

Slow sledgehammer

Aaron

BEN GIJSEMANS

Over summer Aaron has to study for exam retakes, but he can't manage to concentrate. He reads his superhero comics and looks through the window at the square outside, where a boy who lives nearby often plays football. In contrast to his comic book heroes, Aaron lacks a talent for witty one-liners, breath-taking courage and a woman in need of rescue. As the summer slowly passes, he is forced to confront something he would rather not face: he's attracted to little boys.

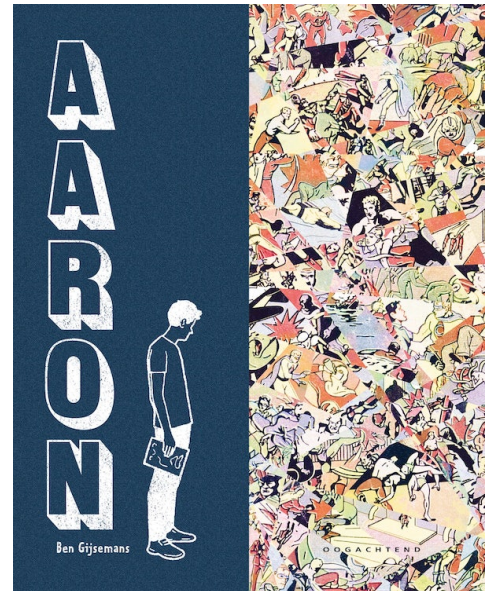
Incredibly carefully thought-out, refined, perfectionistic and subtle, but also unbearable and heart-breaking

BRUZZ

Ben Gijsemans' drawings are meticulously detailed, and in their sometimes slow-motion narrative rhythm they perfectly portray Aaron's struggle with his feelings. Although there is some intense conversation, nothing is said, which only further emphasizes Aaron's loneliness. The superheroes he uses in an attempt to escape his worries provide some breathing space in the oppressive atmosphere. 'Aaron' is a beautiful but painful and subtle portrait of a young man who doesn't want to know what he already knows, and the despair that results. A gem of a book.

This is a wonderful book, and I want everyone to read it. Its emotional and visual economy is extraordinary

THE GUARDIAN ON 'HUBERT'



AUTHOR



Ben Gijsemans (b. 1989) studied audiovisual arts and comics in Ghent and Brussels. The first chapter of his debut *Hubert* was his thesis. It was very well received at home and abroad. Gijsemans' drawings are incredibly detailed, and more often than not depict loners who feel out of place among other people. *Photo © Ben Gijsemans*

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