

George Minne

The Lost Son

visitor guide

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George Minne - The Lost Son

September 21 – December 21 2025
Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens

The Lost Son

In 1931 the couple Dhondt-Dhaenens lost their only son, fourteen-year-old Roger. At that time, the Ghent sculptor George Minne (1866–1941) was also living in Sint-Martens-Latem. A few years earlier, he had exhibited his bronze group *The Lost/ Prodigal Son* in Ghent and Brussels – a work created as early as 1896, yet only publicly presented a quarter of a century later. The sculpture group boldly departed from the established iconography of this biblical theme. Even today, the poignant work continues to raise questions concerning corporeality, loss, gender and the gaze.

After the passing of their son, Jules Dhondt and Irma Dhaenens continued to give their art collection further shape. They acquired eight sculptures by George Minne, among them a mother embracing her child, a pair of kneeling ‘relic bearers,’ and ‘drowning figures’. Their Minne works enter into dialogue here with sculptures and drawings from other collections, works pushing the boundaries of bodily representation and of physical and emotional proximity.

(1) *The Prodigal Son*, 1896, bronze, Christian Reyntjens Collection

(2) *Studies for the Prodigal Son*, ca. 1894-96, pencil and ink on paper, Museum of Fine Arts Ghent

(3) *Figure (study)*, n.d., pencil and ink on paper, Museum of Fine Arts Ghent

(4-7) *Figure studies*, ca. 1894-96, pencil and ink on paper, Museum of Fine Arts Ghent



George Minne, *The Prodigal Son*, 1896, bronze, Christian Reyntjens Collection



Hubert Malfait, *Portrait of Roger Dhondt*, 1945, oil on canvas, 70 × 45,5 cm, Collection Museum Dhondt-Dhaenens.
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