

# CONTEMPORARY INTERNATIONAL EX-LIBRIS ARTISTS



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12

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Arranjo gráfico  
Artur Mário da Mota Miranda

# SERGEY HRAPOV

Luc Van den Briele

Sergey Hrapov engraved his first bookplate in 1991. His checklist actually amounts to about 130 items. That means that he engraves an average of only seven bookplates a year; and his ex libris never give the impression of being mass-produced engravings. The many well-known collector names from 16 different countries already on that checklist indicate that his work leaves a more-than-good impression and can count on international interest.

There are four main reasons why Sergey Hrapov can be considered as one of the

best and most remarkable contemporary ex libris artists: he is an excellent and talented designer; he has the limitless fantasy of a philosophical fairy-tale narrator; his mastering of graphic techniques comes very close to perfection; and he respects the link between bibliophile traditions and bookplate art e. g. by the use of usually good and always finely engraved ex libris texts.

Sergey Hrapov has his very own pictorial language and what he draws or engraves is a mirror image of his own inner life.



Sergey Hrapov



Some of his bookplates are chiefly based on the artist's own fantasies, peopled with human beings with amazed looks on their faces. They sometimes gird on the wings of angels and are flying between sun and moon, scene on their way to a new and not yet discovered world. From time to time they are accompanied by odd fishes and strange birds. That almost surrealistic content reflects Sergey Hrapov's view on life, his feelings about good and bad, his need for tenderness, his dreams about happiness.

Other *ex libris* are the result of a consciously pursued collaboration between artist and collector. These bookplates partly reflect the personality of the owners or illustrate some aspects of their lives. Fine examples of such work can be seen in the bookplates made for Erika and Andreas Selle (opus 45), for G. Dumon (opus 51), for Reglinde Lattermann (opus 56) and for Frans van der Veen (opus 69).

In opus 45, one sees a house and some aspects of the daily life of the two owners in their home. Each room in the house is a chapter in the story of their life. Breakfast table, house cat and for bibliophiles the indispensable book, are only three of the details in the illustration of their happiness. Opus 51 has wine as theme and is a fine original illustration of the effects of wine. The glow of the dark wine has disordered time and has tripled the head of the wine drinker. The most important and amusing detail in that *ex libris* is a wine devil in an empty bottle. Opus 56 is an image of the pleasures of life and the happiness that the owner discovers in her own garden. Opus 69 illustrates one of the internationally known aspects of life in Holland: the bike as a daily means of transport.

Another good example of an owner's thematic collaboration is the *ex libris* for Birgit Göbel-Stiegler (opus 102). This book-

plate is characterised by a joy of life and illustrates how man and woman discover new forms of happiness in each other's eyes. It is clearly a bookplate that reflects the owner's own experience. Different aspects of erotic desire or moments of erotic satisfaction can be seen in bookplates for Hasip Pektas (opus 92), for Sergei Brodovich (opus 105, 121 and 124) and for Christos P. Giannakis (opus 125).

In opus 92, a man and a woman are flying away on wings of happiness; their closed eyes suggest a rosy state of erotic sublimation. Opus 125 depicts the touching of stars as the result of erotic games between a man and woman. Opus 105 and 121 underline how varied forms of erotic approach can dominate our lives. On the other hand, opus 118 (engraved for Luc Adam) seems to show a temporary erotic loneliness, with a woman reading – or daydreaming of – love letters.

Some collectors have asked Sergey Hrapov to engrave bookplates in which literary or mythological themes play a leading role. Carefully developed literary themes can be seen in bookplates about Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra's *Don Quixote de la Mancha* (opus 26, 81, 98), about Charles De Coster's freedom fighter Till Ulenspiegel (opus 28 and 60), about Fyodor Dostoevsky's murderer Raskolnikov (opus 40), about Ernest Hemingway's *Old man and the Sea* (opus 57), about the American writer of horror stories Howard Phillips Lovecraft (opus 84), about the French philosopher, novelist and playwright Jean-Paul Sartre (opus 87) and about Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* (opus 101).

A more general literary theme is engraved for Wouter Van Gysel (opus 82), where one sees a penetrating but humorous portrait of a writer of crime stories. Sergey Hrapov engraved a second *ex libris* for Wouter Van Gysel (opus 120), again a general literary



theme, with an absentminded writer, waiting for the awakening of his inspiring muse.

Remarkable examples of Sergey Hrapov's bookplates with mythological themes are engraved for Hideo Ariizumi (opus 95), with an impressive picture of the lugubrious faces and baleful looks of the three Fates; for Wout Meulemans (opus 113) with a portrait of the beautiful and so restrained Phryne, and for JoAnn Pari-Mueller (opus 117), with the image of a woman just after she opened Pandora's box and thus surrounded by anything-but-friendly birds of evil.

Books are important for a philosophical engraver like Sergey Hrapov. Books as a source of wisdom are used as a theme for instance in ex libris for Peter Nesterenko (opus 71), James P. Keenan (opus 77) and Hasip Pektas (opus 116). In these ex libris, the book becomes a house, a tree or a source, with ladders for better reaching the fruits of wisdom.

In some of his ex libris, and sometimes only in details, one also can see that Sergey Hrapov is a cartoonist. Opus 68 (engraved for Susanne Kolar) is a good example of his sense of satiric humour. The cat in that bookplate is in good mood. Bird and fish have already surrendered and are awaiting the final attack of the cat, but a brave and tough trumpet-playing little mouse tries to provoke and strengthen resistance with a tootling note.

Very few contemporary bookplate artists have the same or nearly the same poetical and philosophical approach to themes so as keep on the look out for the unknown or explore new frontiers, and search for ways to escape fate or to conquer the towers of evil. Waiting for the final result of a new ex libris creation by Sergey Hrapov is therefore often suspenseful – an adventure with a surprising and marvellous end.

Most of Sergey Hrapov's bookplates are made in mixed intaglio techniques (C3-C5-C7). The purity of his graphical craftsmanship increases our admiration. That purity strongly contrasts with the rather careless composed work of more and more other contemporary ex libris artists.

The outstanding quality of his printing is also worthy of mention. Here also, in an essential part of the production process, one can see the pursuit to reach the top of perfection. The ex libris of Sergey Hrapov are mostly printed in shades of black and green and on a good quality of paper. This strong but thin paper is suitable and easy for use as owner's mark in books.

Graphic artists making illustrative work for contemporary editors are inevitably confronted with the new techniques of the computer era and the creation of CGD-bookplates is a direct result of these new graphic possibilities. In 2003, Sergey Hrapov made for the first time – and only for himself and a few well-known bookplate collectors – some ex libris in CGD. His 12 CGD-bookplates so far are experiments, and that is the reason why they are not yet included in his checklist. They certainly do not have poor artistic quality; they are fulfilled bookplates, because all the characteristics of Sergey Hrapov's work in intaglio techniques are also visible in his CGD works.

A scanned pen and ink drawing or aquarelle is the basis of these works, which are then completed by computer techniques. In the final result, traditional drawing is harmoniously mixed with the new possibilities of software for designers.

The presence of a traditional basis makes the CGD ex libris acceptable for Sergey Hrapov. Work that is realised by using only computer technology would be much less attractive for him. For him, drawing-



based CGD ex libris are not artistically inferior and in the future, he will accept with pleasure commissions for designing such ex libris.

In the CGD bookplates for Benoît Junod, Ottmar Premstaller and Luc Van den Briele, especially, one can see the familiar contents

of Sergey Hrapov's bookplates in intaglio techniques: the human being, flying or sailing to new and unknown worlds, or the ladder as an important means of climbing to as yet unachieved aim. Pay especial attention also to the very elegant, clearly visible and readable ex libris texts.

e x l i b r i s



Luc van den Briele



e x l i b r i s



Benoit Junod













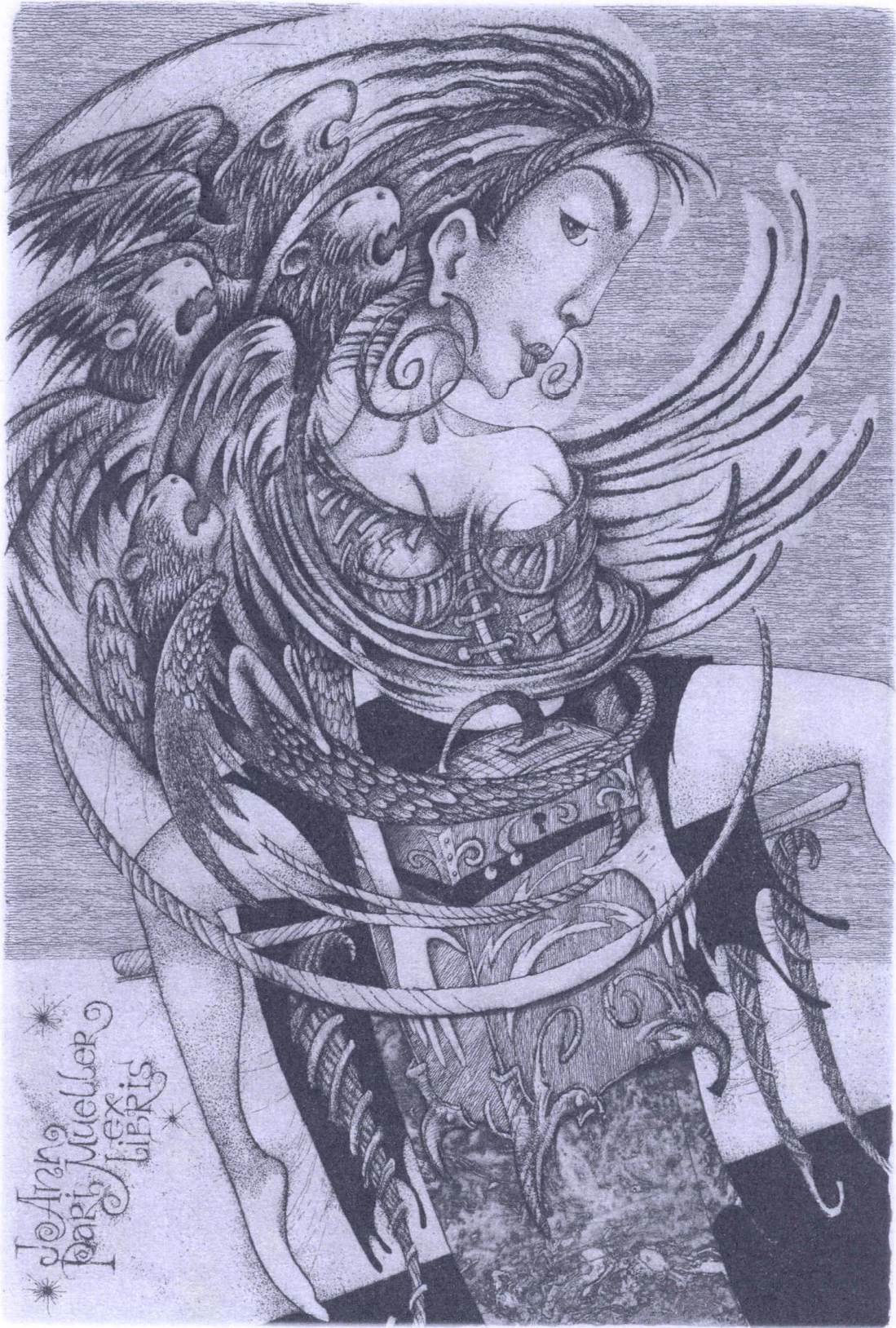




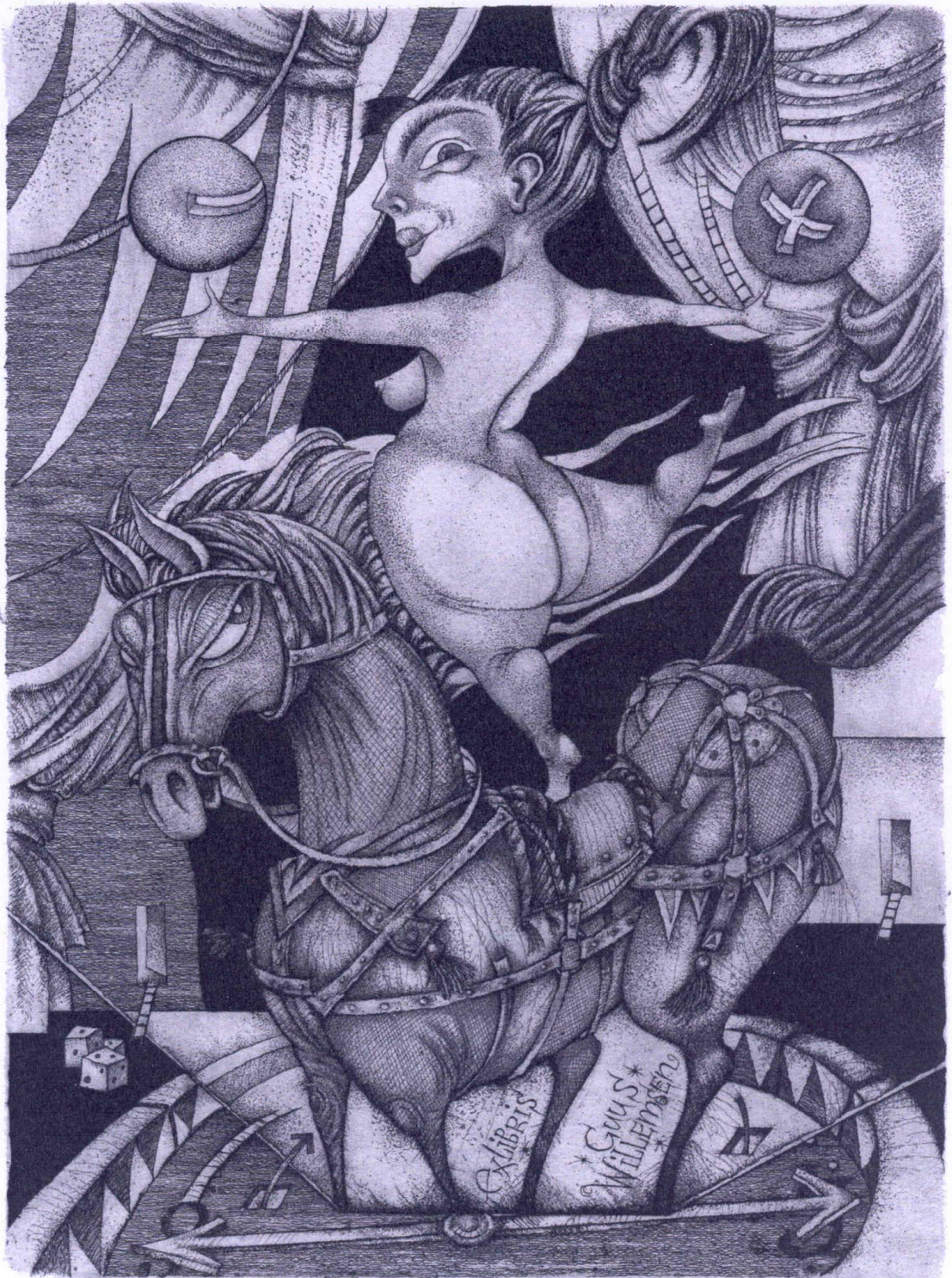














# Chronological checklist of ex-libris by Sergey Hrapov

|             |                              |        |             |                             |        |             |                        |        |
|-------------|------------------------------|--------|-------------|-----------------------------|--------|-------------|------------------------|--------|
| <b>1991</b> |                              |        | <b>1996</b> |                             |        | <b>1998</b> |                        |        |
| 1           | Boris Levych                 | C3C5   | 21          | Artur Mário da Mota Miranda | C3C7   | 40          | Luc Van den Briele     | C3C5C7 |
|             | <i>Gold time</i>             |        |             | <i>Encyclopaedia</i>        |        |             | <i>Dostoïevski</i>     |        |
| 2           | E. L. Z.                     | C3     |             |                             |        | 41          | Piet Van den Akker     | C3C5C7 |
|             | <i>Man made</i>              |        |             |                             |        |             | <i>M. C. Escher</i>    |        |
| <b>1992</b> |                              |        | <b>1997</b> |                             |        | <b>1999</b> |                        |        |
| 3           | Boris Levych                 | C3C5   | 22          | Artur Mário da Mota Miranda | C3C7   | 42          | PF 1999                | C3C5C7 |
|             | <i>Vessel</i>                |        |             | <i>Climb</i>                |        |             |                        |        |
| 4           | Sergey Hrapov                | C3C5   | 23          | Boris Levych                | C3C7   | 43          | Sergieï Bubka          | C3C5C7 |
|             | <i>Fish</i>                  |        |             | <i>The albatross</i>        |        |             | (Rolf Bergstrand)      |        |
| <b>1994</b> |                              |        |             | <i>(In memoriam)</i>        |        |             | <i>Up</i>              |        |
| 5           | Sergey Hrapov                | C3C5   | 24          | Elsbeth Rhonheimer          | C3C7   | 44          | Wayne Gretzky          | C3C5C7 |
|             | <i>Cockle shell</i>          |        |             | <i>Rich</i>                 |        |             | (Rolf Bergstrand)      |        |
| 6           | Jean-François                | C3C5   | 25          | Elsbeth Rhonheimer          | C3C7   |             | <i>Power</i>           |        |
|             | <i>Chassaing</i>             |        |             | <i>The Season</i>           |        | 45          | Erika + Andreas        | C3C5C7 |
|             | <i>Body</i>                  |        | 26          | George Sekine               | C3C5C7 |             | <i>Selle</i>           |        |
| 7           | Arnold Hausweiler            | C3C5   |             | <i>Pure</i>                 |        |             | <i>Happiness</i>       |        |
|             | <i>Sad</i>                   |        | 27          | I. M. Szymanski             | C3C7   | 46          | H. P. Bongers          | C3C5C7 |
| 8           | Arnold Hausweiler            | C3C5   |             | <i>Excellent</i>            |        |             | <i>Be fond</i>         |        |
|             | <i>Second</i>                |        | 28          | Luc Van den Briele          | C3C5C7 | 47          | N. Hillerbrandt        | C3C5C7 |
| <b>1995</b> |                              |        |             | <i>Till Ulenspiegel</i>     |        |             | <i>Millennium</i>      |        |
| 9           | Oksana Danyluk               | C3     | 29          | Jentien Peijnenburg         | C3C5C7 | 48          | Deurinck Lodewijk      | C3C5C7 |
|             | <i>Debora</i>                |        |             | <i>The Dream</i>            |        |             | <i>Heavens</i>         |        |
| 10          | Agaath & Jos van Waterschoot | C3C7   | 30          | Spartaco Cadioli            | C3C5C7 | 49          | PF (Klaus Rödel)       | C3C5C7 |
|             | <i>Tired</i>                 |        |             | <i>Nest</i>                 |        |             | <i>Frederikshavn</i>   |        |
| 11          | Peter Ford                   | C3C5C7 | 31          | Albin Brunovsky             | C3C5C7 |             | <i>Kunstmuseum</i>     |        |
|             | <i>Artist</i>                |        |             | <i>Ache</i>                 |        | 50          | A + E. Selle           | C3C5C7 |
| 12          | Albin Brunovsky              | C3     |             | <i>(In memoriam)</i>        |        |             | <i>Welcome 2000</i>    |        |
|             | <i>Success</i>               |        | 32          | PF 1998                     | C3C7   | 51          | Georges Dumon          | C3C5C7 |
| 13          | Ottmar Premstaller           | C3     | 32a         | Gordie Howe                 | C3C7   |             | <i>Wine</i>            |        |
|             | <i>The Hope</i>              |        |             | (Rolf Bergstrand)           |        | 52          | PF 2000                | C3C5C7 |
| 14          | PF 1996                      | C3     |             | <i>Victory</i>              |        |             |                        |        |
| <b>1996</b> |                              |        | <b>1998</b> |                             |        | <b>2000</b> |                        |        |
| 15          | Ottmar Premstaller           | C3     | 33          | E. Rhonheimer               | C3C5C7 | 53          | George Sekine          | C3C5C7 |
|             | <i>Unicorn</i>               |        |             | <i>Zurich</i>               |        |             | <i>Wisdom</i>          |        |
| 16          | Oksana Danyluk               | C3     | 34          | Deurinck Lodewijk           | C3C5C7 | 54          | E. Rhonheimer          | C3C5C7 |
|             | <i>Hunting for unicorn</i>   |        |             | <i>The Spring</i>           |        |             | <i>Music</i>           |        |
| 17          | H. P. Bongers                | C3     | 35          | Rolf Bergstrand             | C3C5C7 | 55          | Remo Palmirani         | C3C5C7 |
|             | <i>Eternity</i>              |        |             | <i>Play</i>                 |        |             | <i>Nemesida</i>        |        |
| 18          | Irena Hrapova                | C3     | 36          | Ottmar Premstaller          | C3C5C7 | 56          | R. Lattermann          | C3C5C7 |
|             | <i>Phoenix</i>               |        |             | <i>Aquarius</i>             |        |             | <i>My garden</i>       |        |
| 19          | Agaath & Jos van Waterschoot | C3C7   | 37          | Luigi Bergomi               | C3C5C7 | 57          | N. Hillerbrandt        | C3C5C7 |
|             | <i>The fairyland</i>         |        |             | <i>Old time</i>             |        |             | <i>Old man and sea</i> |        |
| 20          | PF 1997                      | C3C7   | 38          | Marvin Bolotsky             | C3C5C7 | 58          | Georges Dumon          | C3C5C7 |
|             |                              |        |             | <i>Alice</i>                |        |             | <i>Classical music</i> |        |
|             |                              |        | 39          | Leo Bednarik                | C3C5C7 | 59          | Dorun Pestalozzi       | C3C5C7 |
|             |                              |        |             | <i>He and She</i>           |        |             | <i>New day</i>         |        |
|             |                              |        |             |                             |        | 60          | G. Vandermoere         | C3C5C7 |
|             |                              |        |             |                             |        |             | <i>Sacred</i>          |        |



|             |                              |        |             |                                     |        |             |                               |        |
|-------------|------------------------------|--------|-------------|-------------------------------------|--------|-------------|-------------------------------|--------|
| <b>2000</b> |                              |        | <b>2002</b> |                                     |        | <b>2006</b> |                               |        |
| 61          | Dorun Pestalozzi             | C3C5C7 | 85          | F. van der Veen                     | C3C5C7 | 108         | Olli Ylönen                   | C3C5C7 |
|             | <i>Shower</i>                |        |             | <i>Glory</i>                        |        |             | <i>Place under the sun</i>    |        |
| 62          | Aloys Vertongen              | C3C5C7 | 86          | PF 2003                             | C3C5C7 | 109         | UUA – Print Club              | C3C5C7 |
|             | <i>Dialogue</i>              |        |             |                                     |        |             | <i>Flowers for presidents</i> |        |
| 63          | PF 2001                      | C3C5C7 | <b>2003</b> |                                     |        | 110         | Sergei Brodovych              | C3C5C7 |
| <b>2001</b> |                              |        | 87          | James P. Keenan                     | C3C5C7 |             | <i>Paradise apple</i>         |        |
| 64          | Peter Nesterenko             | C3C5C7 |             | <i>No exit</i>                      |        | 111         | Gilbert                       | C3C5C7 |
|             | <i>Letter</i>                |        | 88          | Floor Oosterhoff                    | C3C5C7 |             | Vandermoere                   |        |
| 65          | O. Premstaller               | C3C5C7 |             | (Frans van der Veen)                |        |             | <i>The Hunter</i>             |        |
|             | <i>St. Aquarius</i>          |        |             | <i>Fine country</i>                 |        | 112         | Henri                         | C3C5C7 |
| 66          | Tobias Wimmer                | C3C5C7 | 89          | Birgit Göbel                        | C3C5C7 |             | Swagemakers                   |        |
|             | (Eva-Maria Wimmer)           |        |             | <i>Comfort</i>                      |        |             | OGC                           |        |
|             | <i>Agile</i>                 |        | 90          | PF 2004                             | C3C5C7 | 113         | Wout Meulemans                | C3C5C7 |
| 67          | Doris Thiel                  | C3C5C7 | <b>2004</b> |                                     |        |             | <i>Phryne</i>                 |        |
|             | <i>Visitor</i>               |        | 91          | Sergei Brodovych                    | C3C5C7 | 114         | Hugo Viaene                   | C3C5C7 |
| 68          | Susanne Kolar                | C3C5C7 |             | <i>Temptation</i>                   |        |             | <i>Captain</i>                |        |
|             | <i>Good mood</i>             |        | 92          | Hasip Pektas                        | C3C5C7 | <b>2007</b> |                               |        |
| 69          | F. van der Veen              | C3C5C7 |             | <i>Sublimation</i>                  |        | 115         | Hacettepe University          | C3C5C7 |
|             | <i>Voyage</i>                |        | 93          | Beumont Gil                         | C3C5C7 |             | <i>Vertex</i>                 |        |
| 70          | Peter Labuhn                 | C3C5C7 |             | <i>Open heart</i>                   |        | 116         | Hasip Pektas                  | C3C5C7 |
|             | <i>Old invention</i>         |        | 94          | Reglinde Lattermann                 | C3C5C7 |             | <i>Thirst</i>                 |        |
| 71          | Peter Nesterenko             | C3C5C7 |             | <i>Inspiration</i>                  |        | 117         | JoAnn Pari-Mueller            | C3C5C7 |
|             | <i>Book</i>                  |        | 95          | Hideo Ariizumi                      | C3C5C7 |             | <i>Pandora</i>                |        |
| 72          | PF 2002                      | C3C5C7 |             | <i>Strings of a life</i>            |        | 118         | Luc Adam                      | C3C5C7 |
| <b>2002</b> |                              |        | 96          | Giorgio Frigo                       | C3C5C7 |             | <i>Letters of love</i>        |        |
| 73          | Peter Labuhn                 | C3C5C7 |             | <i>In loneliness</i>                |        | 119         | Guus Willemsen                | C3C5C7 |
|             | <i>Heavy apple</i>           |        | 97          | Henry Klein                         | C3C5C7 |             | <i>Equilibrium</i>            |        |
| 74          | Hildegard Pungs              | C3C5C7 |             | <i>Search of the compromise</i>     |        | 120         | Wouter Van Gysel              | C3C5C7 |
|             | <i>Star light</i>            |        | 98          | Shoichi Koeda                       | C3C5C7 |             | <i>Muse</i>                   |        |
| 75          | Reglinde Lattermann          | C3C5C7 |             | <i>Farewell Dulseneja!</i>          |        | 121         | Sergei Brodovych              | C3C5C7 |
|             | <i>Two roads</i>             |        | 99          | Sergei Brodovych                    | C3C5C7 |             | <i>Make a flight</i>          |        |
| 76          | Erika + Andreas Selle        | C3C5C7 |             | <i>Paritx</i>                       |        | 122         | Yalçın Ayasli                 | C3C5C7 |
|             | <i>Mystery</i>               |        | 100         | PF 2005                             | C3C5C7 |             | <i>Axiom</i>                  |        |
| 77          | James P. Keenan              | C3C5C7 | <b>2005</b> |                                     |        | <b>2008</b> |                               |        |
|             | <i>Books</i>                 |        | 101         | Tazuo Matsubishi                    | C3C5C7 | 123         | Edwin Smits                   | C3C5C7 |
| 78          | Marvin Bolotsky              | C3C5C7 |             | <i>Gulliver's travel</i>            |        |             | <i>Instinct</i>               |        |
|             | (A. Brunovsky)               |        | 102         | Birgit Göbel-Stiegler               | C3C7   | 124         | Sergei Brodovich              | C3C5C7 |
|             | <i>Ache</i>                  |        |             | <i>Key to heart</i>                 |        |             | <i>Prey</i>                   |        |
| 79          | Loek Aarsen                  | C3C5C7 | 103         | Deurinck                            | C3C5C7 | 125         | Christos P. Giannakos         | C3C5C7 |
|             | <i>Antagonism</i>            |        |             | Lodewijk                            |        |             | <i>Touch to stars</i>         |        |
| 80          | Agaath & Jos van Waterschoot | C3C5C7 |             | <i>Madame Grief</i>                 |        | 126         | Christos P. Giannakos         | C3C5C7 |
|             | <i>Space</i>                 |        | 104         | Sophie Boving                       | C3C5C7 |             | <i>Morphology</i>             |        |
| 81          | Gilbert Vandermoere          | C3C5C7 |             | (Hugo Viaene)                       |        | 127         | Karl Vissers                  | C3C5C7 |
|             | <i>Battle</i>                |        |             | <i>Gladness</i>                     |        |             | <i>Madrigal</i>               |        |
| 82          | Wouter Van Gysel             | C3C5C7 | 105         | Sergei Brodovych                    | C3C5C7 |             |                               |        |
|             | <i>Crimenovels</i>           |        |             | <i>The beauty rescues the world</i> |        |             |                               |        |
| 83          | Louis Pisane                 | C3C5C7 | 106         | Sergaï Golifman                     | C3C5C7 |             |                               |        |
|             | <i>Disagree</i>              |        |             | <i>Go</i>                           |        |             |                               |        |
| 84          | James P. Keenan              | C3C5C7 | 107         | Nicola Carlone                      | C3C5C7 |             |                               |        |
|             | <i>Depth</i>                 |        |             | <i>Demiurgos</i>                    |        |             |                               |        |