

Fictitious biography of a genius

Bouvaert

SIMON SPRUYT

Jan Bouvaert is a man with ambition. In early seventeenth-century Italy, he works as a painter at the court of Mantua, but his heart longs for Rome, where he wants to study the old masters. His brother Pieter has stayed behind in Antwerp, where he too is trying to realise his ambition: writing the ultimate ode to the donkey. When Pieter sends word that their mother is dying, Jan returns to Antwerp. Although by now he thinks quite highly of himself as an Italian trained painter, his reception in Antwerp does not reflect this. Luckily, he can seduce clients with his skillful portrayal of beautiful women. With the help of his wife Isabella he builds up his reputation and his business, but after his brother's death he cannot get the donkey out of his mind.

An album worthy of the greatest Flemish painters

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Bouvaert, loosely based on Peter Paul Rubens, the greatest Flemish painter of the baroque, is dazzlingly brought to life by Simon Spruyt, who by his standards delivers a relatively straightforward story. Once again, he adapts his drawing style to his subject, and so Spruyt uses baroque images to create a fictitious biography that also pokes fun at the ego of artists and poses questions about what gives meaning to life.

Mesmerisingly beautiful

HET BELANG VAN LIMBURG



AUTHOR



Simon Spruyt (b. 1978) calls himself a 'Belgian Comics Engineer'. This comic book artist is a masterful storyteller. The tone, style and atmosphere of his graphic novels vary greatly from book to book, but are always just right. Time and again, Spruyt demonstrates that he masters and manipulates the graphic novel medium like no other. Photo © Marc Tessier

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