

# Jean-Marie Isnard

Book

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# Jean-Marie ISNARD

## New Romantic

Jean-Marie Isnard has been painting and exhibiting for the last 30 years . Born in Grenoble on May 13, 1962, he lives and works in Brussels for many years.

Self-taught, he develops a personal production anchored in an expressionist vein. Described as neo-romantic by the critic Sandra Caltagirone, Jean-Marie Isnard's painting explores the main themes of art history: landscape, portrait, still life. He draws inspiration from his daily life : nature, family, interiors, bars, markets, cafes, museums.

Passionate about astrophysics and interested in the news, the artist is concerned with chaotic development of the world from which he escapes through painting. His melancholy and somber work partly translates this existential questioning. This concern is transformed into light, vigorous and blurring touches introducing as such breath and poetry in the composition.





**WORKS**

# Landscapes Confinement 2020

This work is the last opus of the confinement period. It started just after the exhibition « Les Ombres » (The Shadows), a very dark series which dealt with humanity loss.

During this highly creative period he was able to fully dedicate himself to his art, reconnecting with nature and above all, with color !



# Interiors Confinement 2020

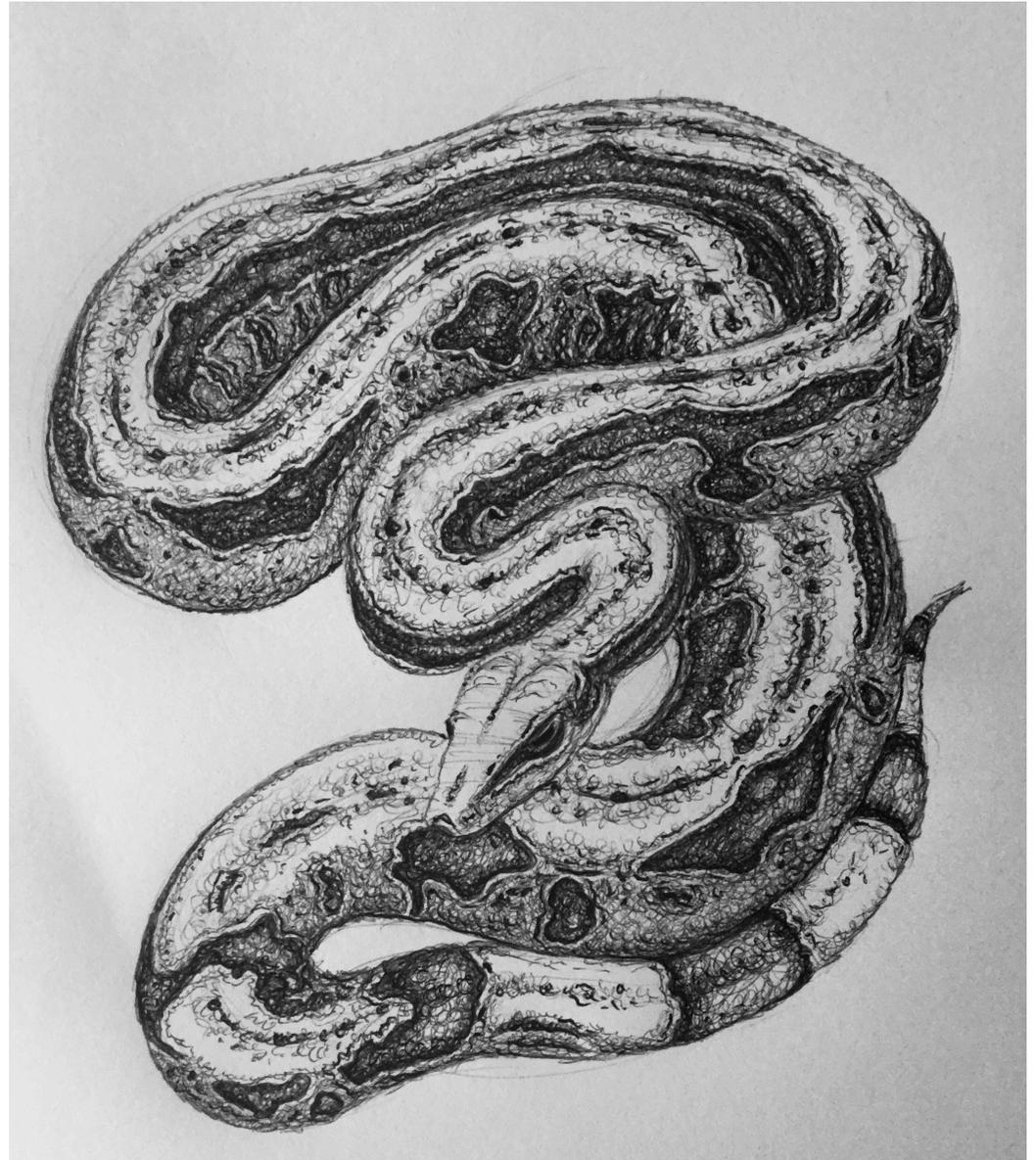
Confinement gives birth to interiors: living room,  
workshop, every spaces merge into a bright space



# Animals

## Confinement 2020

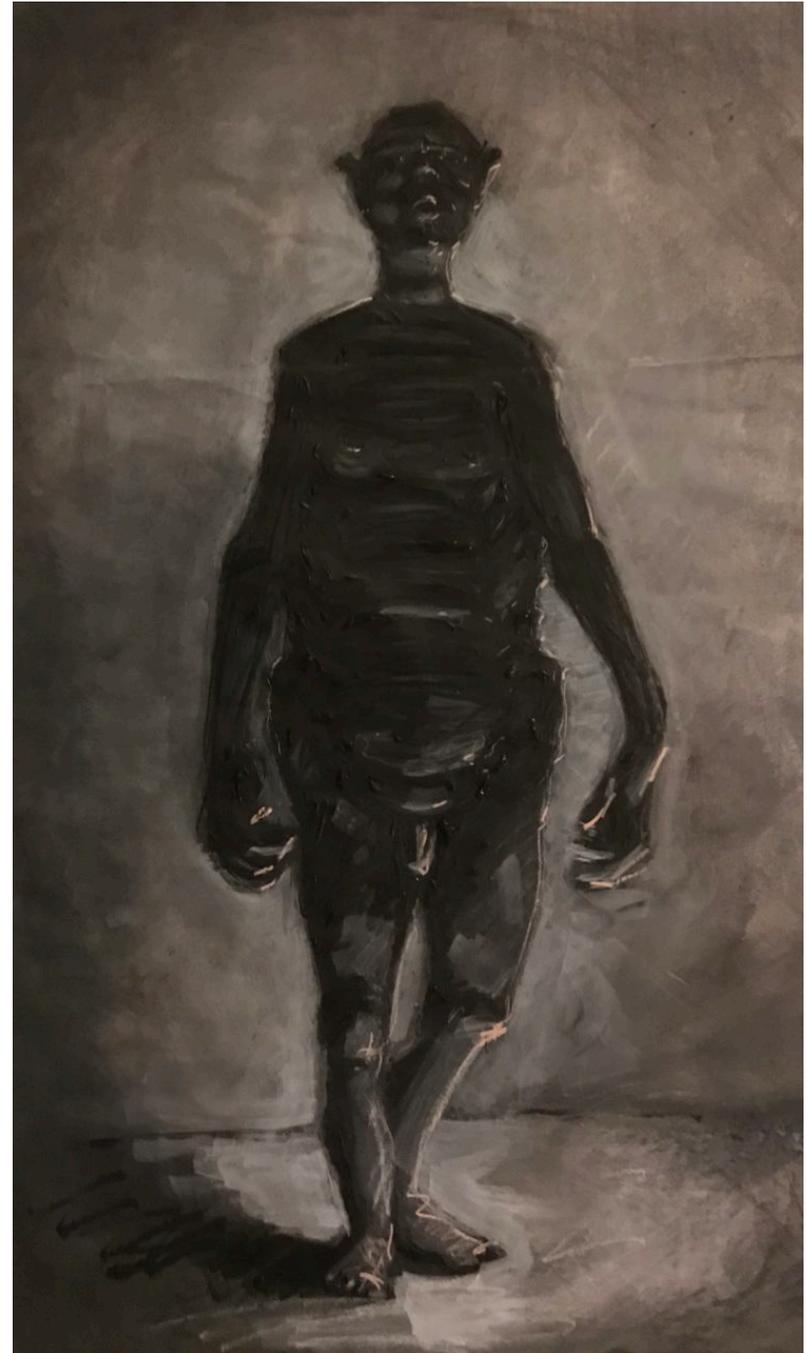
Thanks to the wild fauna Jean-Marie Isnard reconnects with the living...



# Les Ombres

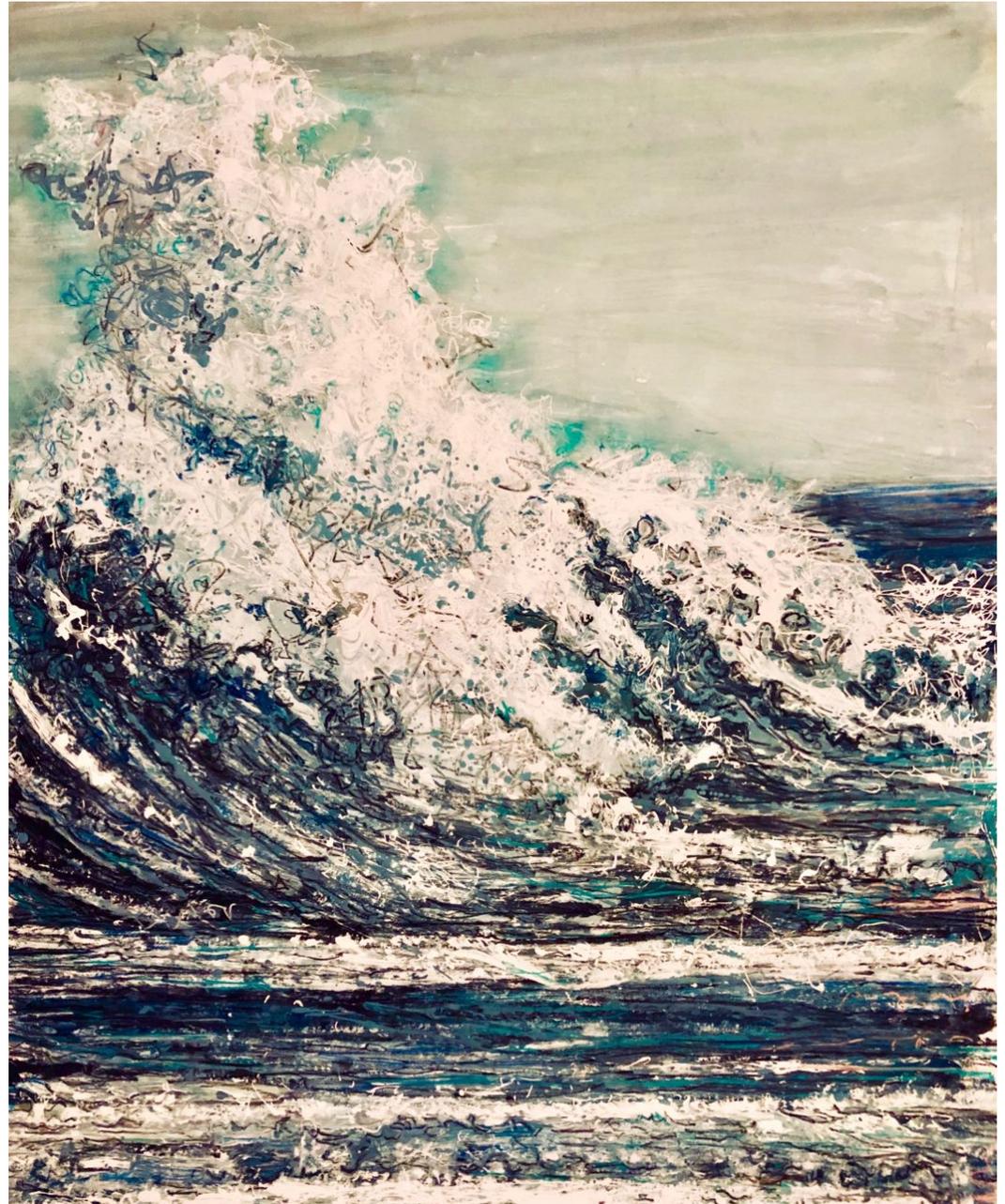
## The Shadows

Suspended above the ground, bodies are distorted...  
Humanity is undergoing an almost unconscious mutation,  
probably linked to its loss of connection with nature.  
The inertia is so strong that it becomes difficult to fight,  
to be grounded.  
Greed is everywhere, in all directions, all spaces.  
Invisible ties enchain us.  
We struggle, we give up and get lost...  
Are we still part of this world?



# Variations

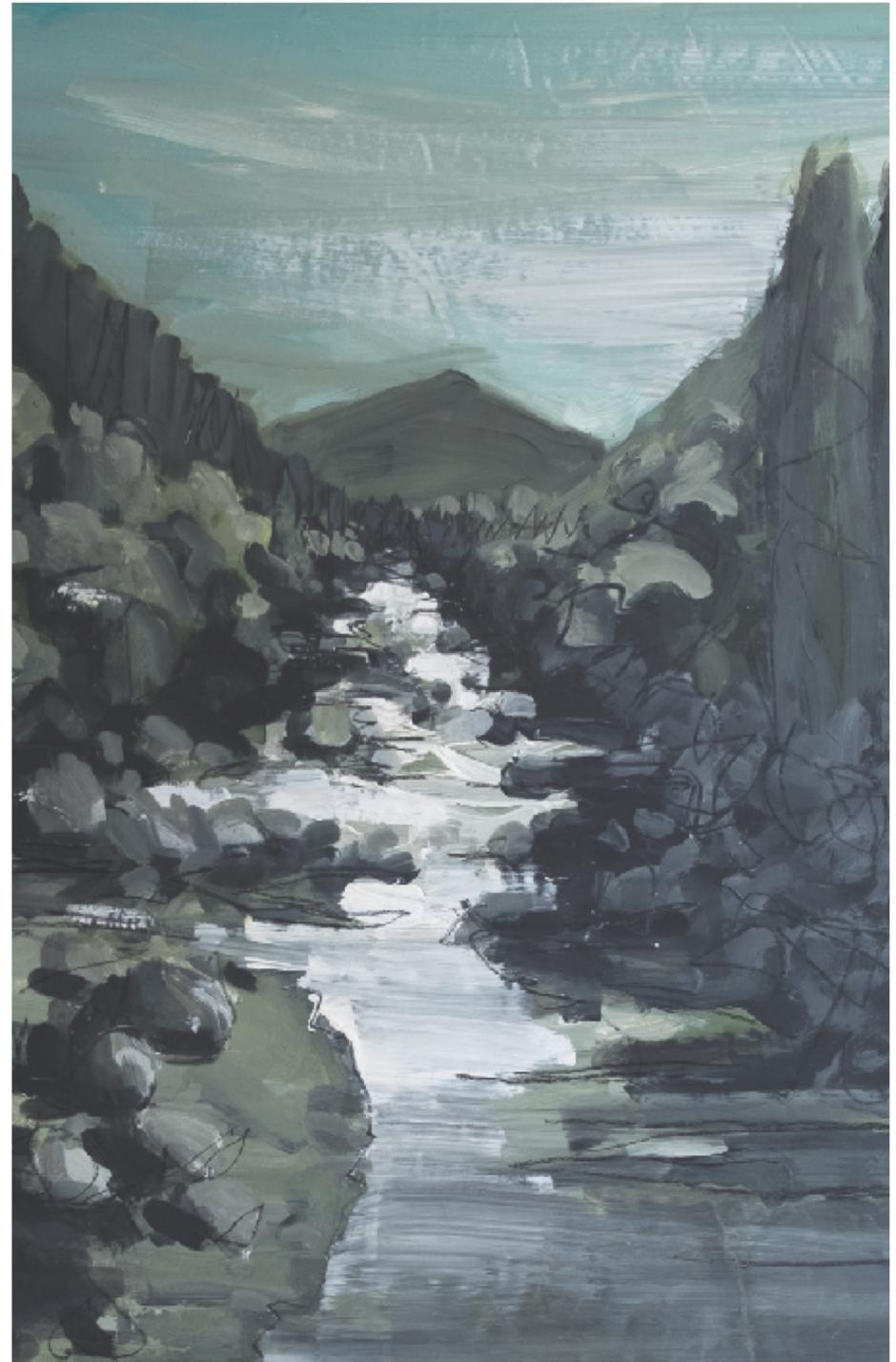
For this exhibition, Jean-Marie Isnard explores his favorite themes: landscapes and people. Concerned about the climatic emergency, he expresses this questioning through peaceful but most often tormented landscapes, and through isolated characters facing a harsh reality.



# The Great Escape

Around landscape...

In this exhibition of 90 pieces, Jean-Marie Isnard explores one of the major artistic themes, the landscape and the great escape. Through painted works, using Clair-Obscur, he brings light to the heart of romantic, nostalgic universes, stripped of Humanity...



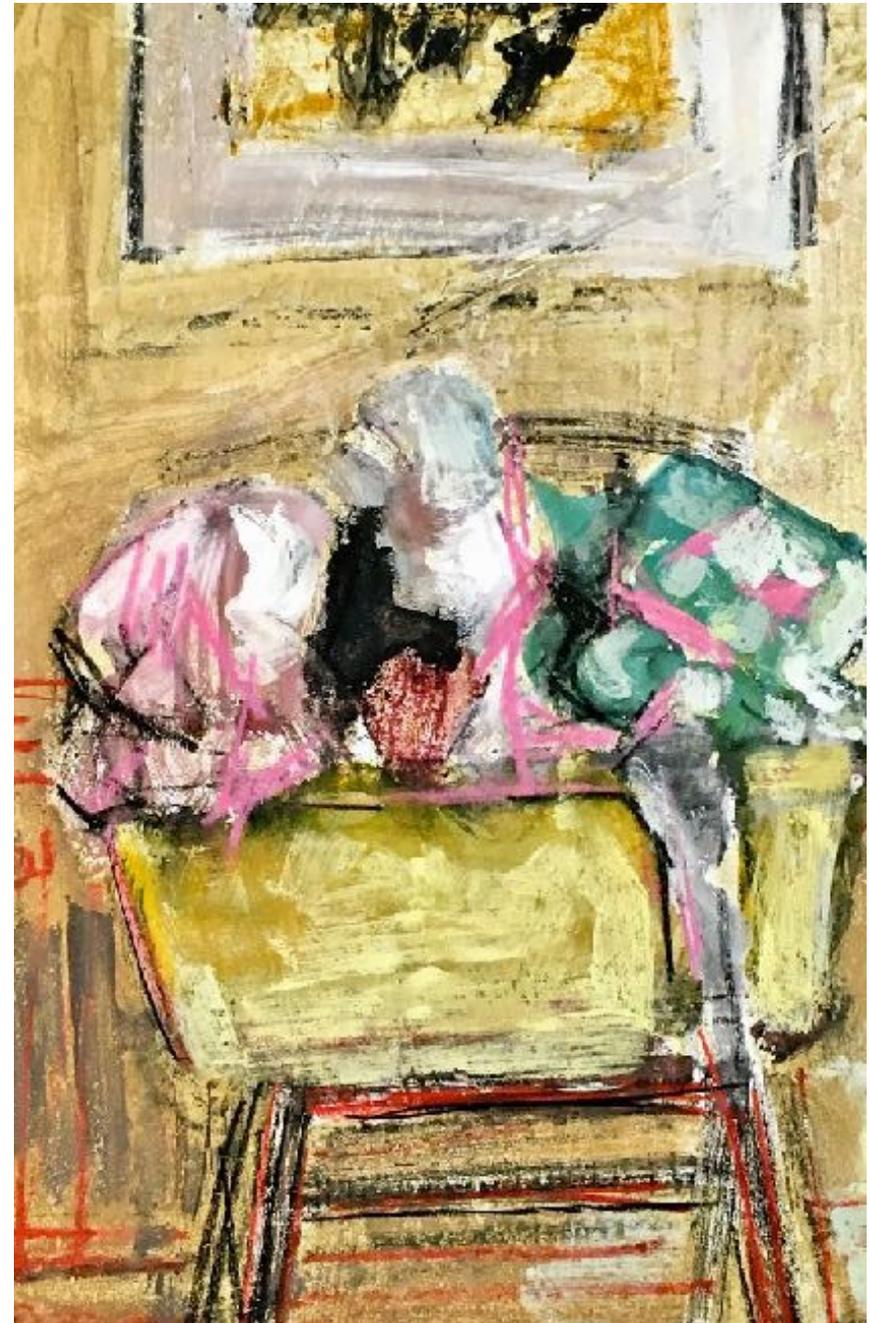
# Impressions noire(s)

Black and white were the main theme of this exhibition of 73 pieces. Landscapes and portraits come together, speed of execution is the rule. For the first time, Jean-Marie Isnard introduces the technique of ballpoint pen which allows him to push to a climax this shadow and light work where the subject sometimes tends to disappear ...



# Interiors

Daily life remains the privileged subject. Everything surrounding the painter becomes material of creation. The functional living spaces take a particular aesthetic dimension thanks to the artist's romantic treatment.



# Blue families

The family is depicted in a unique way. Undefined faces look like mirages, ghostly visions accentuated by cold colors and an evanescent touch. The characters are immersed in a powdery light, suspended between earth and heaven. They come together in the center of the canvas, stoic and inexpressive, like old family pictures that inspired these paintings.



# Figures

Baroque exploration of singular faces, Jean-Marie Isnard uses and abuses of each person's singularities with the unique ambition of painting. Love, passion, pride, eroticism emanate from these scenes ...



# Animals

Animals are also a pretext for creation and pictorial searches. The light and composition reveal tenderness, beauty, and filial attachment.



# Exhibitions

# SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2020, Les Ombres, Mr Vertigo BXL
- 2019, Variations, Mr Vertigo BXL
- 2018, Nancy, De passage..., Espace Cécile Guigou
- 2017, Bruxelles, The Great Escape, autour du paysage, Mr Vertigo 2017, Bruxelles, Impressions Noire(s), Mr Vertigo
- 2016, Nancy, exposition Isnard/Billiotte, Espace Cécile Guigou
- 2015, Nancy, Brussels Inside–Outside, Espace Cécile Guigou
- 2013 Tourinnes–la–Grosse,
- 2011 Bruxelles, Galerie AME
- 2010 Bruxelles, Galerie AME
- 2008 Bruxelles, Galerie le Phénix

# SOLO EXHIBITIONS

- 2005 Bruxelles, Galerie Le Phénix
- 2004 Bruxelles, Galerie Le Phénix
- 2001 Bruxelles, Galerie Chapitre 12
- 2000 Grenoble, Galerie Verte
- 1999 Grenoble, Galerie Verte
- 1999 Evian, Espace Galerie Coté Lac
- 1998 Grenoble, Galerie Verte
- 1997 Grenoble, Galerie St Hugues
- 1996 Grenoble, Galerie St Hugues
- 1996 Bruxelles, Galerie Archipel
- 1995 Lyon, Galerie L'Embarcadère
- 1994 Bruxelles, Galerie Hutse
- 1993 Grenoble, Galerie Jean-Claude David
- 1993 Besançon, Galerie de l'espace

# EXPOSITIONS COLLECTIVES

- 2020, BLOSSOM, Mr Vertigo
- 2019, weartxl, Mr Vertigo
- 2019, Art Truc Troc, Bozar
- 2014 Jodoigne, Biennale Fenêtres sur Mur 2013 Jodoigne, Borderlines
- 2010 Bruxelles, Galerie AME
- 2009 Bruxelles, Galerie AME
- 2008 Bruxelles, Galerie Le Phénix
- 2007 Bruxelles, Galerie Le Phénix
- 2006 Bruxelles, Galerie Le Phénix
- 2005 Bruxelles, Galerie Le Phénix
- 2004 Bruxelles, Galerie Le Phénix
- 2000 Paris, Galerie Philippe Boulakia
- 1999 Grenoble, Galerie Verte
- 1998 Grenoble, Galerie Verte 1995 Bruxelles, Galerie Hutse
- 1994 Grenoble, Musée Dauphinois (Festival Music' Art)
- 1991 Paris, Salon Horizon Jeunesse

# NEW ROMANTIC

*«Romanticism is precisely situated neither in choice of subjects nor in exact truth, but in the way of feeling. For me, romanticism is the most recent and up-to-date expression of beauty. The one who says y says modern art – which is to say intimacy, spirituality, color, aspiration towards the infinite – expressed by all the resources of art ». Charles Baudelaire*

Jean-Marie Isnard always had a passion for drawing. As a child, he would painstakingly reproduce book covers featuring animals, or the traditional Post Office calendars. To test his talent, he would ask friends to distinguish the printed versions from their watercolor replicas. But his real introduction to art began much later, when he was 28, after the birth of his first child. Because the act of giving life highlights its fleeting nature, Jean-Marie Isnard reflects upon Egon Schiele, who died at exactly the same age. It suddenly dawned on him that he, himself, could disappear without ever having put brush onto paper. From that moment on, he threw himself into his art with fervor and frenzy.

With total freedom and daring, characteristic of all self-taught artists, Jean-Marie Isnard knows no limits and produces an extensive amount of artwork, inspired by the outstanding works of great Masters such as Goya, Matisse, Picasso, Otto Dix... certainly no amateurs. With a degree of humor, he challenges himself « To play the bass like Lemmy and paint like Rembrandt », nothing less.

As he pushes the boundaries anyway, he may just as well choose the great Masters to be his guiding light!

Like the former, Lemmy, past leader of the British heavy metal band Motörhead, Jean-Marie Isnard is possessed with an unstoppable energy. Inspired by the latter, Isnard favors the Chiaroscuro technique, developed by the great Master of the Dutch Golden Age.

Over time, Jean-Marie Isnard perfects his technique. His tools of choice are basic: acrylic paint, the wide paintbrushes used by construction painters and a palette consisting only of primary colors, black and white. He experiments with canvas mounted on stretcher bars but dislikes the weight and clutter, so opts for paper, with its fragility and smooth texture and surface. Jean-Marie places this delicate stand on the ground in a horizontal position, as if he were creating his own designated area where he could explore and discover, using the most basic of tools, completely in tune with his work, mentally, physically and intuitively. He folds and unfolds it, producing monotype prints. Following twenty-five years of practicing figurative painting and adopting a variety of styles, he finally settles on the one which best suits his creative mind and momentum.

Our ex-Punk bassist describes his style as Romantic without even batting an eyelid, not that his painting could be considered nostalgic or anachronic even though it does clearly go against current trends and is far removed from the aesthetics and gimmicks in vogue at the time.



Last year, true to his modus operandi of setting himself new challenges, the artist held two exhibitions in his apartment. Thus, he produced, one after the other and within a very short space of time, *Impressions Noire(s)* and *The Great Escape (Autour du paysage...)*, two collections of drawings and paintings on paper, the first in black and white, the second devoted to landscape painting. And 'Dark' they certainly are. Quite apart from his self-imposed color constraint, his works convey at best a dark and disenchanting vision of a world where empty landscapes and lone figures express solitude and broken communication. *Impressions Noire(s)* conveys images of desolate nature, dried up roots, homeless people sleeping on the streets, red-nosed drunkards with haunted faces... The latter remind us of Giacometti's portraits, those human head-skulls, devoid of any expression nor emotion, thus receptacles of the projections which Sartre refers to in his book *Les Mots*: "A man nothing but a man, no better than any other, but no other better than him". Behind their perceived darkness and way beyond any physical or psychological similitude, his portraits express profound humanity. He may indeed have a tortured imagination, but not a desperate one. Whether intense or discreet, light always emerges from the depths of darkness. The spirit shines bubbling with life itself through vivid colors and sharp strokes and even the desperate looks of sadness.

This duality between dark and light can also be seen in *The Great Escape* whose title gives cause for reflection. What kind of great escape is feasible, from these claustrophobic landscapes, surprisingly upright, framed in close-up, with neither horizon nor depth? How is it possible to escape from these dead trees, these dried-up roots, these bunkers? Perhaps it is by fleeing these cones, cubes, fags which look more like abstracts or still life.

As illustrated in *Impressions Noire(s)*, salvation appears in the form of the light that surges into the night sky. Equally, color, fiery or glacial, as well as the artistic treatment, free and impulsive, everything in his painting expresses the movement of life. Desolate twilight landscapes appear to be alive and breathing, full of feeling and emotion. The imposing cubic breakwaters or the dead tree by the lake seem to be moving just like the wiggling egg waiting to hatch. For Jean-Marie Isnard, the nature of the subject is immaterial; it is a pretext that enables him to convey his individuality and profound sensitivity.

His painting is romantic because it fires up the imagination and arouses emotion. Because it reflects the immediacy of reality, of Life itself. Real life. Because the genuineness of his artistic touch and use of color convey utter and heart-throbbing passion.

Sandra Caltagirone.



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