

An ode to life

Mad With Joy

JORIS VERMASSEN

Tom is a stand-up comedian whose career isn't going too well. As a result, his relationship is in the doldrums. His sister, with whom he has a close bond, is also seriously ill. He tries to spend as much time with her as possible, often taking her to see her favourite statue, 'Mad with Joy' by Rik Wouters – an ode to the joy of life. In spite of her illness, they still have plenty of fun together. But her inevitable end is approaching.

The best comic of 2014 ****

DE STANDAARD

The tone may be serious, but there's still a lot of humour in this tale, always used in support of a story that does not shy away from intense emotions. Using a few shades of grey, Joris Vermassen succeeds in creating the atmosphere and nuance of a colour comic. In a loose, fluid and sketch-like style, he draws a story based around important themes: saying goodbye, things coming to an end, disappointment and grief. And yet 'Mad with Joy', like the statue of the same name, is an ode to life.

Very beautiful and moving

DE MORGEN

Both touching and funny

NRC HANDELSBLAD



AUTHOR



Joris Vermassen (b. 1964) used the pseudonym **Fritz Van den Heuvel** for over twenty years, creating a series of absurdist comics, performing as a stand-up comedian and scripting the amusing children's comic strip 'De Bamburgers' for artist Simon Spruyt. In 2014, *Mad with Joy* was published, his first graphic novel and his first work using his real name.

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