



Aäron Willem

Extended Family

Hans Mertens

Valérie De Prycker

Anyuta Wiazemsky Snauwaert

Ben Benouisse

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- **Extended Family** is painter Aäron Willem's ode to human complexity
- His oeuvre, a series of fictitious portraits, is influenced by the ideas on identity of Spinoza, Picasso, Thomas Hirschhorn and many others

Extended Family is an ode to human complexity, from an artist with a significant background in philosophy. Everyone who sends painter Aäron Willem a portrait picture is accepted into his Extended Family. The result is an endless series of portraits, but ignoring the basic principles of the genre. Instead of depicting the recognisable face of just one person, Aäron Willem presents the concept of 'open identity'. Aäron Willem's work usually starts with the human form, mainly faces, but often crosses over into the abstract. Thoughts, observations, expression and coincidence demand their place. He regards himself as an artist of synthesis and integrates as much as possible into his work in a hopeless attempt to capture all of life. The artist view on the concepts 'identity' and 'personality' has been coloured by African philosophy and the ideas of Spinoza, Picasso, Thomas Hirschhorn and many others.

Text in English and Dutch.

Aäron Willem (born 1982) graduated from the university of Ghent as philosopher. He mainly works within the field of drawing and painting, but he also creates installations, sculptures and other kinds of art work. He works on the line where figuration and the abstract meet. The human face and body often serve as a starting point. Aäron's goal is to connect with what is outside himself and to make the complexity of reality imaginable, conceivable or acceptable without falling into cheap simplicity. Ambiguity, paradox and changeability are positive values. Art is essentially about broadening perspectives.

In 2017 artist **Ben Benaouisse** has accompanied Aäron in his artistic evolution, which caused a whole new dynamic. The search to broaden his perspective has also lead him to co-found Wesp Collective (2019), a Ghent based art collective that seeks out the boundaries of the art world in order to push them.

