

Melancholic portrait of a comfortable solitude

Hubert

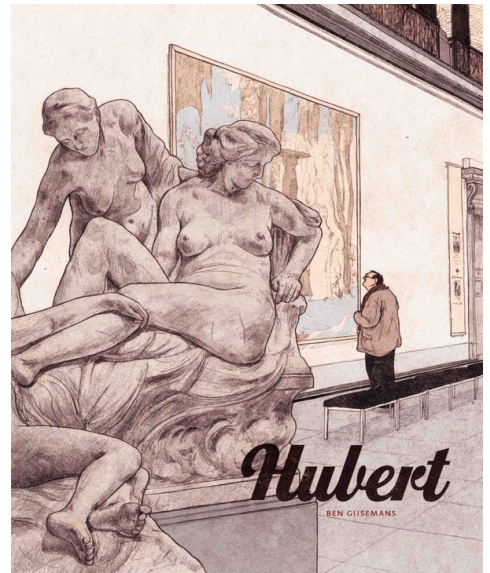
BEN GIJSEMANS

Hubert is a middle-aged man who lives in a tiny flat in Brussels and spends his plentiful free time visiting galleries, standing in front of his favourite pictures as if before a shrine. In between, he talks to almost no one. He has lost the habit of small talk, if he ever had it in the first place. His lonely downstairs neighbour's attempt to seduce Hubert scares him off. He prefers the girl he can see from his window, who lives in the apartment opposite. Her great virtue, of course, is that she is silent, unreachable. Their worlds will never collide, and for all his pining, for Hubert this is perhaps a relief.

Gijsemans can shout if he wants to, but he's more than happy to whisper.

THE HERALD SCOTLAND

Ben Gijsemans focuses on the routine of Hubert's life. 'Hubert's emotional and visual economy is extraordinary. Gijsemans' drawings, washed out but somehow lush, too, are tender and telling, from the doleful curve of Hubert's back to the workaday treads of the stairs in his apartment building. In this gentle account, Hubert is neither noble aesthete nor creepy loner, simply a man who likes pottering around looking at art.



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 well received at home and abroad, and was immediately translated into French, English and German. *Photo © Ben Gijsemans*

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