

A documentary sketchbook of a village that has almost disappeared

Doel

JEROEN JANSSEN

The polder village of Doel, situated in the shadow of a nuclear reactor near the port of Antwerp, has been a pawn in the power games of successive politicians since the 1960s. At first, there were plans for it to be demolished to make way for the port expansion, but then there was talk of preservation. In 1998, the decision was made that it should disappear for good. Yet it is still standing today. Or at least what's left of it. The continuing uncertainty has prompted many residents to move away, turning Doel into a ghost town.

Probably the book of the year

FORBIDDEN PLANET

Jeroen Janssen became fascinated by those who stayed behind and by their stories, visiting Doel many times to draw their histories and that of the village. In this thick tome, which is like a sketchbook, he also expresses his own frustration at this official indecision. 'Doel' is an impressive account of a personal journey of discovery in a village whose fate has long been uncertain.

Remarkable stories

VOLKSKRANT

Five years after 'Doel' Jeroen Janssen returns to the village in 'There Are Still People There'. In his unique voice, he documents the changes that the village and especially its past and present residents have undergone. Janssen's highly personal perspective results in stories that, beyond political and social debates, mainly focus on the human dimension.



AUTHOR



Jeroen Janssen (b. 1963) has been a postman, teacher, driver, gardener, library assistant and has worked with psychiatric patients. He has always had a great passion for drawing, but did not start making comics until the 1990s. When he was working at an art school in Rwanda, he started turning true stories into comic strips. This approach has become his trademark and he does not shy away from difficult topics. His work includes an investigation of the threatened Flemish village of Doel and he has also depicted Ecuador and Rwanda with a great eye for detail. He received the Bronzen Adhemar oeuvre award in 2018. Photo © Jeroen Janssen

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