

COURTESY OF MICHEL SCHRIJVER



"In Between Two Worlds," 2013, by Michiel Schrijver. Acrylic on canvas.

PAINTER SPOTLIGHT

Michiel Schrijver A Different World

By Wim Van Aalst

Dutch painter Michiel Schrijver (born 1957) received his art training at the Camberwell College of Arts in London.

"Art school is great, as it allows you to focus a hundred percent on art for a four-year period, allowing you to develop fast," Schrijver said, contrasting it with when he got back to the Netherlands, where he found himself at a loss for a clear direction in which to take his art.

Sober-headed like a real Dutchman, Schrijver opened a tourist art shop in the heart of Amsterdam.

"I was selling etchings and watercolors for tourists and doing assignments for businesses, very commercial stuff," he recalls. "But it allowed me to remain engaged with the craft."

Ten years later, Schrijver's artistic vision finally did take shape. In 1996, his first exhibit proved a resounding success.

When asked about his dreamlike works, he's quick to reply: "Dreamworlds, yes, I hear that a lot, but to me they are real. They are my own world," he says.

Schrijver constructs his scenes purely from imagination, from images that he absorbs, "taking information from the outer world into the inner world," or a combination thereof, he said. Being an avid reader, prose and poetry equally provide inspiration to him.

"I work a lot from my feeling. It's almost physical, I can't explain it."

Now, almost 20 years later, Schrijver's still as motivated and

excited as ever about painting, naming concentration and continuous effort as being key to his artistic development. "I believe very much in this: to keep going, keep building it up," he said.

Schrijver is wary of taking his paintings out, often keeping them four to six months at bay until he's sure they are up to standard.

"You can't be critical enough about yourself," he says as he mentions the importance of being open to others' criticism as well.

"Sometimes people will say something that makes sense; at other times you won't agree, but then you still remain mindful of it because it may make sense later on," he said. "You can't be critical enough; I think that is very important for an artist."

What does Schrijver hope to leave us through his work?

"I love it when my work carries people away: when people break loose from their own world and are taken to a different world, one that is new—and that hopefully they learn to look because of this. So that when they go out, they are visually stimulated to recognize things they didn't recognize before."

For more information, see Michiel Schrijver's website: MichielSchrijver.nl

Wim Van Aalst is a painter based in Belgium.

I love it when my work takes people into a different world, one that is new.

Michiel Schrijver

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