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The museum is laid out in a way that is both simple and easy to read. Two visual axes run across the building, which is divided into three parts: one housing a collection presentation, another for a temporary exhibition and the third containing a handful of large, permanent art works. The latter include the specially built *Skyspace* by James Turrell, a maze sculpted from over 200 tonnes of steel by Richard Serra, the hyperrealistic, more than life-size *Couple under an Umbrella* by Ron Mueck, and the trompe l'oeil swimming pool by the Argentinian artist Leandro Erlich. Works such as these are not easily relocated.

The first collection presentation is entitled *Full Moon* and starts with a confrontation between the canvas *Moonnight* by the Dutch artist Jan Sluijters (1912), a fragile painting by the Belgo-Mexican artist Francis Alÿs (2012) and an abstract landscape of brightly coloured panels, an installation by the Dutch artist Esther Tielemans, created in 2011. The display plays emphatically on correspondences in colour, form, theme and genre between Rineke Dijkstra and Michaël Borremans, Marcel Broodthaers and René Magritte (all Low Countries artists), Yves Klein and Katja Mater. Information on the labels is kept to a minimum; a visitor guide provides all the information, once again illustrating the museum's desire not to distract visitors from the works of art. The art on display is given lots of space, though the collection presentation is perhaps slightly too serene and could benefit from a little more fire, sharpness and dissonance.

The first temporary exhibition was dedicated to the American minimalist painter Ellsworth Kelly, one of Van Caldenborgh's earliest favourites. The fact that top museums such as the Museum of Modern Art, Tate Modern and the Centre Pompidou in Paris have loaned works to the museum says something about the reputation that Joop van Caldenborgh has built up in the international art world.

ERIC RINCKHOUT

Translated by Julian Ross

The temporary exhibition *Say Cheese!* can be seen in Museum Voorlinden until 7 May 2017. This exhibition brings together around 40 works to form a coherent reflection of the versatile and characteristic oeuvre of the British artist Martin Creed. It has been realised in close collaboration with the artist (see www.voorlinden.nl).

Rocky Mountain Landscapes, Vast Distances and Mysterious Valleys **Hercules Segers and his 'Printed Paintings'**

The work of the painter and etcher Hercules Segers (1589/90-1633/40) has always appealed to the imagination. This is chiefly because of his painted and etched landscapes, which make no attempt to depict the reality of the surroundings, but are founded largely on fantasy. For most of his life Segers worked in Amsterdam and probably never travelled abroad. It is most likely that he owed his penchant for landscapes to his studies under the Flemish landscape painter Gillis van Coninxloo. His influence is apparent in the early painting *River Valley*, which is built up using shades of green, yellowish-brown and greyish-blue oil paint. The dark foreground with the traveller leads into a desolate rocky landscape through which a river meanders.

Segers presents a more individual and unconventional face in his landscape etchings. He was born in Haarlem and became familiar with the innovative printmaking of his fellow artists Willem Buytewech and Esaias van de Velde, who, like Seger, enrolled in the Guild of St Luke in Haarlem in 1612. These were the artists who discovered

that etching was the best method by which to depict landscapes. The artist can after all draw in the etching ground with a point as spontaneously as with a pen or pencil on paper. The prints these *peintres-graveurs* did were to be decisive in the emancipation and appreciation of the art of print-making. Segers played a unique role in this development. He was more than anyone the undisputed master in experimenting with and manipulating the potential of the etching technique to create individual works of art. It is largely the subjects he chose, mainly rocky mountain landscapes, vast distances and mysterious valleys encircled by fantastic rock formations, woodland landscapes and existing or imagined ruins, that contribute to the present fascination with his prints, even though they are sometimes no larger than a postcard. And although the printing technique was actually invented so as to reproduce many copies of a single work of art, Segers used etching to experiment freely and to try out a variety of effects. He sometimes took eight different prints from a single etching plate. His work has become extremely rare. At present, 184 prints from 53 etching plates are known, almost all of them unique.

A thorough study of Segers's technique was carried out on the occasion of the special exhibition that was on at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam until early January 2017 and is now at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. He printed in a variety of coloured inks - black, yellow, blue and green - on linen and cotton, to which he applied a thin coat of pink, brown or another colour by hand. Sometimes



Hercules Segers, *Distant View with Branch of a Pine Tree*, etching, hand coloured with brown, greenish, blue and white, printed on pale brown prepared linen, 14.3 x 19.5 cm.

© Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

he even used two separate copper plates for one print. In addition, he was the first artist in Europe to use paper from the Far East, twenty years before Rembrandt printed a number of etchings on Japanese paper. Segers then worked on the print with brush and ink or with oil paint in several colours. What is more, he experimented with the etching technique itself, by working on the finished etching plate with a dry point or by drawing on the plate with a brush dipped in ink mixed with gum Arabic or a sugar solution to create a range of tones.

Because Segers printed his etchings onto prepared paper or linen and then continued working on them with paint or ink, Samuel van Hoogstraten called them 'printed paintings' in his *Introduction to the Academy of Painting* (1678). In Segers's day, there was an increase in demand for affordable painted landscapes and it may be that he cleverly took advantage of this. However, the majority of the etchings shown in the exhibition originate from his estate and only came into circulation after his death, so some of them may be works in progress.

It is no surprise that Rembrandt, who was himself a master in the repeated reworking and re-printing of his etching plates, was a great admirer of Segers. Rembrandt owned no less than eight of his paintings and undoubtedly some prints too. In addition, from Segers's estate he acquired an etching



Hercules Segers, *River Valley*, panel, 29.8 x 53.2 cm.

© Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

plate portraying Tobias and the Angel. Rembrandt replaced the existing figures by the Holy Family on their flight to Egypt, though they are made barely visible in the bushes so that all the emphasis is on Segers's mysterious and picturesque landscape. Van Hoogstraten tells us that Segers, lacking success, in despair and drunk, suffered a fatal fall from the stairs, but this is probably a romantic legend. He had no need to complain about any lack of success, since, in addition to Rembrandt, the steward Frederik Hendrik and the king of Denmark also purchased his work.

As a pioneer of etching, Segers was an example to many twentieth-century artists who thought they recognised a contrary personality in his fanciful fantasy landscapes, one who attempted to transcend the limits of printmaking. The exhibition presents virtually all his known work. In addition to 110 different prints from 54 etching plates, it also includes 16 paintings and two sketches in oils. Three of these additional works are privately owned and have hardly ever been seen, if at all.

ILJA VELDMAN

Translated by Gregory Ball

The Mysterious Landscapes of Hercules Segers, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York until 21 May 2017 (www.metmuseum.org).

Olivier Schrauwen

The First True Internationalist of Flemish Comics

Olivier Schrauwen (b. 1977) may not be a household name in international art circles yet, but this Flemish cartoonist is slowly gathering acclaim from general media and specialized comics circles all around the globe. Recently, his colourful work as an illustrator has regularly been featured in *The New York Times*, but his comics work has enjoyed an even better reception in the United States. His most recent graphic novel *Arsène Schrauwen*, a fictional account of his grandfather's stay in Congo when it was still a Belgian colony, was featured in several 'best of' lists in American media at the end of 2014 and the publication of the book by Seattle-based publisher Fantagraphics Books even preceded the edition of Schrauwen's book in his mother tongue Dutch.

Schrauwen has been slowly developing an international career since 2006. That year, the animation and comics alumnus from art schools in Ghent and Brussels published his debut book *My Boy* in English and French. Several other translations ensued, but the book was never published in Dutch. *My Boy* is a comical tragedy about a father and his son, who has not grown since the tragic day when his mother died giving birth to him. Technically, the book can be seen as a collection of short stories about the father and the songbird-sized son. Together, they visit Bruges and admire paintings by Flemish primitives in one story and find entertainment in the zoo in the next. The book stands out because of its stylistic maturity. The prologue, in which the mother dies, was drawn in a style reminiscent of old-fashioned puppet theatre. The rest of the book evokes the art nouveau sensibility of the best representatives of the American newspaper comic strip, such as Winsor McCay of *Little Nemo in Slumberland* fame. The mixture of a modern sensibility and old styles results in an interesting and funny contrast.

My Boy got Schrauwen critical acclaim immediately. It won him the biannual prize for the first comic by a Dutch-speaking cartoonist at Turnhout's comics festival (Flanders) and his first nomination for the album prizes at the International Comics Festival in Angoulême, France – later,