



10 Books from Holland

London Book Fair Issue

Nederlands
letterenfonds
dutch foundation
for literature

Spring 2015

Frequently Asked Questions

10 Books from Holland? Who decides the contents?

Our editors. We want to showcase the best contemporary fiction from the Netherlands for our audience of literary publishers. In addition, there is always one classic, one graphic novel and one thriller. 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 (one page only). 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. Please go to www.letterenfonds.nl/en/travel-costs.

I've heard so much about the Amsterdam Fellowship.

Every September, we organise a fellowship (4 days) for publishers and editors. It includes a schedule with many meetings: publishers, agents, writers, translators, some dinner parties and usually a boat trip on the canals. 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?

There are important books that remain unknown, books we never hear about and that are unavailable in Dutch. 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



Barbara den Ouden:
Eastern and Middle Europe,
Mediterranean countries,
Russia. Graphic novels.
b.den.ouden@letterenfonds.nl



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Scandinavia, German and
English-language countries.
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Alexandra Koch: Schwob, a.koch@letterenfonds.nl

Jeroen Brouwers

The Wood

Stylistic tour de force about a young teacher's struggle to escape a brutal boarding school regime

Jeroen Brouwers explores one of the darkest chapters in our recent history: the sexual abuse of children within the Catholic Church. The latest novel by this long-established literary figure has won over critics and readers alike with its harrowing directness, attracting five-star reviews and spending months in the top ten.

Brouwers' protagonist, mild-mannered Eldert Haman, is neither abuser nor victim. A teacher at a Catholic boarding school, he is gradually absorbed into religious life and becomes a monk there, taking the name Bonaventura. Disturbed by the military discipline to which his young charges are subjected, he treats them instead with compassion. This brings him into conflict with his fellow monks. He is demoted from teaching to being night watchman with the task of making sure that the boys do not succumb to the sins of the flesh.

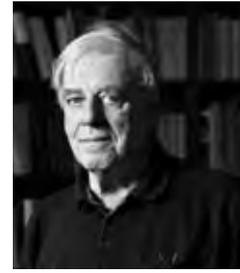
The novel is set in the early 1950s, shortly after World War II, when people were struggling to build a life for themselves and leave the uncertainties of the war years behind. Mansuetus, a German monk, arrives at the monastery to impose order and discipline.

Bonaventura is not fully aware of the abuses being committed around him until the damage is done: he realises he is powerless to protect the boys from the wooden stick with which Mansuetus beats them. The German monk is the embodiment of evil and his young victims bear the full brunt of his sadistic sexual urges. Trapped like the pupils he is failing to protect, Bonaventura continues to play his part in the grim facade of monastic life.

He falls in love with a young widow, Patricia, who makes him question his actions, plunging him into psychological turmoil. At last he learns to think for himself again and take the boys' side. Abandoning his monastic robes, he leaves the school and the church, followed by the boys he was unable to protect within its walls.

Brouwers describes this drama subtly and precisely, keeping the narrative voice close to Bonaventura, thereby letting the reader share the monk's inner struggle and turmoil without turning away from this disturbing world in revulsion. Ultimately the author offers salvation: escape from hell is sometimes possible, if a man is able to find love and stay true to himself.

Jeroen Brouwers (b. 1940) grew up in Indonesia, worked as an editor at Manteau publishers in Brussels and subsequently settled in the Netherlands. Brouwers's work has strong autobiographical elements, such as in *Groetjes uit Brussel* (Greetings from Brussels, 1969), *Het verzonkene* (The Submerged, 1979, awarded with the Multatuli Prize) and in *Bezonken rood* (Sunken Red, 1981, the French translation was awarded the Prix Fémina Etranger in 1995). His novel *Geheime kamers* (Secret Rooms, 2000) became a resounding success: it met with unanimous praise and won the Flemish Golden Owl Award, the AKO Literature Prize 2001 and the Multatuli Prize. His work has been translated in fourteen languages. In 2007 the author was awarded the prestigious Dutch Literature Prize (Prijs der Nederlandse Letteren) for his entire oeuvre.



Publishing details

Het hout (2014)
290 pp., 82,000 words
30,000 copies sold

Publisher

Atlas Contact
www.atlascontact.nl

Rights

Shared Stories
Hayo Deinum
hayo@sharedstories.nl
www.sharedstories.nl

Translated titles

Bezonken rood: Translated into French as *Rouge décafé* (Gallimard, 1995). Also into English (Peter Owen, 1990) and many other languages
Geheime kamers: Translated into German as *Geheime Zimmer* (DVA, 2002). *Datumloze dagen*: Translated into French as *Jours blancs* (Gallimard, 2013).

For other translated titles please see www.vertalingendatabase.nl

Sample translation available

'Brouwers has produced an extraordinary novel. At every level it turns and clicks expertly into place. There is a miracle on every page [...] gems so flawless it's hard not to nod in appreciation when you do come across one.'
– *de Volkskrant*

'Once again Brouwers demonstrates his finesse [...] *Het hout* is a descent into hell that haunts the reader for weeks. Let us give thanks to the Lord for this heathen masterpiece.'
– *De Standaard*

Photo: Annaleen Louwes



Bregje Hofstede

The Sky over Paris

Assured debut about a professor who falls for the doppelganger of the woman he loved and lost

An original take on love and art, Bregje Hofstede's graceful and distinctive debut combines an enthralling and original romance with thought-provoking insights from her background as an art historian.

Olivier, a French professor of art history, has settled into comfortable middle age, enjoying a tranquil Parisian lifestyle with his girlfriend Sylvie. He is woken from his slumber by the appearance of 21-year-old exchange student Fie, who bears an uncanny resemblance to Mathilde, the young woman he loved and lost 25 years previously, having been reluctant to support her in pregnancy to the point of urging her to have an abortion. Mathilde had vanished from his life and he had regretted his decision ever since.

Now Olivier becomes obsessed by Fie. The memories of happier days she rekindles make it increasingly impossible to settle for the anodyne security of his current life with Sylvie. When Fie discovers she is pregnant, history seems to be repeating itself. Once she has left her boyfriend and decided to keep the baby, Olivier takes on the role of her protector, even though it costs him his relationship, his career and his reputation. He leaves

Paris with Fie at his side: 'The accelerator burns beneath his foot and his happiness colours the sky. Everything he was afraid of has finally come to pass.'

The love story is interspersed with Fie's struggles to describe as lively as possible the artist's search for the perfect work of art. These reflections add depth to the love story. She describes how Robert Rauschenberg once rubbed out a charcoal drawing by Willem de Kooning to create a new artwork *Erased De Kooning Drawing* because he was battling against the current of time, returning to the drawing's beginnings, 'back to the moment when the artist's idea was still unspoiled, the paper untouched'.

Similarly, Olivier is being given the chance to return to the moment when his idea of love was pure and unsullied, to make an almost existential choice in favour of romance and fatherhood. For the first time in his life, he dares to commit to someone. *The Sky over Paris* suggests that it is better to throw caution to the wind and make a start than to endlessly pursue the ideal, whether in art or in love. It is a rich theme, one that this mature novel from a young author both explores and embodies.



Publishing details

De hemel boven Parijs (2014)
223 pp., 56,728 words
5,000 copies sold

Publisher

Cossee
Laurens Molegraaf,
laurens@cossee.com
www.cossee.com

Rights sold

Denmark (Tiderne Skifter),
Germany (C.H. Beck)



Bregje Hofstede (b. 1988) lives in Brussels and studied art history and French in Utrecht, Paris and Berlin. She works for a European heritage organisation based in the Belgian capital and lectures in art history at Radboud University in Nijmegen. *The Sky over Paris* was nominated for the Gouden Boekenuil and the Libris Literature Prize.

'The kind of debut writers dream of: well-structured, mature in tone and packed with keen observations.'
– *De Telegraaf*

'While Bregje Hofstede explores the paralysing pursuit of perfection, it is not an affliction to which she succumbs. *The Sky over Paris* is a dream debut.'
– *De Twentsche Courant Tubantia*

'What a joy when a writer is unafraid of being stigmatised, sticks her neck out and delivers a book that can be read as an unabashed and intelligent romance.'
– *De Groene Amsterdammer*

Photo: Natalie Hill

Gustaaf Peek

Goddess, Hero

Two lovers are consumed by a sexual passion underscored by loneliness and loss

What is the nature of sexual attraction, the essence of the chemistry that draws people together? And what is it that stops two people in love from sharing their lives with each other? Gustaaf Peek examines these matters in his erotically charged novel *Goddess, Hero*, an ingeniously constructed tale of two lovers who find and lose each other.

In his previous novels, Gustaaf Peek drew inspiration from real-life events: the fate of German prisoners-of-war in a Texan internment camp during World War II (*I Was America*, 2010) and the deaths of a group of refugees smuggled into Britain in a freight container (*Dover*, 2008). In both, he demonstrated an uncanny ability to immerse himself in the lives of people on the outer reaches of human experience.

Peek's latest novel is dominated by a single theme: the mysterious force of attraction. When teenagers Tessa (the goddess) and Marius (the hero) meet at school, they spark powerful desires in one another, desires that burn strongly through the years, even though they spend most of their lives apart. When they meet it is in the anonymity of hotel rooms, at the margin of their existence.

While Marius dreams of marrying Tessa and having a child with her, he nevertheless chooses to remain on the periphery of her

life; emotional intimacy does not come easily to him. Tessa's need for Marius is greater than his need for her, triggering a loneliness that never lets her go. The world of these two lovers is defined by the interplay between rejection and attempted reconciliation.

The novel's most striking feature is its narrative in reverse, counting back from Chapter 50 to Chapter 0. It opens with Tessa's funeral and returns to the moment of the lovers' first teenage encounter. This highlights the inevitability of the events and sets their love story in the context of their demise. The theme of death is also explored through the suicide of Tessa's son and a tender scene in which Marius observes his father's dying breath.

Peek describes the couple's sexual encounters with intensity and fierce intelligence. He paints an intimate and disconcerting picture of how close you can get to someone else's lips, to their eyes and yet still feel alone. The sex is sometimes animalistic and cruel: 'Her arms free and victorious in the air, her pale armpits and unrestrained breasts, all her skin so vulnerable and close, the taste of her deep inside his mouth, on his tongue, it became too dark in him to think clearly. He assaulted her, tried to cover her with his body, relieved that she spoke as she fought him.'

Gustaaf Peek (b. 1975) studied English language and literature at Leiden University. His debut novel *Armin* appeared in 2006. His second novel, *Dover*, came out in early 2008, inspired by the fatal drama of a group of Chinese immigrants at the British port of Dover. In 2010, his third novel, *Ik was Amerika* (*I Was America*) won him the BNG and F. Bordewijk Prizes. *Godin, held* (*Goddess, Hero*, 2014) received a rapturous reception and has been nominated for the 2015 Libris Literature Prize.



Publishing details

Godin, held (2014)
274 pp., 70,000 words
30.000 copies sold

Publisher

Querido
Patricia de Groot,
p.de.groot@querido.nl
www.querido.nl

World English rights: Paul Sebes,
Sebes & Van Gelderen Literary
Agency, sebes@sebes.nl

Translated title

Ik was Amerika. Translated into
Czech as *Byli jsme Amerika*
(Barrister & Principal, 2012).

Rights sold

Germany (DVA).

'The novel's composition gives it a sweeping elegance. By telling the story in reverse, Peek goes from inevitable decline back to the beginnings of love, setting up the highest of expectations. The book resembles a crumpled drawing that is slowly unfolded and smoothed out before your eyes.'
– *NRC Handelsblad*

'Goddess, Hero is a bold undertaking: it is sexy and thoughtful, and utterly refuses to hold back in any way whatsoever. With his robust, sensual style and the guts to deliver storylines that are ragged around the edges, Peek succeeds in writing a novel that is both arousing and moving.'
– *De Groene Amsterdammer*



Kees 't Hart

Teatro Olimpico

A hapless duo look on as their theatrical triumph descends into a cruel comedy of errors

'Teatro Olimpico was a dream, a dream that had to come true. I hope you understand.' Here the dramatist at the centre of Kees 't Hart's tenth novel shares his tale of woe with a potential backer. His dream of staging a ground-breaking production at Italy's most celebrated theatre lies in tatters.

Kees and Hein are two cutting-edge theatre-makers from The Hague. After the première of their 'anti-Beckettian' play about the 18th-century philosopher Rousseau, they are invited to bring it to the Palladian theatre in Vicenza. Without stopping to consider the practicalities, the partners plunge headlong into a foreign adventure and soon find themselves gasping for air.

First there's the language barrier to contend with: Kees and Hein hardly speak a word of Italian. Then there's the logistical headache of transferring their elaborate mise-en-scène to a 16th-century theatre. Next up, finances: the funds that were promised either evaporate or find their way into the wrong bank account.

Last but not least there are the artistic hazards: Kees and Hein soon start to suspect that their Italian director is clinging to an alarmingly different set of dramaturgical dogmas. Who is this director anyway? Where is the money coming from? And who exactly is running the show at the Teatro Olimpico?

At times *Teatro Olimpico* conjures up associations with Kafka's *The Castle*, except that Kees and Hein's hapless attempts to grapple with Italian culture and officialdom are much funnier. Every time they take a step forward, the cast of characters intent on undermining their dream is extended. Everyone interferes with everything and everything that can go wrong does go wrong. As the artistic reincarnation of Laurel & Hardy, the duo – naïve and arrogant in equal parts – stumble on towards their opening night, edging ever closer to bankruptcy. But as Kees writes in his report to his financial backer: 'There was nothing to be done. It would be all right on the night. *Vedremo! Nessun problema!*'



Publishing details

Teatro Olimpico (2014)
220 pp. 75,000 words
5,000 copies sold

Publisher

Querido
Patricia de Groot,
p.de.groot@querido.nl
www.querido.nl

Translated title

Blauw Curaçao. Translated into German as *Blaues Curaçao* (Klett-Cotta, 1998).



Writer and critic **Kees 't Hart** (b. 1944) made his breakthrough in 1999 with *De revue* (The Variety Show), the moving tale of a washed-out clerk who revisits the happiest days of his life as part of an Amsterdam variety show. The novel set the tone for a postmodernist author who thrives on seemingly autobiographical works that blend reality and fantasy. 't Hart once described his characters as 'rampaging adolescents' who identify with such disparate figures as Elvis in *Land van genade* (Land of Mercy, 1989), Pinocchio in *De neus van Pinokkio* (Pinocchio's Nose, 1990) and Hitchcock (*Hotel Vertigo*, 2012).

'The wittiest novel of the year [...] Yet this is so much more than Laurel & Hardy: *Teatro Olimpico* is also a satire on the collective autism of the modern-day theatrical fraternity.'
– *NRC Handelsblad*

'As the novel unfolds, the more Hein and Kees' world starts to resemble a Beckett play. [...] A complex network of other texts underlies this single work. 't Hart, literate and supremely at ease, knows exactly where he's taking us.'
– *de Volkskrant*

Photo: Euf Lindeboom

Ernest van der Kwast

The Ice Cream Makers

Eldest son breaks with a proud family tradition and finds himself saddled with a brotherly debt

In his bestseller *Mama Tandoori*, Ernest van der Kwast painted a vivid and hilarious portrait of an immigrant family. *The Ice Cream Makers* is every bit as entertaining while tapping into a deeper seam of emotion. It is a delightful and sensual tale of poetry, love, family ties and the art of ice cream making.

Van der Kwast's fourth novel centres on the Talamini family, the embodiment of generations of Italian ice cream makers. Every spring they make the journey from their home in Northern Italy to their ice cream parlour in Rotterdam, returning to their fatherland in the winter. Eldest son Giovanni goes against the grain; instead of entering the family business, he decides to pursue a literary career. This has far-reaching consequences for the entire family.

While Giovanni travels the world as a poetry-festival programmer, his brother Luca takes up the family business with Sophia, a beauty who has been the object of both brothers' affections from an early age. Luca feels abandoned by Giovanni and refuses to speak to him for twelve years. When he breaks the silence it is to make a dramatic request. He is infertile and demands that Giovanni fathers a child with

Sophia, on condition that he tells no one. The result is Giuseppe, a boy who would rather listen to poetry than operate an ice cream machine. When Giuseppe suddenly decides to head out into the big wide world, the family tradition seems to have ended for ever.

The Ice Cream Makers describes the fate of two brothers whose lives are bound up together, both of whom have made sacrifices on their chosen paths: the family man who slaves away all day over an ice cream machine and the lonely poetry lover who is only permitted to be an uncle to his own son.

The narrative is richly laced with incisive accounts of poetry festivals and anecdotes, some mythical, about ice cream making. Van der Kwast's tone is infectious, whether he is dealing with first-time happiness, parenthood or missed opportunities.

A line of poetry by Patrick Lane, a favourite of Giovanni's, resonates through the book: 'What do you do with the parts of yourself you have lost?' This sets a melancholy undertone to the novel's otherwise light-hearted style. The result is a wonderful mix of flavours worthy of master ice cream maker Luca.

Mama Tandoori, Ernest van der Kwast's (b. 1981) breakthrough novel, enjoyed huge success in the Netherlands and Italy, selling over 100,000 copies. In 2012 he produced the novella *Giovanna's Navel*, the German translation of which was published by Mare in early 2015. His fluid, sensual style has charmed critics everywhere. As German daily FAZ put it 'Ernest van der Kwast flutters around his storyline like a butterfly and his playfulness delights the reader.' He works in his hometown Rotterdam as a programmer and presenter.



Publishing details

De IJsmakers (2015)
304 pp., 87,899 words
13,000 copies sold

Publisher

De Bezige Bij
Marijke Nagtegaal,
m.nagtegaal@debezigebij.nl
Uta Matten, u.matten@debezigebij.nl

Rights sold

Germany (btb)

Translated titles

Mama Tandoori: Translated into Italian as *Mama Tandoori* (ISBN, 2011).

Giovanna's navel: Translated into German as *Fünf Viertelstunden bis zum Meer* (Marebuch, 2015). Also into Italian (ISBN, 2013).

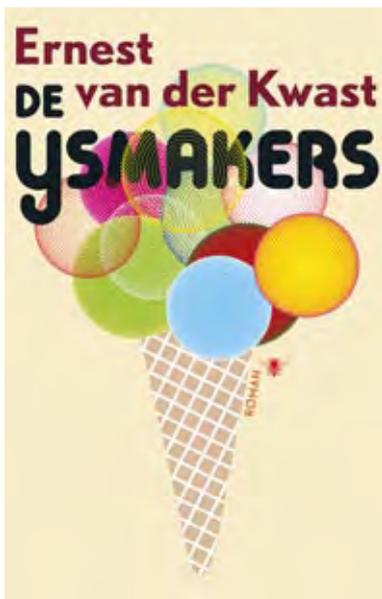
Sample translation available

'The Ice Cream Makers is a rewarding novel. A second reading reveals just how perceptively it pits family pressures against the desire for freedom down the generations. The contrast between Giovanni's world of high culture and that of his ice cream making brother Luca is cleverly realised. Van der Kwast leaves the reader in no doubt as to who the real poet is: the ice cream maker, of course.'

– NRC Handelsblad

'It is an ode to poetry and to women. A tale of the tradition of ice cream making and the price it exacts. But above all, The Ice Cream Makers is a book that sweeps you along like an avalanche.'

– Noordhollands Dagblad



Successful Titles

Making a Splash on the International Literary Market

Prizewinning novel about alienation and migration

Tommy Wieringa

These Are the Names

(*Dit zijn de namen*, 2012)
200,000 copies sold

Rights: Marijke Nagtegaal, m.nagtegaal@debezigebij.nl, Uta Matten, u.matten@debezigebij.nl
Rights sold: Argentina (Edhasa), Australia (Scribe), France (Actes Sud), Germany (Hanser), Hungary (Libri), Italy (Iperborea)

'Within pages it becomes clear that this is a rare novel possessed with a sense of place and a purpose. In ways a parable about displacement, encompassing the emotional, the spiritual and the psychological, it has cohesion and urgency, balancing the ordinary with the extreme horrors of a news bulletin.'
– *Irish Times*



'The design is structurally sound and highly intelligent. Wieringa will make you think and keep you reading eagerly to the final page.'
– *Times Literary Supplement*

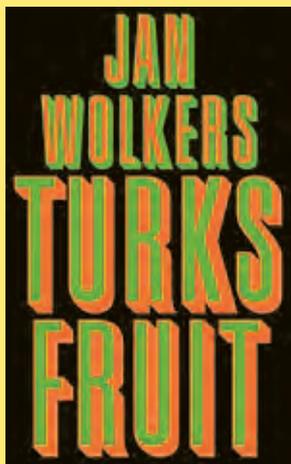
Legendary love story of a doomed relationship between an artist and a daughter of the bourgeoisie

Jan Wolkers

Turkish Delight

(*Turks fruit*, 1969)
600,000 copies sold

Rights: Marleen Seegers, marleen.seegers@2seasagency.com
Rights sold: Argentina (Libros del Zorzal), Bulgaria (Literaturen Forum), Croatia (AGM), Germany (Alexander), Finland (Otava), France (Belfond), Greece (Potamos), Italy (ScritturaPura), Japan (Kadokawa Shoten), Lithuania (Alma Littera), Poland (Iskry), Portugal (Casa Portuguesa), Slovenia (Zalozba Obzorja), Slovakia (Slovart), South Korea (Hyandae Minhak), Sweden (Forum), Turkey (Versus), UK (Calder and Boyars), US (Tin House Books)



'Like Henry Miller, Wolkers writes with a tremendous appetite for life and a painterly approach to the sensuous.'
– *New York Times Book Review*

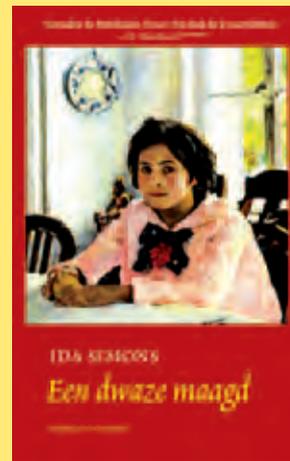
A rediscovered classic about the growing pains of a Jewish girl between the world wars

Ida Simons

A Foolish Virgin

(*Een dwaze maagd*, 1959)
25,000 copies sold

Rights: laurens@cossee.com
Rights sold: Armenia (Antares), Brazil (Objetiva), Catalonia (Empúries), Czech Republic (Pistorius & Olsanska), Denmark (Klim), Germany (Luchterhand), France (Belfond), Iceland (Bjartur), Israel (Yedioth Books), Italy (Rizzoli), Norway (Pax), Rumania (Polirom), Spain (Alfaguara), UK (MacLehose Press), Sweden (Natur och Kultur)



'Ida Simons speaks with an assured and individual voice in this sensitive yet unsentimental work. It is incomprehensible that this book hasn't been read for many years.'
– *NRC Handelsblad*

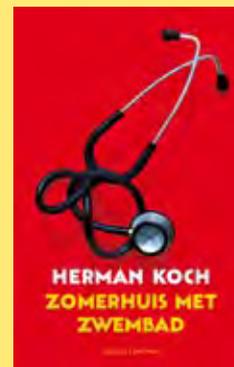
Ferocious contemporary satire about a vengeful doctor who drives an actor friend to his death

Herman Koch

Summerhouse with Swimming Pool

(*Zomerhuis met zwembad*, 2011)
350,000 copies sold

Rights: Christel Meijer, christel@sharedstories.nl
Rights sold: Australia (Text), Brazil (Intrinseca), Bulgaria (Colibri), Catalonia (Ara Llibres), China (Shanghai 99), Czech Republic (Barrister & Principal), Finland (Siltala), France (Belfond), Germany (Kiwi), Greece (Metaixmio), Hungary (Európa), Iceland (JPV Publishers), Israel (Keter), Italy (Neri Pozza), Norway (Pax), Poland (Media Rodzina), Portugal (Objetiva), Russia (Azbooka-Atticus), South Africa (Protea Boekhuis), South Korea (Eunhaeng Namu Publishing Co), Spain (Salamandra), Turkey (Doğan Kitap), UK (Atlantic Books), US (Hogarth Crown)



'Caustic. Poisonous. I couldn't stop reading. Ghoulishly fascinating.'
– *Washington Post*

'A compelling family drama. The narrator's voice is full of wit and fury and angry feelings – it's a thriller with literary quality, raising moral questions.'
– *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*

The Book of Genesis retold from the perspective of the underdogs

Guus Kuijer

The Bible for Unbelievers
(*De bijbel voor ongelovigen*, 2012)

30,000 copies sold

Rights: Patricia de Groot,
p.de.groot@querido.nl

Rights sold: Germany (Kunstmann),
US (Seven Stories Press)

'A completely original literary undertaking which knows no equal.'
– *De Groene Amsterdammer*

'Kuijer's retelling is merciless.'
– *NRC Handelsblad*



Graphic novel about the life of the old master from the Golden Age

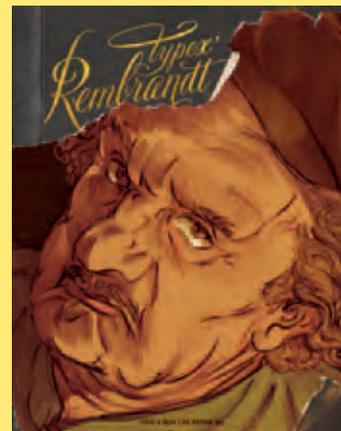
Typex

Rembrandt
(*Rembrandt*, 2013)

Mentioned as one of the best graphic novels of 2014 by *The Guardian* and Creative Bloq

Rights: Marijke Nagtegaal,
m.nagtegaal@debezige.bij,
Uta Matten,
u.matten@debezigebij.nl

Rights sold: China (Buclas),
France (Casterman), Hungary
(Libri), South Korea (Green
Knowledge), Spain (Norma),
UK (SelfMadeHero)



'The drawings are fantastic: they teem with life (and, sometimes, with rats). Typex, It feels outrageous to write it but I think Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn would have adored this book. He would have admired its draughtsmanship and its wit and – given how many times he painted himself – he would have loved the fact that he is its star, warts and all.'
– *The Guardian*

A classic psychological novel about three friends in love with the same woman

Stephan Enter

Grip
(*Grip*, 2011)
50,000 copies sold

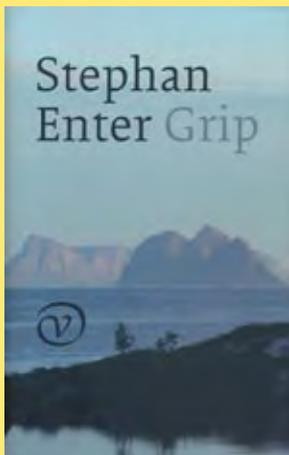
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laura@thesusijnagency.com

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Hungary (Gondolat), Italy
(Iperborea), Norway (Font Forlag)

'This novel is a gem.'
– *Focus*

'Transcends the boundaries between the physical and interior landscape: a remarkable book with images of great evocative power.'
– *Il Manifesto*



Successful debut about a Turkish family drama in the 1960s

Murat Isik

Lost Ground
(*Verloren grond*, 2012)
20,000 copies sold

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bisseling@sebes.nl

Rights sold: Germany (Arche),
Sweden (Fakta 2244), Turkey
(Koton Kitap)

'When we really tell our own story we also tell everyman's story. That is why Isik's story sounds so familiar.'
– *Ece Temelkuran*



Top 10 Translated Dutch Fiction

1



Max Havelaar (Max Havelaar),
Multatuli (1860)

- 2 *Het diner* (The Dinner), Herman Koch (2009)
- 3 *Rituelen* (Rituals), Cees Nooteboom (1980)
- 4 *De aanslag* (The Assault), Harry Mulisch (1982)
- 5 *Het volgende verhaal* (The Following Story), Cees Nooteboom (1991)
- 6 *De passievrucht* (A Father's Affair), Karel Glastra van Loon (1999)
- 7 *Komt een vrouw bij de dokter* (Love Life), Kluun (2003)
- 8 *Het huis van de moskee* (The House of the Mosque), Kader Abdolah (2005)
- 9 *De tweeling* (The Twins), Tessa de Loo (1993)
- 10 *Boven is het stil* (The Twin), Gerbrand Bakker (2006)

Source:
Vertalingendatabase.nl

Jeroen Thijssen

Solitude

Intriguing family novel set against the background of Dutch colonial history

Frank and Robert Bramme live in a squat. The brothers grew up at their grandfather's house after their parents died young. The grandfather has dementia and has been admitted to a nursing home. Managing his affairs and having no money themselves, the brothers find themselves forced to give up the old house. While clearing it out they discover a collection of cardboard boxes in the attic. This is the starting point of a suspenseful story that takes the reader back to Indonesia in the 19th century, where the brothers' ancestors ran a family plantation. With this rich and atmospheric novel, Jeroen Thijssen follows in the footsteps of Multatuli and Hella S. Haasse.

The books, seaman's books, letters and diaries from the boxes become the raw material for a book Frank writes about the history of his family and a plantation called Solitude in the Dutch East Indies, now Indonesia. His story starts with the brothers Hendrik and Theo. They served in the East Indies Army and took part in the Lombok Expedition of 1894. Having survived the bloody battle at Tjakra Negara where the army was lured into a trap and forced to retreat, they were among the same troops when the strong-

hold was recaptured six months later. Entering the Raja's place, Hendrik and Theo happen upon a wealth of precious stones and steal them.

With capital from the stones, Theo buys the daily paper *The Typhoon*, and Hendrik a plantation called Solitude, far from Batavia. Both Theo and Hendrik have sons, who more or less follow in their father's footsteps. Theo's son shares his father's liking for drink and brothels, while Hendrik's son Simon takes over the running of the plantation after his father contracts a muscle-wasting disease. During the Japanese occupation and the Indonesian War of Independence that follows, Simon in particular runs into difficulties. He's a proud plantation owner but also feels a strong connection with local villagers and with Barep, who turns out to be his half-brother.

Thijssen describes the present life of the brothers in their squat and that of their forebears in the Indies with an equal feel for atmosphere and detail. He cleverly interweaves colonial relationships, and in a sense their indictment, with the fate of his characters, postponing with masterly control the revelation of dark family secrets. A wonderful page-turner to the very end.



Publishing details

Solitude (2014)
464 pp, 150,000 words
6,000 copies sold

Publisher

Nieuw Amsterdam
Janneke Louman,
jlouman@nieuwamsterdam.nl
www.nieuwamsterdam.nl

Rights

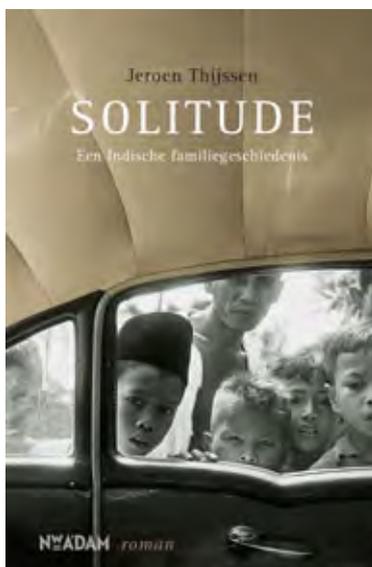
Marleen Seegers
2Seas Agency
marleen.seegers@2seasagency.com

Sample translation available

'With this story Thijssen gains a place for himself in the literary tradition that comes to terms with Dutch colonial history, along with Hella Haasse, Couperus, Multatuli and, especially, E. du Perron's *Country of Origin* (1935) in which engagement is seen from various perspectives.'
– *de Volkskrant*

'Thijssen's knowledge of history is astonishing. [...] His ability to tell a gripping story that continually takes new twists and turns makes the book irresistible and his evocation of characters draws us in.'
– *NRC Handelsblad*

'*Solitude* overflows with suggestive and cleverly concealed family mysteries.'
– *Trouw*



Jeroen Thijssen (b. 1959) is the author of *A Trip Around Gaul* (2010) and the short-story collections *The Marshall and Other Stories* (1998) and *The Children of the Triple A* (2009). After *Brother* (2007), *Solitude* (2014) is his second novel. *Taste*, a book about food and flavour, will be published in the spring.

Photo: Keke Keukelaar

Adriaan van Dis

I Will Return

A mother confides her deepest secrets to her son in exchange for a peaceful death

Adriaan van Dis has explored his family history before but never so unflinchingly as in this memoir. In the final phase of his mother's life she is at last prepared to talk about living through three wars and the death of her first husband, beheaded in a Japanese internment camp. Adriaan van Dis pieces together her past and his own in a brave and uncompromising book.

The author's relationship with his mother was always troubled. Critical rather than tender, she refused to open herself up to others and never talked about the past. It was unclear whether this was simply her nature or the fallout from her wartime ordeals and her difficult marriage.

The mother in *I Will Return* clings to her secrets and threatens to take them to the grave with her, while the author is intent on getting at the truth. The two enter into an almost Faustian pact: he will be allowed to take on the role of journalist and pry into her past if he promises to help her end her life. With her 80th birthday approaching, she feels she has nothing left to live for, though plenty still remains unsaid.

The first part of the memoir takes place after the author's two sisters have died. His mother, now in a rest home, comes across as distant and heartless, even refusing to talk about her two dead daughters, and dwelling on her own suffering: fleeting impressions of hard times, long years of loneliness and condemnation of her mixed marriage.

The mother is shrewd, controlling and manipulative with her son in the way she gives and withholds information. Van Dis writes beautifully on the subject of remembering and forgetting, words that ring with insight and emotion even when they come from his reluctant mother's lips. 'That's old age,' she said. 'Your character doesn't wear away as you get older, it condenses, the essence rises to the surface. We are all reduced to the stock cube of our own soup.'

I Will Return is an exceptionally courageous book about mothers and sons, about war and coming to terms with life and with death. While the narrator sees death as the end, it is the mother's firm belief in reincarnation that gives the book its title. In a dreamlike closing sequence, the deceased mother does indeed return.

Adriaan van Dis (b. 1946) was raised in the Dutch town of Bergen along with his half-sisters, the children of parents with an Indonesian background, traumatised by war. He debuted in 1983 with the novella *Nathan Sid*. After making a name for himself as a travel writer with books such as *Het beloofde land* (The Promised Land) and *In Afrika* (In Africa), he sealed his reputation with the award-winning bestseller *Indische duinen* (My Father's War, 1994), a novel about the Dutch-born son of an Indonesian family who grows up in an atmosphere of repressed suffering. His later novels such as *Familieziek* (Family Fray, 2004), *De wandelaar* (The Walker, 2007) and *Tikkop* (Betrayal, 2010) have all sold well and received glowing reviews. His work has been translated into many languages.



Publishing details

Ik kom terug (2014)
288 pp., 63,000 words
90,000 copies sold

Publisher

Atlas Contact
www.atlascontact.nl

Rights

Shared Stories
Hayo Deinum,
hayo@sharedstories.nl
www.sharedstories.nl

Translated titles

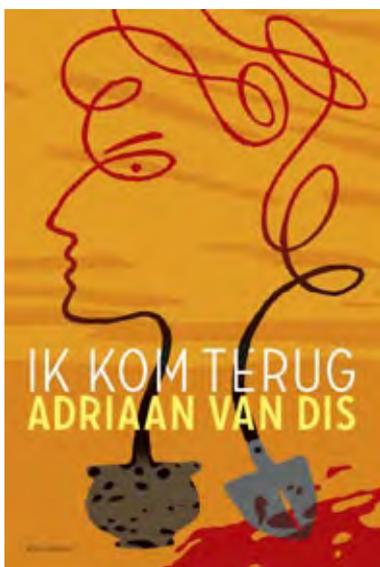
Please see
www.vertalingendatabase.nl.

Sample translation available

'Fascinating stories, memories, glimpses, images that make a deep impression on the reader. This uncomfortable portrait, wrestled from his past, his mother and most of all from himself, shows Adriaan van Dis at his literary best.'
– Vrij Nederland

'He presents his struggle with maternal love magnificently: he has to force himself to do right by her, to walk in her shoes. After all, as a grown man shouldn't he be capable of a normal, reasonable, adult relationship with her? It is honest. And gripping till the very last page.'
– NRC Handelsblad

'Entertaining, painful and gruesome by turns, and often incredibly moving.'
– HP/De Tijd



Jan Arends

Keefman

A classic, harshly critical and impassioned protest against the psychiatric establishment

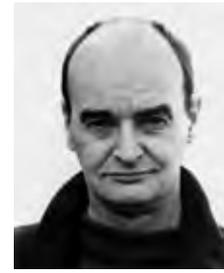
Jan Arends was a gifted poet and writer of short stories but also an alcoholic and a sociopath who spent much of his short life in psychiatric care. These aspects of his complex personality come together brilliantly in *Keefman*, a collection of short stories published in the heyday of the anti-psychiatry movement. It has since become a literary classic.

The book consists of two extended narratives and eleven shorter pieces, almost all focusing on characters who walk the thin line between madness and normality. The elderly man in 'The Suicide' pretends to hang himself so that he can be admitted to an asylum to escape his domineering wife. In 'The Newspaper Eater' the protagonist subjects himself to humiliation at the hands of a couple he regards as his friends. Mr Koopman in 'The Breakfast' tries to flee the squalor of a psychiatric clinic by climbing up a tree.

The two longer stories are also the most powerful. 'Bedsit Bachelor' is an office

clerk's disturbing account of a descent into poverty and degradation when in the grip of depression. The title story 'Keefman' takes the form of six monologues in which a patient rails against his doctor. Keefman is angered by society's intolerance of mental illness and regards psychiatrists as the extension of an uncaring regime. He accuses doctors of refusing to listen even though 'people with a psychiatric disorder have an even greater need to be understood than others'. Instead, those in genuine need of treatment are locked up along with the dregs of society and strapped into straitjackets to keep them under control.

Keefman's angry tone of voice is clearly unbalanced yet there is no denying the truth in his embittered attack on the system. Almost fifty years on, conditions in most psychiatric institutions have changed considerably but Arends' literary plea to treat the patient as a human being remains as topical and relevant as ever.



Publishing details

Keefman (1972)
166 pp., 60,000 words

Rights

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Jan Arends (1925-74) was raised in a Catholic care home and went on to lead a turbulent life, stumbling from one short-lived job to the next. All the while he wrote poems and stories that focused on his battles with officialdom and the medical establishment. He committed suicide in 1974, days before the publication of his final collection of poems *Lunchpauze gedichten* (Lunch-break Poems). He soon became a cult figure whose work has since been rediscovered by generation after generation. *Keefman* has achieved classic status and is now in its eleventh edition.

'Books such as *Keefman* are few and far between. In my view the Nobel Prize would not be too great an honour for an entire oeuvre as good as the title story or a story such as 'Bedsit Bachelor'.'
– Rudy Kousbroek

'This is prose that inflicts pain. It moves you and, most important of all, it stays with you. [...] *Keefman* should be compulsory reading for every aspiring psychiatrist.'
– Thomas Heerma van Voss in *De Correspondent*

Photo: Eddy de Jongh

Aimée de Jongh

The Return of the Honey-Buzzard

Psychological thriller in graphic form from the Netherlands' youngest and most promising talent

The Return of the Honey-Buzzard is a visual masterpiece of magic-realist tension. Its apparently sketchy yet precise style, its subject matter and its filmic narrative are reminiscent of Craig Thompson's *Blankets* and Hayao Miyazaki's *Spirited Away*.

Simon Antonisse, and his wife Laura, had reluctantly taken on his parents' bookshop. Now that it is threatened with closure because of the financial crisis, he becomes increasingly self-absorbed. This is made worse by his witnessing a suicide in the woods on his way one day to the building where his books are stored. Unable to open up and share his experiences with others, he spends more and more time in the storeroom where he

withdraws in his mind to his schooldays and his friend Ralph, who died while trying to take revenge on the bullies who were making his life a misery.

This repressed trauma of childhood gradually turns Simon's life into a nightmare. Then he meets the mysterious Regina, with whom he feels a close bond. She alone seems able to bring him comfort and peace. But who is Regina?

Aimée de Jongh's decision to draw in taut black-and-white with a powerful narrative rhythm, places the focus entirely on Simon's inner world. She brilliantly weaves together the financial crisis, bullying, friendship and coping with trauma and shows true mastery of the graphic narrative.



Publishing details

De terugkeer van de wespindief (2014)
160 pp, 3,744 words
b/w illustrations

Rights

De Bezige Bij
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Rights sold

Belgium (Dargaud)



Aimée de Jongh (b. 1988) is a prize-winning animator, cartoon-strip artist and illustrator, who is influenced by European graphic novels, manga and Japanese animated films and commands a wide range of styles and techniques. She has created a daily cartoon strip for the newspaper *Metro* and a music video for Wende Snijders. Her animated film *Aurora* was shown in seventy-one Dutch cinemas. Her work has been exhibited in The Whitney Museum of American Art in New York and the Kulturmuseum in Oslo, among others. *The Return of the Honey-Buzzard* is her first graphic novel.

'An extremely mature debut. Makes you wish that far more graphic novels of this standard would appear in the Netherlands.'

– *NRC Handelsblad*

'A promise comes to fulfilment.'

– *De Standaard*

'The realistic black-and-white drawings are reminiscent of Craig Thompson and thoroughly convincing.'

– *De Groene Amsterdammer*

Photo: Alain Lemmens

Anita Terpstra

Different

A masterly psychological thriller about the return of a missing child

Rising thriller-writer Anita Terpstra draws here on a true story about a Dutch boy who walked into a Berlin police station a few years ago claiming that his father had held him captive in a forest for years. This later proved to be untrue.

Different opens at a cracking pace with Alma Meester desperately searching woodland for her son Sander who, with his best friend Maarten, has gone missing during an orienteering game. Alma's husband Linc and Sander's older sister Iris, who were in charge of the game, lost track of them. When Maarten is found dead a few hours later, it's clear that the boys did not simply lose their way.

After this dark opening, Terpstra switches to the present, and six years later a boy is digging a pit in a wood intended

for Eelco, a fifty-year-old man with whom he's been living in isolation for several years. In the next chapter he calmly walks out of the forest to report to a German police station, claiming to be Sander.

Where many thrillers end – with the discovery of the missing person – *Different* is only just getting started. Sander's sister Iris notices immediately that Sander has changed. 'How do we know this is Sander?' she asks, even though both the missing child and the boy have a finger that's one bone short. But the question has been asked and doubt is sown. What really happened, that night in the woods? Is the boy truly Sander? With her brilliantly constructed story, Terpstra has painted a compassionate picture of the absolute but lacerating love of a mother for her son.



Publishing details

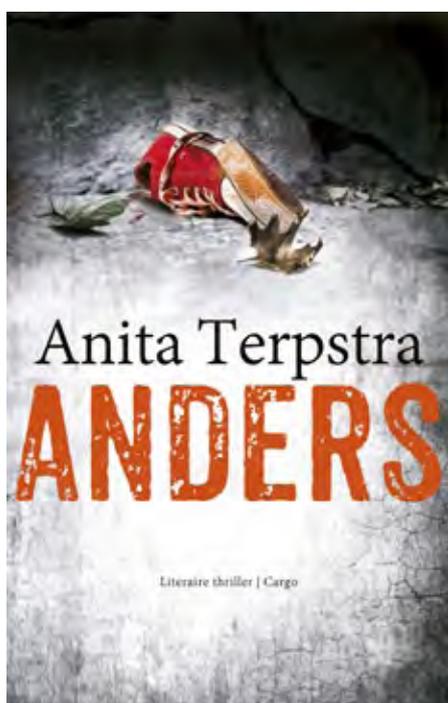
Anders (2014)
302 pp, 83,000 words

Rights

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Uta Matten,
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www.uitgeverijcargo.nl

Rights sold

Germany (Blanvalet / Random House), France (Denoël)



Anita Terpstra (b. 1974) studied journalism and art history. In 2009 she made her debut as a crime author with *Night Flight*, which was nominated for the Shadow Prize and the annual prize of the Crimezone website. After *Overpowered* (2011) and *Beloved* (2011), her well-received *Different* was published in 2014.

'A thriller as it should be: a story that makes you forget your surroundings. Just like in the work of her Scandinavian colleagues, the world depicted in *Anders* is tough and dark, sometimes even gruesome.'

– *Leeuwarder Courant*

'Anita Terpstra is one of the top thriller authors in the Netherlands.'

– *Crimezone*

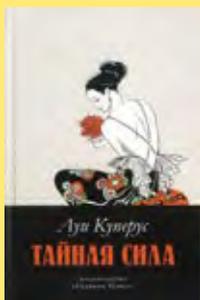
'Clever how Terpstra manages to build up the tension and the plot.'

– *HDC Media*

Photo: Billie Glaser

Recent Translations

This is a selection of recently published translations from the Dutch. For more information please go to our online database of translations www.vertalingendatabase.nl.



Louis Couperus
The Hidden Force

[Tajnaja sita]
Translated into Russian by Irina Michajlova for Helicon Plus, 2014.



Lieneke Dijkzeul
What Remains

In der Stille der Tod
Translated into German by Christiane Burkhardt for DTV, 2015.



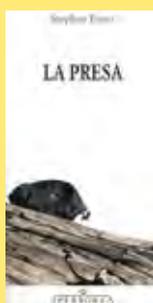
Guido van Driel
Guests

Les visiteurs
Translated into French by Daniel Cunin for L'Agume, 2014.



Anna Enquist
Counterpoint

[Kontrapoenkt]
Translated into Hebrew by Ran HaCohen for Hakibbutz Hameuchad, 2015.



Stephan Enter
Grip

La presa
Translated into Italian by Giorgio Testa for Iperborea, 2014.



Anne-Gine Goemans
Gliding Flight

Translated into English by Nancy Forest-Flier for World Editions, 2015.



Saskia Goldschmidt
The Hormone Factory

Die hormoonfabriek
Translated into Afrikaans by Daniel Hugo for Protea Boekhuis, 2015.



Murat Isik
Lost Ground

Jorden vi miste
Translated into Swedish by Per Holmer for 2244 Publishers, 2014.



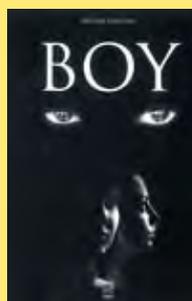
Nescio
Amsterdam Stories

Storie di Amsterdam
Translated into Italian by Fulvio Ferrari for Iperborea, 2015.



Jan Jacob Slauerhoff
The Forbidden Kingdom

Translated into Arabic by Mostafa Mahmood Mohamad for Afaq Books, 2015.



Wytse Versteeg
Boy

Translated into Turkish by Erhan Gürer for Kahve Yayinlari, 2014.



J.J. Voskuil
The Office

Das Büro 2- Schmutzige Hände
Translated into German by Gerd Busse for Verbrecher Verlag, 2014.

Jeroen Brouwers
The Wood

Bregje Hofstede
The Sky over Paris

Gustaaf Peek
Goddess, Hero

Kees 't Hart
Teatro Olimpico

Ernest van der Kwast
The Ice Cream Makers

Jeroen Thijssen
Solitude

Adriaan van Dis
I Will Return

Jan Arends
Keefman

Aimée de Jongh
The Return of the Honey-Buzzard

Anita Terpstra
Different

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David Doherty, Liz Waters

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Victor Schiferli
www.flickr.com/victorschiferli

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Platform P

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