

100 F - Franc note James Ensor

The new banknote pays tribute to James Ensor,
one of the boldest among the great painters
at the turn of
the century.



Security

The 100 franc note is protected by a number of effective security features enabling anyone to check whether a note is genuine; examples are areas of raised print, the security thread, the watermark, the

optically variable device... At the printing works of the National Bank of Belgium quality is meticulously controlled throughout every stage of the production process. This guarantees that

every note issued fully meets the required quality standards. Any note which looks different or lacks some of the security features should immediately arouse your suspicion.



Actual measurements : 139 mm x 76 mm

Ways to identify a genuine banknote

1. Exclusive paper



When you pick up a note you can feel the stiffness of the paper and hear the crackle it produces. These qualities help give 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. In addition they enable the blind or visually impaired to identify the note by touch.

3. Anti-copying features

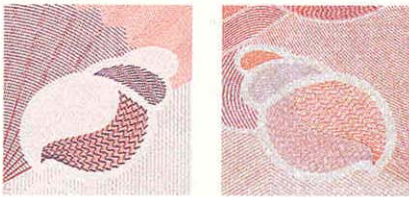


The colours in the design change if the note is copied



The grey motifs are specially designed to change when reproduced.

4. Printing in register



The note is printed with great accuracy so that when the shell motif is viewed against a light, the coloured areas on the face fit exactly with those on the back.

5. Watermark and thread



The watermark is of a finely drawn portrait of James Ensor 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 “100 F” is repeated over its whole length.

6. Hidden image



In the rectangle, the figure 100 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.

7. Micro-lettering



A magnifying glass reveals words in minute lettering on the border of the white band of the watermark, on both sides of the note. Elsewhere, one can see the face value in very small font, on the front in figures, on the back in lettering.

8. Under an ultraviolet lamp



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

What you should do if...

... you have a note withdrawn from circulation ?

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

... you have a damaged note (burnt or mutilated...) ?

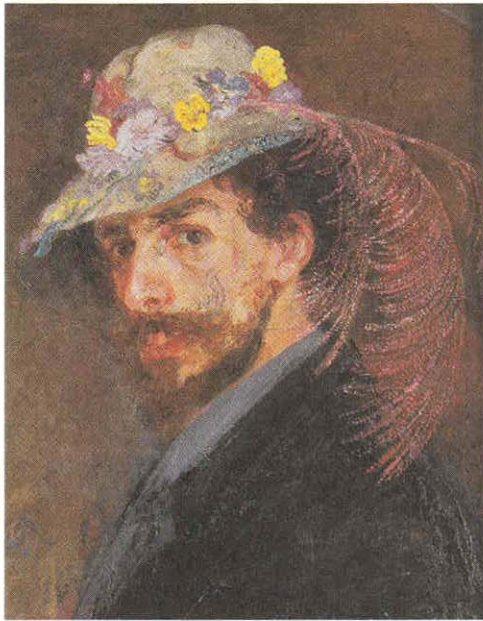
Take it carefully to the National Bank, don't forget any piece. The note will be passed to experts who will check it free of charge and estimate its value.

For additional information...

... About the extensive history of the currency or the origin of banknotes, arrange for a free guided tour of the Musée de la Banque Nationale (phone 32/2/221.22.06) rue du Bois Sauvage 9, 1000 Brussels



The boldness of James Ensor



Self-Portrait in a flowered hat
Stedelijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Oostende

James Ensor - a painter, designer, engraver and also a writer and composer - is now recognised as a genius.

He was born in Ostend on 13 April 1860. His parents kept a small shop full of curiosities. As he was still very young, it would influence his work. His father encouraged him and arranged a few lessons for him given by two old, Ostend painters. At the age of 17 he entered the Brussels Academy, but he was rebellious and was not inclined to conform to his teachers instructions; after three

years he left that "school of the short-sighted" and went back to Ostend. He moved into a large house which had a studio in the attic, from which he could see a "magnificent panorama" of the town and the countryside. From 1880 onwards he painted his first notable works there, in particular "*Le lampiste*" (The lamplighter) and "*La musique russe*" (The Russian band). He soon started to move in artistic circles and in 1884 was one of the founders of "*Les XX*" (The Twenty), a group which included avant-garde artists such as Van Rysselberghe, Knopff and Evenepoel. He regularly exhibited with this group and later with "*La libre esthétique*", which succeeded the first group from 1894 to 1914.

Ensor soon found himself attracting increasingly virulent criticism. Some of his most famous paintings, especially "*La mangeuse d'huîtres*" (Woman eating oysters), were rejected by the organizers of official exhibitions. Everywhere the artist met ridicule, spitefulness or incomprehension. Nevertheless, he had some defenders, including Emile Verhaeren. Gradually, the taste for his work won over the intellectual elite and the art lovers. In 1929 Ensor was rewarded in a way which made up for all that had gone before : he was ennobled. He died on 19 November 1949.

His early work, characterised by dark colours and a rich and smooth paint texture, still reflected a variety of influences, mainly those of Manet, Degas and the symbolists. From 1883 onwards,



The Bathing-Machine
Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerpen

however, Ensor's palette became brighter and rapidly developed the violently expressive range of pure colour as the young artist's personality and originality matured. From then on, Ensor was to be haunted by the search for and the representation of light. He broke all the established rules, and each new picture provided evidence of pictorial achievement averse to all traditional techniques.

In addition to still lifes and landscapes, Ensor also painted masks, skeletons, interiors and scenes

from the life of Christ imbued with a rebellious spirit and an innate fancy of farce. He also liked to take himself as a model. Passing easily from painting to engraving or drawing, he put himself in the picture with the features of Christ. Death haunts his work, and he even went as far as to paint himself as a skeleton. He also portrayed himself in the company of his family, his friends or contemporaries, or surrounded by grinning demons. When he painted masks, the first of which appeared in 1883 (*"Les masques scandalisés"*), Ensor took his inspiration from the carnival. We all know how much he enjoyed the famous "Dead rat's ball", which is the highlight of the Shrove Tuesday festivities in Ostend. Obviously this "prop" allowed him above all to express his fantasies and his anguish. The mask hides the face and allows all sorts of liberties underneath its happy exterior.

In each of his works Ensor plunges us into a world of fantasy which heralds surrealism and entitles us to regard him as one of the great precursors of modern art, ranking with Cézanne, Van Gogh or Gauguin. Today he enjoys an international reputation : his most famous work, *"L'entrée du Christ à Bruxelles"* (Christ's Entry into Brussels) of 1888, is to be found in the collection of the J.Paul Getty Museum in Malibu, USA.

James Ensor strongly influenced both the 19th and the 20th century. His unique personality is beyond compare.



Strange Masks Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, Brussels

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Ensor's work is represented in all the great museums of the world; the most complete collections can be seen in Antwerp (Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, phone 32/3/238.78.09) and in Brussels (Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, phone 32/2/508.32.11). Tourists in the

seaside resort of Ostend can discover the world of the Master by visiting Ensor's house, where souvenirs of the painter and reproductions of his major works are to be found (phone 32/59/50.25.57), and admire some of his pictures in the Stedelijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten (phone 32/59/80.53.35).