Julia Michalska interviews Vincent Honore on five works from the contemporary section of Art Basel, The Art Newspaper, 15 – 17 June 2012

Expert eye

Vincent Honoré is the curator of London's David Roberts Art Foundation, which is due to open a new site in September. He has organised "Three Hundred and Fifty Kilograms Per Square Metre", a solo exhibition by the UK artist Simon Starling, at the Kunsthalle Mulhouse, France (until 26 August; a shuttle bus to the show will leave Art Basel on Friday 15 June at 6.15pm). We asked Honoré to choose five works from the contemporary section of Art Basel

Interview by Julia Michalska

Bob Law, ***Landscape XII***,
1959, £14,000, unsold
Thomas Dane Gallery
(2.1/M15)

I first saw Bob Law's work at Artissima [the contemporary art fair] in Turin two years ago, when Thomas [Dane] staged a retrospective of his work. It was a revelation—not only for me, but also for some curator colleagues of mine. I didn't know this artist at all before Turin. Law, who died in 2004, started in landscape but very quickly moved towards a more abstract, more conceptual vocabulary. He started working on a series of abstracted landscapes, of which this work is a part. They are blank drawings with only a border and the date they were created. I found that really extraordinary. This piece is particularly important because it's one of the earliest examples of such drawings. He was a British artist, based in St Ives, who was perhaps somewhat neglected, although [the Tate's director] Nicholas Serota staged a major exhibition of his work at the Museum of Modern Art in Oxford when he was its director in the 1970s. It's kind of like a DIY landscape; the viewer has to complete it. The white page is only the beginning of something—it could become a text, a painting or a photograph. It is symbolic of all the practice around landscape. n