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Privé Domein 64 (121109)

*I will give several lectures on behalf of the children's drawings book. A private hospital in Mill, ViaSana, orthopedic specialists, cosmetic surgery, has bought 200 books that will be divided among three charitable causes.*

*There will be lectures for the Political Women in Helmond and for a Lions Club that will buy the children's drawings book.*

*About € 13,000 worth of books have already been sold. **Who's next?***



Cavea, oil on copper, 100x100, 2009



J.V., oil on board 27x19, 2009



Web brown, oil on canvas 11x9cm, 2008

(Catalogue Nicola Samori: BEING. ISBN: 978-88-6403-023-4)  
(Arte – speciale La Biennale di Venezia , July 2009)

During Art Basel, I think somewhere in the vicinity of Scope, I was stopped by some young Italians with brochures, who asked passers-by if they were interested in visiting their exhibition. Being curious, Brendan and I found ourselves carried along, and we ended up in lift that took us down to an immensely big and high concrete space, where the works of five Italian artists were shown. The work of Nicola Samori immediately struck me and I decided to buy some works straightaway.

Nicola Samori is a versatile artist, who doesn't usually paint on canvas, but on copper and board, he often draws and he creates sculptures.

His work is characterized by craftsmanship and a love for the 17th century, think of Rembrandt, Goya and Ribera. Nicola Samori's knowledge of both old and modern art is something rare in young artists. There's a leitmotiv running from the past to our times via painters like Michelangelo, Schiele, De Kooning, Rainer and Bacon. He interprets the work of others, actualises 17<sup>th</sup> century baroque realism again and distorts it. He is especially fascinated with deforming heads, bizarre, mystic, cleft, crushed, obscured and impenetrable heads.

We, humans, are strangers to ourselves.

Cees Hendriks, always travelling between the Netherlands and China, collector of Chinese art from the very beginning, tipped me to take a look at the work of the Chinese artist Song Kun (1977), who had been proclaimed one of the most promising young Chinese artists. The UCLA Hammer Museum in Los Angeles was the first to organize a solo exhibition of her work in 2007.

Song Kun is represented by the Boers-Li gallery in Beijing.



Song Kun, Woman reading a Letter on a Hainan Airlines' Flight, oil on canvas, 60x45, 2008

The exhibition was part of an exhibition by Walter Maciel in Los Angeles, entitled: **'Seeking the Recluse but not Meeting'**, which is borrowed from the poet Jia Dao (779-843 Tang Dynasty), in which the poet seeks for seclusion, but never finds it. Song Kun opposes the current art scene in China; the provocative performances by Zhang Huan or the dramatic fireworks of Cai Guo-Qiang and neo pop culture. Song Kun seeks spiritual, mystic and universal experiences that stem from deeply rooted memories. Her paintings are testimonies of wistfulness, melancholy, nostalgia and silence that are nowhere to be met these days.

She could be attributed what Etty Hillesum terms 'an opiate to grief', a balm for the wounds of a world.

Her paintings are small-sized (45x60), poetic and vulnerable enchantments in soft grey and sepia tones, flowing into each other. A woman reading a letter in a corner by the window of an aeroplane, a man weeding his garden in the sacred glow of dawn. Song Kun leads the spectator to the indefinable and unattainable along people's backs, remembers Caspar David Friedrich.

Song Kun has an old soul, she is more European than many Chinese artists are Chinese. (Those Chinese painters in 'The State of Things' in Bozar – Brussel really disappoint me, exactly, neo pop and clumsy, loosely-brushed attempts.

Enclosed with her work you'll find a CD with electronic music by Mu Lian and lyrics by Song Kun that sit somewhere between dream and reality, light and darkness, contemplative silence and hypnotic experiences.

*I'm pushed forward by the light in her work, on tiny waves of hope and desire, to something I will never reach, further away than ever...*

## **Aaron van Erp**

Aarop van Erp, I instantly fell in love with his work, and to this day I am very fond of it. And we still get along swimmingly.

Aaron and I are worlds apart. Aaron's studio is ruled by total chaos. We have been busy making a film about his perfectly messy studio for some time now.

I like to visit messy, chaotic studios, it reeks of paint and there are all sorts of other smells, you find trampled, half-empty paint tubes, food leftovers and the occasional dead mouse, which lost its life after having enjoyed these treats, and beneath your feet brief, crackly-creaky noises of hidden CDs arise underneath unsuspecting magazines.

You can tell his entire life from his floor. Aaron uses something and drops it wherever he happens to be. 'Where it lands, is where it belongs' is his device.

I was in his flat the other day, which had been cleared up by his visiting girlfriend, Cynthia, a couple of moths of earlier, and again I happened upon the indescribable chaos I've become accustomed to. Aaron's thesis '*Soup*', which we hope to publish next year, deals with this chaos. As for myself, I cannot stand a mess at home and I'm always busy organizing, adjusting things that are not at 90°, just as compulsive as Aaron. Neurotics are of the same mind.

I think Aaron is a truly brilliant painter, who conjured up an entirely original language of painting from his underbelly.

Last Sunday I went to an exhibition of Leopold Rabus, whose work is also brimming with human chaos, psychic tension and all sorts of inconveniences. Aaron and Leopold both draw inspiration from objects in their immediate vicinity. In that sense there are many similarities. However, their painting styles are poles apart. Aaron has a loose stroke, more pictorial and unfinished, whereas Rogier Ormeling characterized Rabus's method of working as meticulous, crammed with photo-realistic details. 'We see the most subtle hues of birds and the most delicate branching structures of leafless birches, but also how alpine meadow-grass is shimmering.' (1)

When Rabus depicts people, the heads are exceptionally big, whereas the bodies are puny, thin and elongated.

Aaron never paints full-fledged human beings, people are erased, they loom up like silhouettes, their presence is very threatening and terrifying, but also comical once you get to know them better. They are ghosts, floating up from the sublunary world, and apparently they haven't learned a thing. It's better to meet them in a painting than in real life.

The colours in Rabus's paintings are derived from typical Swiss country cabinets with those gentle and sundry colours that splash before your eyes. Smooth and shiny are the colours Rabus uses, creamy and greasy those of Aaron. Aaron's paintings are empty in comparison with the busy merriment of Rabus's paintings. If you look at paintings by Aaron and Rabus, loneliness becomes your housemate and you'll realize we live in hard times, agitation everywhere, danger in every corner, no one can be trusted anymore, we are all offenders and victims, approaching thunderstorms tear us apart, ravaging tsunamis of all shapes and sizes... It reminds me of my youth, when curate DE VREE announced impending doom from the pulpit with a hissssssing and broken voice... after which wallets were immediately pulled out.

Aaron has a number of exhibitions ahead of him, such as the one in Cape Town at gallery Joao Ferrerira in March, furthermore, Jan Hoet has asked him in Gent and gallery Kunstagenten, Linienstrasse, Berlin, has presented itself.



Rabus, Neige et Renard, oil on canvas, 240x300, 2007



La Bergère et le Bucheron, oil on canvas, 270x190, 2007 (Gemeentemuseum Den Haag)



Unt., oil on canvas, 150x110, 2009



Unt., oil on canvas, 130x100, 2009



Unt., oil on canvas, 45x55, 2009



Unt., oil on canvas, 100x130, 2009

Splendid, mysterious and bizarre marvels of painting, full of the European tradition, with a sense of intimacy, and yet new at the same time.

I would love to see an exhibition with Goya, Van Gogh, Ensor, Soutine, Bacon, Rabus, Daniël Richter, Nicolai Samori and Aaron VAN ERP, and to salve the wounds, Song Kun p.5



Unt., oil on canvas, 220x300, 2009



Unt., oil on canvas, 55x70, 2009



Unt., oil of canvas, 60x115, 2009



Unt., oil on canvas, 120x200, 2009

Wonderful paintings, in my opinion, with Aaron van Erp ingredients that reveal our weird world and make it look like a fool.  
Titles are not yet available.



Unt., oil on canvas, 150x250, 2009

If this leaves you cold, you must be... Ouch, ouch, ouch, ouch-ouch. My heart breaks...  
Darkness descends... unutterable longing seeks consolation for every wound...  
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