



10 Books from Holland

London Book Fair Issue

Nederlands
letterenfonds
dutch foundation
for literature

Spring 2018

Frequently Asked Questions

10 Books from Holland? Who decides the contents?

Our editors. We want to showcase the best fiction from the Netherlands for our audience of literary publishers. Most titles have been published recently and have enjoyed good sales, excellent reviews and one or more literary awards or nominations. Though sometimes one of these factors is enough. Equally important is the question: 'Does it travel?' Our advisors talk to publishers from all over the world and while it is impossible to say with certainty which novels will travel where, we have the expertise to make an educated guess.

At book fairs, do you talk about these books exclusively?

While we like to discuss our catalogue, there are always other titles: books that have just appeared or are about to come out or books that just missed our selection. Our advisors read as much fiction as they can.

Do you work together with Dutch publishers and agents?

We keep each other informed about interest in titles and rights sales. When we commission a sample translation, we usually share the costs. However, we always make our own decisions, and remain completely independent.

How many books by one author will you support?

We can support one author with three books. If the author has changed publishing houses, previous titles are not counted.

Are all books in your brochure eligible for a grant?

Yes they are, with a maximum subsidy of 100% of the translation costs for classics and 70% for contemporary prose, based on the actual fee paid by the publisher.

Are books that aren't included in your brochure eligible?

As long as it's a good literary title, it probably is. We make our decisions based on three criteria: literary quality of the book, status of the publishing house and quality of the translator. You can always ask in advance if a book is eligible or not.

Can you help us find a translator?

Lists of experienced translators are provided by e-mail.

We want to work with somebody who is not on your list.

Then we require a sample translation of 20 pages and the translator's CV. If the translation is good, the translator will be added to our list. If the translation needs repair, we can make suggestions. If the translation is beyond repair, you are advised to hire somebody who is on our list.

How do we apply for a translation subsidy?

We need contracts with the rights holders and the translator, plus the application form. You can submit digitally from our website: <http://www.letterenfonds.nl/en/translation-subsidy>. Meetings are held six times a year, the dates are announced on our website.

Do you subsidise production costs?

This is possible in the case of editions of poetry, illustrated children's books or graphic novels. For regular fiction and non-fiction, we support translation costs only.

We would like to invite a Dutch author for a promotional visit.

If you organise a good programme and offer the author accommodation, we can cover the travel costs.

How to apply for the Amsterdam Fellowship.

Every September, we organise a fellowship (4 days) for publishers and editors. We do not have an application procedure, but you can always send us an e-mail stating your interest.

Individual Publisher's Visits

We host 8 to 10 publishers and editors per year on an individual basis. Usually, these are great if you already have one or more Dutch authors on your list and would like to see them, combined with a schedule of meetings.

What's Schwob?

Schwob.nl is a European network for forgotten or undiscovered books, established and maintained by translators, publishers and editors, researchers, readers and critics.

Can I subscribe to Books from Holland?

Please leave your card at our stand, or send a message. All our past issues are available at www.letterenfonds.nl.

Advisors Fiction



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Martin Michael Driessen

The Pelican

A surprising tragicomedy about two men who keep each other in a stranglehold

Former opera and theatre director Martin Michael Driessen's sixth book is a comedy of errors about two men inescapably connected by a web of blackmail. As in his prize-winning story collection *Rivers*, Driessen is a master of inspiring empathy for individuals who take their fate into their own hands, usually with tragic consequences.

In Communist Yugoslavia in the late 1980s, pelicans and a clock museum are the closest things to local attractions in a sleepy town on the Adriatic coast. The two leading characters are Josip, the driver of the funicular, who has a disabled daughter and a deranged, nagging wife, and Andrej, an unmarried postman and nature photographer. On a walk in the mountains, Andrej sees Josip making love to his mistress. Andrej takes photographs and begins to blackmail Josip.

The financial arrangements and Josip's misguided suspicions about his blackmailer's identity lead to entertaining complications. But then Andrej is hurt in a traffic

accident and Josip comes to his aid. Josip discovers envelopes in Andrej's house that have been steamed open and realizes that the postman has stolen posted money. Josip then uses this information to blackmail Andrej. Neither one has any idea who his tormentor could be; in fact, the two of them become friends. This personal drama with unexpected plot twists takes place against the background of the impending Balkan war, which drives apart the village's ethnic groups. The two men's mutual stranglehold is a metaphor for the fault lines in the former Yugoslavia, where friends became enemies from one day to the next.

No one in *The Pelican* is wholly good or evil. The characters' backgrounds and motives are described in an intimate style that enables readers to empathize with all of them: 'You always had expectations of other people, good or bad, and it was confusing when they did the opposite.' With skilful irony, Driessen gives malice and misunderstanding a human face.



Publishing details

De pelikaan (2017)
200 pp., 51,031 words

Publisher

Van Oorschot
Menno Hartman
menno@vanoorschot.nl
www.vanoorschot.nl

Rights

2 Seas Agency
Marleen Seegers,
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Rights Sold

US (Amazon Crossing, in preparation).

Translated Titles

Rivieren [Rivers]: US (Amazon Crossing), Germany (Wagenbach), Hungary (Gondolat), all in preparation.
Vader van god [Father of God]: Italy (Del Vecchio, 2015).

'Prose characterized by craftsmanship, imagination and an almost old-fashioned pleasure in storytelling, embedded in an ingenious plot.'
– *De Morgen*

'Driessen's craftsmanship is a sheer delight: like a puppeteer, he makes his characters run in circles around each other, suspecting a bit too much and discovering too little, while showing his readers the big picture through ingenious shifts in perspective.'
– *NRC Handelsblad*



Martin Michael Driessen (b. 1954) is an opera and theatre director, translator and author. He made his debut in 1999 with the novel *Gars*, followed by *Father of God* (2012) and *A True Hero* (2013), all of which were acclaimed by the press and nominated for literary prizes. His work has been translated into Italian, German and Hungarian. His voluminous novel *Lizzie* (2015) was written with the poet Liesbeth Lagemaat. *Rivers* won the ECI Literature Prize in 2016. *The Pelican* has been shortlisted for the prestigious Libris Literature Prize.

Photo: Bob Bronshoff

Maxim Februari

Lump

Erudite novel calling on us to surrender not to data, but to life

A great deal has been written about the ever more radical ways in which data shapes our lives. The tone is either optimistic and impressed or cynical doom-and-gloom. Maxim Februari, one of the Netherlands' sharpest, most multifaceted thinkers, has turned his hand to the novel to explore at close quarters the influence of big data on a number of lives. The result is *Lump*.

'The lump was the enemy.' So starts Februari's novel on the digital world in which consumer data has piled up to form an uncontrollable autonomous system. Due to proliferating algorithms, users are subject to the tyranny of the lump. Against this backdrop, Februari follows two characters: the charismatic Alexei Krups, who enthusiastically applauds the endless possibilities, and technology expert Bodo Klein, who is sent by the Minister of Security to shadow Krups.

An inspirational speaker and prophet, Krups proclaims the word on data, despite barely believing in it himself. When his message is taken seriously, making him a prominent authority, he becomes increas-

ingly perplexed: 'This is the sort of nonsense that people want to hear.' There is no question of stopping, so he becomes ever more reckless in the statements he cuts and pastes together.

Klein follows Krups, trying to get a grip on him, and on his own life, which has been derailed after he sent a suicide note by email but then changed his mind. His position at work is unsustainable and things at home are not much better. Both Klein and Krups are confronted with powers greater than themselves.

One of Krups' disturbing messages to the world is that data renders novels obsolete. *Lump* proves the opposite: the novel is indispensable. By zooming in on Krups and Klein, Februari shows that their personal lives cannot be reduced to data.

The novel offers an erudite reflection on modern developments. It is enhanced by the essay style in which Februari excels and by the intimate portrayal of characters who constantly find themselves off-balance in an ever more grotesque world. The message of *Lump* is that we should surrender not to data but to life itself.



Publishing Details

Klont (2017)
256 pp., 69,634 words
10,000 copies sold

Rights

Prometheus
Ronit Palache
r.palache@pbo.nl
www.uitgeverijprometheus.nl

Translated Titles

De zonen van het uitzicht [The Sons of the View]: Denmark (Politisk Revy, 1993).
De literaire kring [The Book Club]: UK (Quercus, 2010).
De maakbare man [The Making of a Man]: UK (Reaktion Books, 2015), Colombia (Icono, 2016), Turkey (Güldünya, 2016).

'Brilliant novel by Maxim Februari on how to be a person in a "datafied" world. Never before has he packaged his quest in such witty, sparkling and multifaceted form.' – *de Volkskrant*

'Februari's beautiful style, powerful images and clear character psychology make *Lump* in its entirety a good example of the book's message: that human intelligence, love and imagination are the only medicine for twisted artificial intelligence.' – *Trouw*

'Februari is in complete control of his material and writes with humour and imagination. His novel aptly demonstrates what Big Tech does to people.' – *NRC Handelsblad*



Maxim Februari is a writer, columnist, lawyer and philosopher. His novel *The Sons of the View* (*De zonen van het uitzicht*) was published in 1989. His major breakthrough came with *The Book Club* (*De literaire kring*, 2007) which won the Annie Romein-Verschoor Prize and was shortlisted for the Libris and Golden Owl Literature Prizes and longlisted for the International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award. In 2008 Februari received the Frans Kellendonk Prize for his entire oeuvre.

Photo: Bob Bronshoff

Franca Treur

Now Hear My Voice

A Calvinist girl develops into an ambitious young woman, unable to let go of her past

Religion plays a large part in Franca Treur's writing. In her new novel - narrated in alternating chapters through the life of a growing girl and the grown-up woman she has become, Treur shows us liberation from faith and the emptiness that ensues.

When as a young girl Ina loses her parents, she is taken to live with her grandfather and his two sisters in the religiously fundamentalist countryside. God watches over all that she does and says. The outside world is held at bay, and with neither radio nor television allowed, it is the village clergyman who dominates. Despite her doubts, as Ina grows up, she holds on to her faith. At the same time, we read about her later life as Gina, her studies at university and how she makes the transition to a world without faith, even becoming the interviewer for a popular radio programme.

But then she unexpectedly loses in quick succession her lover and then her

job. When she returns to Zeeland to look after her sick aunt, she is back in the bosom of the faith which she had abandoned. This leads to crisis. She cannot accept the loss of her lover, even though she had never really given him a chance. His loss now awakens a passion for him that she had not previously known.

As in Treur's previous novels, *Now Hear My Voice* deals with the impossible situation of people who cannot submit to the discipline of faith and unconditional surrender to God, and are left with an abyss of spiritual emptiness which is so typical of our society.

Now Hear My Voice is a classic novel about an uprooted life, a sense of sin, and a distancing from childhood and faith. The climax of this memorably and evocatively written story - when Gina's aunt dies and the narrator gives herself over to a series of reflections on the impossibility of a divine being - lends the book a special, consoling power.



Publishing Details

Hoor nu mijn stem (2017)
320 pp., 45,247 words
20,000 copies sold

Rights

Prometheus
Ronit Palache
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www.uitgeverijprometheus.nl

Translated Titles

Dorsvloer vol confetti [Confetti on the Threshing Floor]. Brazil (Virgilae, 2012).

'What is attractive about the novel is the lack of any sharp boundary between the strict Calvinist and the atheist life. Gina's ambition, and her need for applause, is quite a long way from the religious devotion shown by Aunt Ma, one of the elect. Yet her aunt's attitude is what Gina must ultimately learn: to be detached, to count neither on success nor on love. What ultimately matters is beyond the devout's surrender to God: it is everyone's surrender to life.'
- *De Groene Amsterdammer*

'A warm mixture of compassion and nostalgia. Her style in particular deserves admiration, especially in her way of having different characters talk realistically. Her sentences are invariably worth not just reading but mulling over. [...] A homage to a lost faith, a lost childhood.'
- *PZC*

Photo: Annaleen Louwes



Franca Treur (b. 1979) studied Dutch and literary theory at the University of Leiden. The publication of her debut novel *Confetti on the Threshing Floor* (2009) brought her unprecedented success: it sold more than 150,000 copies and won the Jan Bruijns prize and the Selexyz prize for best debut. The film adaptation premiered in 2014. Treur writes columns, essays and short stories for various Dutch newspapers. *Now Hear My Voice* has been shortlisted by NRC Handelsblad as best book of 2017.

Charlotte Mutsaers

Harnas of Hansaplast

Lament for a brother who died lonely, and for an eccentric family

Charlotte Mutsaers' new book is dedicated to 'all members of the family I come from and the house where we lived'. It is an ambiguous declaration of love for a parental nest that produced misfortune and good fortune, mystery and undiluted misery; it is at once a testimony of loyalty and betrayal.

Every family has its extremes and its black sheep. Here the black sheep was Barend, the youngest in a family after two older sisters, A. and C. The underlying theme of this novel is outsiders. The Mutsaers family, living in a large house in the historic centre of Utrecht, could not have been more eccentric. The writer herself talks of a 'bizarre lineage', one which had fatal consequences, 'that prevented us from developing the ability to take life at its word.'

In one of her essays Mutsaers has written that Kafka would probably never have written *The Metamorphosis* if he had had a loving beetle for a little sister. After all, what words does he put into the mouth of Gregor's sister, once Gregor has changed into a beetle? 'Dear parents, this cannot continue. Perhaps you haven't realised this, but I have. I do not wish to address this vermin by my brother's name, so I will only say that we must attempt to get rid of him. We have tried everything to care for and tolerate him; I do not believe anyone could

find anything to reproach us with.'

Among the most chilling sections of the book are those in which the author imagines her deceased brother being found by the police, who subsequently 'sweep up' his body as Samsa does at the end of Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*. The passage through the rooms where he kept his books, porn and comics is simultaneously a passage through their childhood home, presented as a haunted house, covered in cobwebs, dust and litter. It is a house once dominated by a father who preceded his children in a radical kind of courage – 'Make sure you can fend for yourselves, or you'll be crushed by the hordes.'

Now the two remaining sisters pace up and down, nervously rubbing their hands, swinging between fear, revulsion, rage and pity, one with shoulders drooping so low that the other thinks she needs shoulder pads, the other eager to put on a dress she wore at the age of eighteen, proud that it can still fit. Amidst the mess there emerges a shaky monument to a family and its youngest offshoot, a boy, a man, who must have lived an indescribably lonely life. 'How to live, that's what it's always about,' writes his sister, no more a beetle than her brother, but a deeply kindred spirit: 'How to live when life will irrevocably abandon you and the only weapon against tears is a clean handkerchief.'



Charlotte Mutsaers (b. 1942) is an author and visual artist who has published five novels and several collections of essays and poetry. Best known for her novels *Rachel's Skirt* (1994) and *Coachman Autumn* (2009), she has won numerous literary awards, including the prestigious P.C. Hooftprijs for her complete works. She is widely considered one of the most striking and surprising voices in contemporary Dutch literature.



Publishing details

Harnas van Hansaplast (2017)
312 pp., 63,000 words
15,000 copies sold

Publisher

DasMag
Daniël van der Meer
daniel@dasmag.nl
www.dasmag.nl

Rights

Cossee
Stella Rieck
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www.cossee.com

Translated Titles

Rachels rokje [Rachel's Skirt].
Germany (Hanser, 1997,
Droemer Knaur 2002).
Kersenbloed [Cherry Blood].
Germany (Hanser, 2001).
Koetsier herfst [Coachman Autumn].
Germany (Hanser, 2011).

'While going through her parental home – clothes, crockery, paintings, thousands of books – Mutsaers reconstructs her childhood. She writes about her family with amazement, love (for her father) and unconcealed reluctance (about her mother). An extraordinary novel about the thin line between success and life as an outcast.'
– *HP De Tijd*

'In this playful book, the 75-year-old Peter Pan of Dutch literature juggles fact and fiction while writing a loving tribute to her deceased brother. The insights are sometimes as frivolous as the language, both refreshing and colourful.' – *HUMO*

Photo: Keke Keukelaar

Thomas Verbogt

How It All Had to Start

When you discover the love of your life too soon

Thomas Verbogt plays a Modiano-like game with the past. Through a description of a photograph and snatches of conversation, he summons a vanished past while sketching the outlines of a future that would never come to pass.

A walk in the park, the smell of 'the day that has just begun', a street musician's melodies – for 65-year-old Thomas, this experience brings back memories of his bond with Licia at the age of six.

In a photograph, he sees himself with Licia and her parents, not long before her mother's death. Thomas and Licia had just met. He hears the words they said to each other then, their certainty about how to build their friendship. They turned the world around them into a world of their own.

Their happiness was cut short when Licia's father moved to Italy with his new partner and Licia. Eight years later, Licia invited Thomas to visit her in Rome. It had seemed unthinkable that anything would ever come between them, yet they

find they've grown apart. They quarrel; they make love; and when they say goodbye, they both know the connection between them is still there. It's just that there's 'much too much world' around them.

They meet twice more, once when he's nearing forty and for the last time when he's sixty-three. Although the years bring a degree of resignation, his pain at the loss of what might have been stays with him all his life. It doesn't take much to make the feeling flare up again, like a heath fire that never goes out.

Verbogt suggests more than he says outright. Thomas leaves many questions unanswered, sowing seeds of doubt about his reliability as a narrator and telling his story as if feeling his way in the dark. The reader must decide whether and how to fill in the gaps. The author's keen awareness of light, colour and fragrance makes this delicate, dreamy novel a feast for the senses.



Publishing details

Hoe alles moest beginnen (2017)
240 pp., 45,247 words
15,000 copies sold

Rights

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Translated titles

Als de winter voorbij is [When Winter Is Over]. Germany (Aufbau, in preparation).



Thomas Verbogt (b. 1952) debuted in 1981 with *The Gala Night*, a collection of short stories. Since then he has written many novels, plays and story collections. As his body of work has grown, so has his audience. His novel *When Winter Is Over* was shortlisted for the Libris Literature Prize in 2016 and translated into German. Verbogt is most admired for his light, melancholy tone and his cinematic style of narration.

'Everything – dream and reality, present and past – is full of life and light in Verbogt's work. [...] Read Verbogt. It will make you happy.'
– *Het Parool*

'Verbogt is the kind of writer who, without ever growing tiresome, can scatter insightful life lessons throughout his books.'
– *Elsevier*

Photo Amke

Joost de Vries

Old Masters

An adventure novel about two intellectual brothers with a fateful predilection for the past

The greatest tragedy in the lives of the two brothers Edmund and Sieger van Zeeland, is that they were born in the wrong century. In every other way, they are privileged: intelligent, gallant men who need no one but themselves. They both stumble into adventures that put their self-sufficiency to the test.

The story opens in Malta, where Edmund, a millionaire, delights in the historic buildings. His motto is a quote from John Banville: 'The past beats inside me like a second heart.' He has come to the island nation in search of Sarie, his brother Sieger's wife, who works as a costume designer on a historical TV drama.

Edmund hopes that she'll point him to the whereabouts of his missing brother Sieger, but meanwhile, he finds himself nearly falling in love with her. He follows her to Spain and Cuba and buys his way onto the series as an extra. This cinematic adventure comes to an abrupt end when, due to Edmund's actions, the star of the show has a serious accident that brings the filming to a halt.

Sieger works as a magazine reporter. After the death of his boss and mentor

Willem Verdelius, he feels less comfortable than ever with the changing priorities of the editorial staff. Dismayed by the changes, he complains, 'Why doesn't anyone want to write about *majorities* anymore? Lord knows there are a lot more of those.' As everyone is searching for him, he goes to Berlin, where he witnesses an attack on a notorious Russian politician and art collector. Sieger's investigation of the Russian's role takes him to Ukraine, where he finds a scoop he doesn't want to share with anyone.

Like Joost de Vries's earlier work, *Old Masters* is an effervescent cocktail of satire and suspense. But in this novel, he adds a tragic note: the main characters' nostalgic yearnings are constantly tripping them up in the modern world. To make things worse, they seem unable to empathise with others or feel connected to some higher power. These failings are brought home to them by the women in their life.

In a highly entertaining and moving style, Joost de Vries describes the experience of the white male intellectual whose relevance can no longer be taken for granted.



Publishing details

Oude meesters (2017)
303 pp., 80,215 words
4,000 copies sold

Publisher

Prometheus
Ronit Palache
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Rights

Alexandra McNicoll
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Translated Titles

De republiek [The Republic]: UK (Arcadia), US (Other Press), Germany (Heyne), Catalan and Spanish (Anagrama), Estonian (Varrak), French (Plon), Greek (Metaixmio), Korean (Hyundae Munhak), Turkish (Domingo).

'The brothers build up a personal past, their own edifice of memories. That makes *Old Masters* not merely a nostalgic spectacle, but a deeply human novel. Life itself, here and now – that will have to be enough, as the brothers learn from harsh experience. Fleeing into the past won't work anymore, and in fact it never did.'
– *Het Parool*

'Again, Joost de Vries has woven a series of coincidences into an ingenious, glittering web. *Old Masters* reminds me strongly of Anthony Burgess's *Earthly Powers* [...] because both offer a brilliant display of highbrow entertainment.'
– *Trouw*



Joost de Vries (b. 1983) studied journalism and history in Utrecht. Since 2007 he has been an editor and literary critic at *De Groene Amsterdammer*. He burst onto the Dutch literary scene with *Clausewitz* (2010), a biblio-thriller inspired by the work of one of his great heroes, Harry Mulisch. In 2013 he was awarded the Charlotte Köhler Stipendium, and his second novel *The Republic* won the Golden Owl Award in 2014.

Photo: Keke Keukelaar

Marieke Lucas Rijneveld

The Discomfort of the Evening

Intense, poetic debut about the daughter in a God-fearing family coming to terms with the loss of her brother.

In this fine debut novel, Marieke Lucas Rijneveld forces us to look at exactly what is seen, felt and tasted, not from a distancing helicopter perspective, but from close up, breathtakingly close up. *The Discomfort of the Evening* takes the reader into an oppressive and repulsive world where detail is what matters.

Jas is mourning her dead brother, who drowned while skating. She is in the no-man's-land between childhood and adulthood, and it is through her eyes that we see how the other members of her family deal with the loss. Jas feels totally misunderstood, she invokes her brother through strange rituals, she abandons herself to compulsive erotic games, she sees her parents as threatening, she resorts to torturing animals, she fantasises about

God, she dreams of 'the other side' and of redemption. In short, the novel is about her vain attempt to be rescued.

We are not permitted to regard the intense adolescent Jas from a distance, as if observing some pathological case. No, we are deeply involved with her and we shudder. The novel is bursting with apt, sharp, gruesome, and sometimes funny images. Rijneveld lays everything bare.

Thank goodness for those funny images which give some relief and allow us to laugh! Broccoli florets are mini-Christmas trees, Jas' mother's withered breasts are like the collection bags in church. Rijneveld has written a daringly depressing novel, which can lead to sombre, self-pitying reflection. But what powerful writing, what a hunger for images, what a courageous writer.



Publishing details

De avond is ongemak (2018)
272 pp., 77,323 words
40,000 copies sold

Rights

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www.atlascontact.nl

'The deluge of images that Rijneveld unleashes on us is original, witty, sombre and necessary. This is how the story must be told, and in no other way... [the ending] hit me in the chest like a straight left. It goes on reverberating there.' – Trouw

'Rijneveld is not becoming a great writer. She is one already.' – Humo

'The child's world of Jas is often pitch-black and scary, but fortunately she is liberal with sparkling, witty imagery... Rijneveld closes her story in grandiose and determined fashion, while little Jas on the contrary opens something. What remain are shivers down the spine, astonishment and discomfort.'

– *Algemeen Dagblad*

'Book of the Month'
– *DWDD Book Sellers' Panel*
(1,5 million viewers)

Photo: Jouk Oosterhof



Marieke Lucas Rijneveld (b. 1991) made her debut as a poet in 2015 with the collection *Kalfsvlies* (Calf's Caul), awarded the C. Buddingh' Prize for the best poetry debut, and reprinted several times. She won the *Hollands Maandblad* Incentive Bursary 2014/2015 and the C.C.S. Crone Stipendium 2015. The *Volkskrant* proclaimed her the literary talent of 2016.

Jannah Loontjens

Who Knows

A mosaic novel about a dinner party that takes a catastrophic turn

Amsterdam, January 2015, the eve of a major protest march in response to the attack on *Charlie Hebdo*. Eight friends and family members are dining together. Subtle, telling descriptions reveal the tensions between the people at the table, exploring the fabric of today's multicultural European society.

A dinner party in a fashionable house – but beneath the veneer of warmth and hospitality, trouble is brewing. Short chapters, each one named after the person whose perspective it describes, shed light on the true relationships and frictions between the characters.

The arrogant stockbroker Paul is ashamed of his sensitive brother, the park keeper Philip, and vice versa. Manon, Paul's ex-wife, teaches at a university on the verge of a student uprising, and their twelve-year-old daughter Liv is being teased in her class's online chat group. Mohammed, Manon's new flame, is assumed to be a Muslim by the people around him, even though he's non-religious. And then there's Justus, a teacher with a habit of jumping into bed with his

students – men and women alike – and who, in a drunken haze, climbs under the covers with Liv. When they're found there, the ensuing fight brings the group's suppressed conflicts to the surface.

All the characters are struggling to find their way in today's multicultural society. Peace-loving Manon is accused of racism when she asks Liv's headmaster to talk to the bullies in the school chat group, 'and it just so happens they all come from immigrant families'. Her student Besma doesn't feel welcome among the student activists, as a Muslim with a headscarf, but decides to join their protest anyway. Paul feels abandoned by his Somali girlfriend Ablah, who has always been a fierce opponent of Islam but won't take part in the *Charlie Hebdo* march.

Who Knows offers a fascinating slice of contemporary urban life. All the characters wrestle with issues like social status, identity, prejudice and the desire to belong. Loontjens adeptly shows how people who live together often fail to understand each other, yet still feel connected.



Publishing details

Wie weet (2018)
224 pp., 56,088 words

Publisher

Ambo Anthos
Laurens Ubbink
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www.amboanthos.nl

Rights

Shared Stories
Christel Meijer,
christel@sharedstories.nl
www.sharedstories.nl

Translated titles

Misschien wel niet [Possibly Not].
Denmark (Turbine), Hungarian
(Typotex).

'A novel with so many characters always presents the author with a tremendous problem: how to introduce them all without resorting to mini-biographies, and how to make sure the reader can keep track of who's who. Loontjens has found an exceptionally neat solution. She simply tells her story, and thanks to a detail here and a brief allusion there, the puzzle pieces fall into place.'

– *Knack*

'Loontjens' work teems with freshness and originality. Her brand-new fourth novel is an incisive reflection on our age.'

– *De Morgen*

Photo: Martin Dijkstra



Jannah Loontjens (b. 1974) is a philosopher and writer. Her earlier novels include *Good Luck* (2007), *How Late* (2011), *Actually* (2014) and *But Then Again*. Her work has been translated into Danish and Hungarian.

Kasper van Beek

Recollection

An ingeniously constructed thriller about missing memories



Kasper van Beek's debut is an impressive, well constructed thriller. A man is confronted with a photo of himself with another man, who looks completely unfamiliar to him. His search for answers sends him on a mysterious journey from Amsterdam to Helsinki.

Olaf appears largely indifferent to his own life. He is married to Liesbeth and works in his father-in-law's business. As if he were just passing through, he observes what goes on around him but never for one moment feels involved. He does what's expected of him and doesn't ask too many questions.

His apathetic attitude seems to stem from a car crash a few years earlier, which sent him flying through the windscreen. At least, that's what he's been told. He can't remember much about it. For months afterwards he was in a coma, which damaged his memory. His weekly sessions with his psychiatrist don't help Olaf or enable him to engage with life.

Jacob, the husband of Liesbeth's sister Carolien, also works for the family business. At the traditional party to mark the publication of the annual report, he

flirts with Liesbeth. The flirtation, and Carolien's complaints about it, are too much for Olaf, who walks out of the party. Outside, he runs into Mila from the IT department, who tells him about a discovery she's made. Her casual remark is all Olaf needs to 'connect the dots'. His dislike of his wife and relatives and his doubts about his company's integrity fall into place. He starts to suspect what may have caused his nightmares, which are set in a snow-covered landscape and always involve birds and drops of blood.

Soon afterwards, he is sent a photograph of himself with a man he doesn't recognize. Then he finds recordings of his psychiatric sessions in his father-in-law's home office, and Mila's neighbour is murdered for no apparent reason. This series of events forces him to seize control of his life. With Mila's help, he goes in search of the truth. As they travel north, they are followed by company employees; no place is safe. In this accomplished debut, Van Beek makes deft use of small, unexpected plot twists to keep delaying the final revelation. The reader remains in suspense until the very last page.

Publishing details

Vogelvrij (2018)
288 pp., 72,415 words

Publisher

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Kasper van Beek (b. 1985) is a film and television producer and the co-founder of two production companies involved in a wide range of national and international projects. He lives and works in Amsterdam. *Recollection* is his debut.

'An unmatched dream debut, featuring terrific characters and a unique plot with international appeal.' – Tomas Ross

Photo: Tessa Posthuma de Boer

Thé Tjong-Khing & Lo Hartog van Banda

Iris, a Novel for the Eye

Playful eroticism represented in virtuoso lines and psychedelic colours

Thé Tjong-Khing's *Iris, a Novel for the Eye* marked the peak of his career as a cartoonist. He and scriptwriter Lo Hartog van Banda were looking for a way to reach the hearts of the socially motivated young people of the late 1960s, who were growing up with comic strips and television. Khing's drawings are therefore more dominant than Hartog van Banda's texts.

The characters' emotions in this graphic novel drive the compelling, dystopian story. The young woman Iris has set her heart on a career as a singer, and, despite boyfriend Mark's warnings, allows herself to be seduced by the capitalist producer, 'dream lover M.G.'. He moulds her into a

megastar, which leaves Mark and the rest of his lot having to make do with the merchandise: life-sized (sex) dolls of Iris. Attempts to rescue Iris come to nothing; all they do is to allow the dream lover to go on playing his games.

Khing's style in *Iris* shows some affinity with his contemporary, the late Flemish illustrator Guy Peellaert, and the whiff of eroticism which surrounds *Iris* is somewhat reminiscent of Barbarella, her contemporary French heroine.

Iris, drawn with virtuoso élan, is the earliest graphic novel produced in the Netherlands. Hartog van Banda and Thé Tjong-Khing could be said to have discovered the genre all by themselves.



Publishing details

Iris (1968)
160 pp., 4,250 words

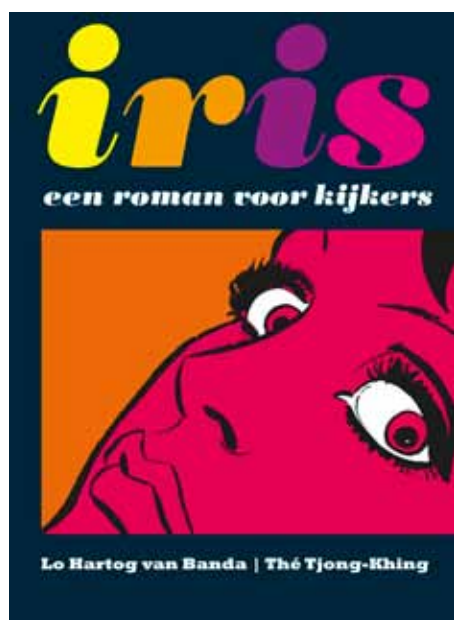
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Thé Tjong-Khing (b.1933) studied for three years at art school in Bandung, Indonesia. In 1956 he came to the Netherlands, where he worked at the studio of the most celebrated Dutch cartoonist, Marten Toonder. Until the end of the 1960s he mainly drew comics like the Arman & Ilva series, with *Iris* (1968) the high point. Then followed a rich career as a children's book illustrator. Thé Tjong-Khing has received many prizes for his work, including the Max Velthuis Prize for his children's book oeuvre.

Strip author **Lo Hartog van Banda** (1916-2006) also worked for Toonder Studios and wrote stories for the Lucky Luke series.

Photo: Pieter van Oudheusden



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Ein Leben nach Maß
Translated into German by Helga van Beuningen for Hanser, 2018.



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Bonita Avenue

Bonita Avenue
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Esther Gerritsen
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[Amsterdamski blues]
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The Ditch

Der Graben
Translated into German by Christiane Kuby and Herbert Post for Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 2018.



Kim van Kooten
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Petit cœur
Translated into French by Isabelle Rosselin for Calmann-Lévy, 2018.



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Translated into English by Laura Vroomen
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Bitter Herbs

A erva amarga
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Margriet de Moor
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Au premier regard
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[De aanslag]
Translated into Arabic by Amina Abed
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Kenda for Modrijan, 2018.



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No volverá a pasar
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Kasper van Beek
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Thé Tjong King
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