hire. Please contact:

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Atelier Marcel Hastir

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