

Layered portrait of a man in crisis

The Heron's Nest

MICHAËL OLBRECHTS

Hawk struggles to live up to his name. Unlike the strong, uncompromising bird, he is timid, insecure and the target of his colleagues' ridicule. Following an incident, he is suspended from work and goes to recuperate at his aunt, who lives in a quiet village surrounded by nature. He is determined to change, and when he meets Anton, a gardener who seems the opposite of Hawk in everything, he digs deep to escape his old self. But it's not that simple.

Olbrechts is quietly working on what may well turn out to be one of the strongest Dutch language graphic oeuvres.

9E KUNST

Since his award-winning debut 'The Very Last Tiger', Michaël Olbrechts' drawing has come on in leaps and bounds: in 'The Heron's Nest' the natural beauty jumps off the page and every face reveals the emotions inside. But it's in the dream sequences that Olbrechts can really unleash his creative talent, resulting in truly impressive images. Hawk's sorrow and fear is hinted at between the lines just as often as it is made explicit, culminating in a layered portrait of a man in crisis. An abrupt ending leaves the reader feeling somewhat numb.

A feast for the eyes

CUTTING EDGE



AUTHOR



Michaël Olbrechts (b. 1987) is a comic artist and freelance illustrator who won the Silvester Debut Award for his first book. His stories centre on the frequently awkward dynamic between people. His figures are cute in some ways, yet Olbrechts always manages to capture their expressions with great precision. Both his characters and his narratives are quintessentially human. *Photo © Bart van der Moeren*

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