An autobiographical family history

The Very Last Tiger

MICHAËL OLBRECHTS

A hot summer's day in 1996. A red Volvo with four children in the back seat is on its way to the Netherlands for a visit to the children's great-grandmother. During the long journey, their father, Filip, tells them about Great Granny, who was born almost a century before in the Dutch island colony of Java.

Michaël Olbrechts sketches a happy time in paradise, in a villa in the middle of the jungle, where Great Granny and her eight brothers and sisters grew up without a care in the world. Olbrechts also entertainingly depicts the taciturn Pa Kloppenburg and his spirited Indonesian wife. But marriages overseas and worldwide conflagrations cause the family to fall apart, and Ma Kloppenburg's dreams go up in flames, together with the colonial villa.

A great asset to the Flemish comic book

ENOLA

Olbrechts blends a piece of family history with the wider social context and does so in a very mature and understated way, with little moments of humour and nostalgia. Not only does the storyline of 'The Very Last Tiger' exude self-confidence, the artwork, too, is equally strong: a combination of cute figures with a relaxed line and painterly colouring. As a result, Olbrechts' work makes a strong impression that will remain with the reader.

A surprisingly good debut from another promising Belgian

DE GROENE AMSTERDAMMER

AUTHOR

Michaël Olbrechts (b. 1987) is a comic artist and freelance illustrator who won the Silvester Debut Award for his first book. His stories centre on the frequently awkward dynamic between people. His figures are cute in some ways, yet Olbrechts always manages to capture their expressions with great precision. Both his characters and his narratives are quintessentially human. Photo © Bart van der Moeren

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TRANSLATION RIGHTS Ann Jossart – ann@oogachtend.be

TRANSLATION GRANTS Lien Devos – lien.d@flandersliterature.be