

THEATRE OF THE ABSURD

In Hanselaar's latest psychodramas, solitary protagonists in interiors give way to groups of figures in deserted landscapes, bathed in the red-green glow of polluted sunsets and overlooked by sinister watchtowers or smoking chimneys.

The figures serve as chorus to a theatre of the absurd in which acts of worship are played out as spectator sports. The familiar female leads with bestial sidekicks (in Hanselaar's nightmares, unlike Fuseli's, the incubi are subservient chumps and the girls are on top) are joined by a cast of shadowy gangsters in Homburg hats, Middle Eastern women in burqas and African boy soldiers in Mickey Mouse skullcaps.

The Arab Spring is in the air.

Guns join the colanders and the beds of nails in the artist's surreal arsenal of props, midway between the kitchen and the torture chamber.

One image consists only of a deserted landscape with a puffing chimney and a distant fortress. We've come upon the smoking gun, but missed the action - Hanselaar can hold us spellbound before an empty set.

Laura Gascoigne