

Text for catalogue,

Thank you for Tomorrow, DE ZWARTE ZAAL – KASK, GHENT BE

Group show – final show HISK

[18.12.10 – 15.01.11]

—

Characterized by a certain quiet, introspective attitude, Baelen's ensemble of works is rich in little hidden surprises [when not almost treasures], not so easy or immediate to be recognized. His work, mainly obtained thru' a painstakingly, quite highly patient need to do, re-do and re-work the very substance of his practice – the drawing technique – is re-invented by the employment of a complex and layered miniaturesque work based on stratification, superimposition and by means of creating sudden blank spaces [obtained by erasure] or sometimes by the deliberate inclusion [in the finalized form of the works] of unexpected black spots, patches and blotches which in turn come to assume a a very well balanced sense of presence, in stark contrast with the minutely organized landscape of the grid-like or maze-like drawing surface[s].

As in its entire history – at the very same time project and process – the drawing impulse – as clearly exemplified by the unabashed intensity of Steven Baelen – isn't located only in what the artist chooses to concentrate on [the resulting drawings] but in the pauses, blank space and the visual rhythm which in turn may result stronger than what is perceived at a first look.

[Francesco Bernardelli]