

Text for catalogue,

Young Artists, PALMARIUM, GHENT BE

Group show – selected by Dirk Pauwels

[08.05.2007 – 02.06.2007]

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'Drawing as an mental exercise. A musty room in which someone has clearly lived, a coffee pot, an armchair with a pile of clothes, an unmade bed ... all meticulously positioned.' Steven Baelen is constantly sketching his immediate surroundings, as a source for future work, drawings, paintings, photos and murals.

Drawing on spaces occupies a special place in Steven Baelen's work. He chooses spaces that show clear traces of another, previous, life. The elements already there, such as electrical sockets, door frames, lamps, etc., become an essential part of the drawing. Using charcoal he reconstructs his own familiar environment in another, unknown space. He is thereby flirting with the boundaries between fine and applied art. His mural drawings are like wallpaper, but they do much more than just cover the walls. They occupy the space.

Mural drawings are doomed to disappear. They fade with time, become damaged or in the worst case are painted over or destroyed. Baelen is fascinated by this self-destructiveness and integrates it into his other works. Like a cave-dweller he paints over existing drawings to create confusion. He obscures and censors images with patches, white voids, and new drawings, layer upon layer.

[Mieke Mels] *translation: G.Ball*