

NEW

DOCTOR



Dutch Foundation
for Literature

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FICTION

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FAQ

This new edition of New Dutch Fiction once again presents a selection of books recently published in the Netherlands, books that have been included for their artistic and commercial success.

Who makes the selection?

Our aim is to showcase the best fiction from the Netherlands. Most titles have been published recently and done well in terms of reviews, sales and awards. Equally important is the question: 'Does it travel?' We work with an advisory panel consisting of a critic, a translator, a bookseller, a journalist and an academic, who give us recommendations and input.

Do you work 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.

Can we get personal recommendations by your staff?

Of course, and we are happy to meet with you at different bookfairs around the world.

Are all the books in your brochure eligible for a grant?

They are, with a maximum subsidy of 100% of the translation costs for classics and 70% for fiction, based on the actual fee paid by the publisher, and with a maximum of 10,000 euros per translation grant.

Are books that aren't included in your catalogue eligible for a grant?

Yes. Our decision to provide a grant will be based on three criteria: the literary quality of the book, the status of the publishing house and the quality of the translator.

Can you help us find a translator?

Lists of experienced translators are provided by e-mail. If you wish to work with somebody who is not on our list, we require a sample translation of 20 pages and the translator's CV. How do we apply for a translation subsidy? We need copies of the contracts with the rights holders and the translator, plus the application form. You can submit these through our website: letterenfonds.nl/en/funding. Meetings are held six times a year.

Can we invite a Dutch author for a promotional visit?

If you organise a programme with interviews and readings and offer the author accommodation, we can cover the travel costs: letterenfonds.nl/en/travel-costs.

Manik Sarkar Oxhead



Publishing details

Ossenkop (2024)
176 pages
38,000 words

Publisher

Hollands Diep
Elco Lenstra
elco.lenstra@hollandsdiep.nl

Rights

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

Debut novel about a butcher's son devoted to his job and blind to the world around him

In this superbly written debut, we meet a butcher who lives for his craft – he wants to provide the best meat from animals who have had a good life and are slaughtered as humanely as possible. After finishing butchery college, he will be taking over his parents' business. He has a brilliant future ahead of him.

As a young boy, Rensing grows interested in the question of how to end an animal's life as skilfully as possible. One day, a bird hits the window of his classroom. Their teacher snaps the bird's neck to put it out of its misery. The students are shocked – how could he do such a thing? A little later, Rensing says, in what he believes to be a quite normal contribution to the conversation, 'He should have just smashed its brains in from behind with a little hammer.'

From that moment on he is seen as an outsider. He graduates from his butchery course with top marks and the time has come for his parents to pass on the reins of the family business. He needs a woman by his side to help keep things going, and his parents have someone in mind, Jacomine, whom he ends up asking out on a date. They become involved, though they aren't in love. Jacomine starts working behind the counter and before long knows the locals better than her fiancé does.

Then Rensing finds himself facing two setbacks: his father dies suddenly and the town gets a supermarket. He is the owner of the shop now, but the business is barely breaking even. Rensing believes in the quality of his pricy meat and tries to restructure the business. After taking out a loan he finds himself saddled with a heavy debt, which leads to discord between him and Jacomine. And then a second supermarket opens nearby.

'For you, there are only two people in this world: you and not-you,' Jacomine tells him one day, before packing her bags. The times are changing: Rensing begins stocking meat substitutes to cater to flexitarians but he continues to struggle financially, and now he's on his own. 'Real loneliness comes from within and there's nothing, nothing, nothing that can make it any better,' he reflects. That thought ultimately leads to an act through which he becomes one with his beloved animals.

'A brilliant debut about an endearingly ambitious butcher. Sarker's prose is impressive, and he is a skilled storyteller: building suspense, raising the stakes (cliffhangers!), letting the reader read between the lines and drawing wholly believable characters.'

Het Parool

'A classic rise-and-fall narrative. Love of animals, bloodlust, craftsmanship, eroticism – in the book's finest moments, all of these come together.'

NRC

'Sarkar is an unflinching storyteller. You won't find a single comma out of place. A book to read and reread, again, and again and again.'

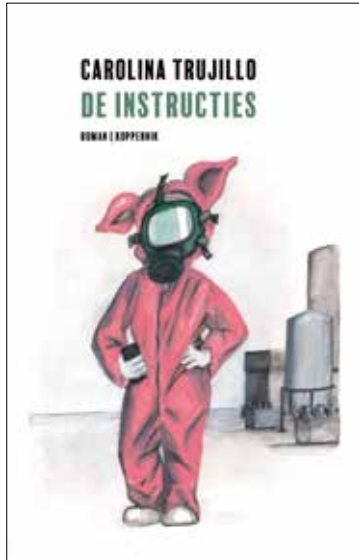
Gijs Wilbrink

Manik Sarkar (b. 1973) is a writer and a literary translator from French. He has translated authors including Philippe Claudel and Joël Dicker and teaches at the Dutch Literary Translation Academy (Vertalersvakschool) in Amsterdam. *Oxhead* is shortlisted for the 2024 Bronze Owl.



Carolina Trujillo

The Instructions



Publishing details

De instructies (2024)
375 pages
108,765 words

Publisher

Kopernik
Chris de Jong
chris.de.jong@kopernik.nl

Rights

Cossee International Agency
Stella Rieck
rieck@cossee.com

Hilarious account of the trials and tribulations of a guerrilla-style group of animal rights activists

‘You’re not alone, you’re part of something bigger.’ This is Mol talking, a slightly nerdy teacher who finds himself getting involved with a group of radical animal rights activists at the behest of his childhood friend, Nora. The story begins with him trying to clamber out of a ditch in pitch blackness, dressed in a pink pig suit after an arson attack on the biggest slaughterhouse in the Netherlands.

From his prison cell – we know how things turned out from the beginning – he tries to do what Nora has told him to do: draw up instructions for future activists. But instead, he ends up writing his autobiography and a detailed portrait of all the zany characters in the group, reminiscent of *Money Heist* or *Ocean’s Eleven*: from Nora, the guns-blazing leader he has a secret crush on, to her boyfriend, the crazy explosives guy, and the femme fatale of the gang.

It turns out they each have their own reasons for getting involved. Mol, for example, has long felt like an outsider. As the driver, he is only tangentially involved in the group’s actions at first. He becomes more invested when he realises the appalling conditions animals are forced to endure, and he stops eating meat.

The activists’ shared anger about factory farming becomes palpable in the vivid descriptions of the destruction they wreak. Unsettling passages about the conditions in slaughterhouses reveal Trujillo’s depth of knowledge on the subject. More than in her previous novels, which were clearly inspired by the Latin American tradition, *The Instructions* follows in the footsteps of socially engaged writers like Mark Twain and Multatuli, whose characters are flawed and complex.

Mol also quotes Twain: ‘The two most important days in your life are when you’re born and when you find out why,’ only to conclude, ‘You just hope that doesn’t apply to the animals in slaughterhouses.’ *The Instructions* is the story of an impossible love and the desire to be part of something bigger – but above all, it’s a searing indictment of animal suffering.

‘Trujillo’s writing is vivid, light-footed, with a surprisingly subtle tenderness and sensitivity that shines through between the lines. Constantly tightropeing the line between comedy and tragedy, she shows the ways that people try to protect themselves in desperate situations. This is literature at its finest.’

De Groene Amsterdammer

‘A rollercoaster ride that keeps flipping you upside down – but it’s also a manifesto. All this silly violence from a few radical animal rights activists – it’s easy to shake our heads from the safety and comfort of our armchairs. But Trujillo portrays the reality of activism on the ground, which makes this book truly unique.’

Trouw

‘You go from laughing out loud one moment to squeezing your eyes shut the next because you don’t want to acknowledge the reality of the meat industry.’

De Volkskrant

Carolina Trujillo (b. 1970) is a Dutch-Uruguayan writer and columnist. After graduating from the Amsterdam Film Academy, she published *De bastaard van Mal Abrigo* (The Bastard of Mal Abrigo, 2002) in Dutch, followed by the novels *De terugkeer van Lupe Garcia* (The Return of Lupe Garcia, 2009) – which was nominated for the AKO Literature Prize – *De zangbreker* (The Songbreaker, 2014) and *Vrije radicalen* (Free Radicals, 2017). In 2019, she earned the Jan Hanlo Essay Prize for *Meisjes in blessuretijd* (Girls During Injury Time). She also writes columns about politics, sports and factory farming for *NRC*.



Rinske Bouwman

Hard Skin



Publishing details

Een soort eelt (2024)
192 pages
45,500 words

Publisher

Orlando
Jacqueline Smit
jacquelinesmit@uitgeverijorlando.nl

Rights

Shared Stories
Hayo Deinum
hayo@sharedstories.nl

A woman undergoes a magical metamorphosis into a yak in a captivating story about loss and grief

Sarlag is a 26-year-old woman working in the freezer section of a grocery store somewhere in the middle of the Netherlands. She seems completely ordinary. With a cool, detached gaze, she observes her surroundings and thinks about yaks, those loyal animals with their white fur that live on the steppes of Mongolia, where she grew up.

She looks back on her childhood: climbing volcanoes, riding horses, a little brother she loves to play with, a father who is a 'cloud-chaser' with the ability to conjure rain. It's a world full of magic. The warm animal fur that little Sarlag could sink her hands into contrasts with the frozen products in the grocery store, which she moulds into fantastical shapes before putting them back into the freezers.

Why does she live so far away from her family? The reason is revealed halfway through the book: her brother died in a car accident. Her father, who was behind the wheel, refused to speak of what happened and even stopped talking altogether. It's a universal story: people who are incapable of dealing with their grief and instead run away from it or change who they are completely. Sarlag closes herself off from her surroundings: 'I want to be alone, but preferably with other people around me.'

But one way or another, grief will find its way to the surface. Her nails become hard and gnarled and long white hair starts growing on her stomach and back – a layer of down that keeps getting thicker. Is this really happening? Slowly but surely, Sarlag begins to change into a yak... She leaves the house and runs all the way out of the city, because as a yak she can't possibly stay where she is.

Bouwman's tone is dark and light at the same time. Gripping and moving, this highly original novel about grief and trauma is an ode to the imagination – a wonderful combination of the Dutch down-to-earth mentality and the magic of old Mongolian stories.

'A bold, inventive novel, though the writer's restraint almost obfuscates just how daring it is.'

de Volkskrant

'It's impressive how Bouwman builds the kind of suspense that makes you want to keep reading, both through the way she breadcrumbs information and through her vivid, visceral prose.'

Trouw

'A wildly original debut.'

VPRO Gids

'A wholly original novel about how grief can alienate and transform us. Bouwman is a keen observer who confidently dissects complex emotions with levity and compassion. A unique debut.'

Koen Caris, the author of *Stenen eten* (Eating Rocks)

Rinske Bouwman (b. 1988) is a writer and theatre-maker from Utrecht. Her plays have been performed at numerous festivals and theatres throughout the Netherlands. Her writing is witty and macabre. Grief is a recurring topic in her work – with a light-footed touch and a keen eye for the absurd, she brings a sense of hope to this difficult human experience. Her debut has been nominated for the Anton Wachter Prize for the best debut in the past two years.



Maurits de Bruijn

Men Ruin Everything



Publishing details

Man maakt stuk (2024)
269 pages
63,000 words

Publisher

Das Mag
Daniël van der Meer
daniel@dasmag.nl

Rights

Cossee International Agency
Stella Rieck
rieck@cossee.com

Whip-smart page-turner about an artist who is inspired by a group of loitering teens

David is a visual artist who lives in a manicured neighbourhood 'where the streets smell like diaper cream'. He is neither productive nor successful and has a trivial job in an art gallery. His life changes when a group of rowdy youths start hanging out outside his window every night. David finds himself equal parts annoyed and fascinated.

When his neighbours try to convince him to call the police, he refuses. As a queer man, David knows what it's like to be discriminated against and he doesn't want the same thing to happen to the teens, several of whom are non-white. Instead, he uses them as a source of inspiration for his art. He's particularly drawn to a boy he dubs Romeo, whose butt reminds him of the peach emoji. Unbeknownst to them, he paints a series of portraits of these macho guys in a range of provocative, homoerotic poses, with the title 'Can't Get You Out of My Hood'. When Tom, the curator at his art gallery, puts on a big exhibition of these paintings, David's work draws a lot of attention. Once the youths learn of the paintings, chaos ensues.

To whom does public space belong? Who is allowed to be where, and who is allowed to be what, and on whose terms? As a queer man and as an artist, David is constantly confronted with these questions. He doesn't want to be reduced to his sexual orientation, and he doesn't want to be pigeonholed by other people. Like his friend Sophie, who proclaims that gay men make the best friends because they have such a great sense of humour. Or straight curator Tom, who asks David to dress extra feminine to cater to the gaze of the gallery's clientele. It's discrimination at its most insidious in a heteronormative world.

The novel is written in the form of a long letter from David to Tom. David shares his experiences and his thoughts on taking up space, masculinity, queerness, class, power, hypocrisy, gentrification and art. Maurits de Bruijn is a masterful storyteller. Without coming across as preachy, *Men Ruin Everything* is gripping, witty and topical, full of sharp observations and discomfiting eye-openers.

'De Bruijn has a fresh, compelling voice. His protagonist's rather bland world is contrasted with incisive thoughts and opinions – about appropriation, about queerness, about the hypocrisy of the art world and recollections of his art school years.'

De Groene Amsterdammer

'This book is reminiscent of Jordan Peele's movie *Get Out* and Percival Everett's novel *Erasure*: satire from a marginalized perspective, all the more confronting because of its mordant wit.'

NRC

'A riveting page-turner. A novel with so many layers that readers will find themselves constantly wrongfooted.'

Trouw

'A clever novel about identity politics that steers clear of predictability.'

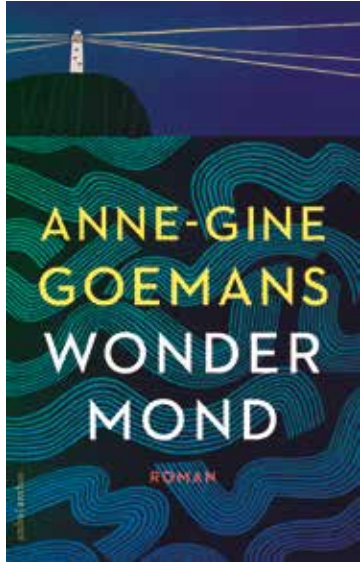
De Volkskrant

Maurits de Bruijn (b. 1984) is queer, Jewish, and grew up in a Protestant family. He works as an essayist, visual artist, podcaster, journalist and editor for an arts magazine. He has written three novels to date. His memoir *Ook mijn holocaust* (My Holocaust Too, 2020), in which he explores how his mother's wartime past shaped his childhood and life, was received to great critical acclaim in the Netherlands and has been translated into German.



Anne-Gine Goemans

Wondermond



Publishing details

Wondermond (2024)
416 pages
106,000 words

Publisher

Ambo Anthos
Susanne Rudloff
srudloff@amboanthos.nl

Translated titles

Gliding Flight (Glijvlucht). UK/
US (World Editions, 2015). Also
in German (Suhrkamp/Insel,
2012), Icelandic (Forlagid, 2013),
Danish (Turbine, 2015) and
Italian (Iperborea, 2014).
Honolulu King. Germany
(Suhrkamp/Insel, 2015).

Breathtaking novel about the collective trauma of a fishing village and a young man who has to reinvent himself

Boye de Koning (18) and his wealthy parents live a carefree life in an upscale seaside town. Everything changes when his father is arrested for large-scale investment fraud and all their assets are seized. Boye and his mother start over in the village of Wondermond in Friesland, where they move in with Boye's grandmother in a tumbledown cottage.

The past and present are inextricably linked in this pacy novel. More than a hundred years before, nearly all the men in the village died in a maritime disaster, including those in Boye's family. After this catastrophe, the widows and daughters lost their livelihoods and often ended up having to resort to sex work.

Boye's great-great-grandmother, Nanna, received regular visits from the pastor, who would rape her ('his fingers digging around in her vagina as if he was looking for pocket change'). When Nanna's fifteen-year-old daughter, Famke, became his maid and was abused too, Nanna took revenge and shoved a hot poker between his legs. Years later, Famke drowned him.

The story of these strong women is seamlessly intertwined with the present-day narrative centred on Boye. He desperately wants to get out of the village, but as time goes by he starts to empathise more and more with the people in the community, who are still crippled by poverty and shame about their past. Thanks to Boye, the final vessel from the fleet that was shipwrecked more than a century before is found. This find gives *Wondermond* an opportunity to process its traumatic past.

Anne-Gine Goemans is a brilliant storyteller who excels at having her characters find their inner strength, elegantly moving between the past and the present. Her characters are vividly drawn and her dialogues are witty and natural. Friesland province and the Frisians, the North Sea as a character in its own right, a gripping plot and the author's lithe prose make *Wondermond* a wonderful feel-good novel.

On *Gliding Flight*:

'A well-balanced, complete novel that stands out because of its range of themes and quirky, eccentric characters whose tragicomic traits are touchingly relatable.'

Dioraphte Prize for Young Adult Literature Jury Report

'It's a funny, tenderhearted book reminiscent of *Little Miss Sunshine* – it has a similar cast of lost, confused, and eccentric characters (...) A sweet, sympathetic novel with a sense of humor.'

Kirkus Reviews

On *Honolulu King*:

'This is what literature is all about: writing something that stands out. Funny and tragic, touching and astute. Exceptionally convincing.'
De Groene Amsterdammer

Anne-Gine Goemans (b. 1971) is an author, journalist and screenwriter. Her debut, *Ziekzoekers* (Disease Seekers), earned the 2008 Anton Wachter Prijs. *Gliding Flight* earned the 2012 Dioraphte Prize for Young Adult Literature and the German M-Pionier Prize for the best literary newcomer. *Honolulu King* (2015), which sold more than 60,000 copies, is being adapted for the screen.



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Toine Heijmans

The Floodplains



Publishing details

Buitendijks (2024)

252 pages

77,000 words

Publisher

Pluim

Evi Hoste

e.hoste@uitgeverijpluim.nl

Rights

Cossee International Agency

Stella Rieck

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A solitary man fights for his existence in the last scrap of unspoiled nature in the Netherlands

After successful novels about the sea and the mountains, Toine Heijmans takes his readers into the foreshore, the area between the dike and the river. Here, Willem de Waal lives in a tent beneath the shelter of a centuries-old black poplar. He is young and strong and lives in harmony with nature, by the rhythm of the tides and the seasons, far away from the hubbub of modern society.

The opening chapters vividly describe how closely connected Willem feels to his surroundings: the allis shads in the river, the herd of Konik horses and his beloved dog, Fido. He forages his meals; what he doesn't eat right away, he stores in a hole under the awning of his tent, an improvised fridge.

He has occasional contact with only a few people, including an artist who comes to draw in the floodplains and an eccentric forester who dreams of living in the outdoors. On his birthday, Willem refuses his parents' offer of a mobile phone. He lives in solitude, not because he hates other people, but because, like Henry David Thoreau in *Walden*, he is 'in search of a deliberate life'.

But then he finds out that the river is going to be diverted to reduce flood risk – and will be running right through the area he calls home. More and more, the outside world starts to encroach upon Willem's solitary life. The land is surveyed, and he is taken to a temporary shelter along with the other people living in the area. Forced to seek out a new place to live, he finds himself needing other people's help and confronting for the first time the frailty of his life off the grid.

With this gripping story, inspired by the author's uncle, Heijmans reflects on the theme of human intervention in nature and the inescapable impact of so-called civilisation on even the most remote places. In the moving dénouement, when the river floods the land, Willem realises he needs the help of others to survive. Like the movie *Into the Wild*, this novel is about a new way of looking at the notion of freedom and a hermit's existence: 'Not bothering anyone is a kind of selfishness too.'

On *Oxygen Debt*:

'Toine Heijmans, himself a passionate mountaineer, tries to recount the inexplicable. But to write a novel of this calibre, passion is not enough. It takes real skill – and Heijmans' pen is powerful, visceral, breathtaking.'

Le Figaro Magazine

'The thoroughly researched history of climbing, along with the philosophical passages that pepper the novel, makes this much more than a conventional hero's journey.'

Frankfurter Rundschau

'A circular journey through the inner summits of life. Calling this a mountaineering story would be doing it a disservice. For Heijmans, the mountains aren't a backdrop or an excuse – they're more like a mirror.'

Il Giornale

Translated Titles

En mer (At Sea). France (Christian Bourgois, 2013).

Also in Danish (Turbine, 2013), German (Arche, 2012), Hungarian (Gondolat, 2013), Italian (Lit Edizioni, 2016), Portuguese (Cosac Naify, 2015), Spanish (Acantilado, 2018), Turkish (Hit Kitap, 2014)

Pristina. France (Christian Bourgois, 2016),

also in German (Edition Amikejo, 2022)

Dette d'oxygène (Oxygen Debt). France (Belfond, 2023).

Also in German (Mairisch Verlag, 2023), Italian (SEM, 2022)

Toine Heijmans (b. 1969) is a writer, journalist and columnist. After writing the non-fiction book *La Vie Vinex* (2007), he made his mark with his debut novel *Op Zee* (At Sea, 2011) which brought international renown, was made into a movie and made him the first Dutch writer to receive the prestigious French Prix Médicis Étranger. It was followed in 2014 by his second novel, *Pristina*, about a refugee and a government agent tasked with issuing deportation orders. In 2019, *Marifoonberichten* (Marine Communications), a collection of Heijmans' best stories about sailing and the sea, was published by Pluim. 2021 saw the publication of *Zuurstofschuld* (Oxygen Debt), a breathtaking story about the friendship between two climbers. Heijmans lives on the outskirts of Amsterdam, close to his sailing boat, which doubles as his writing studio.



Marijke Schermer

In the Eye



Publishing details

In het oog (2024)
192 pages
52.500 words

Publisher

Van Oorschoot
Menno Hartman
menno@vanoorschot.nl

Rights

Cossee International Agency
Stella Rieck
rieck@cossee.com

Translated titles

Breakwater (Noodweer): US/UK (World Editions, 2023), Danish (Grif, 2019), German (Kampa, 2019), Spanish (Alfaguara, 2019).
Love, If That Is What It Is (Liefde, als dat het is): US/UK (World Editions, 2022), German (Kampa, 2021).

A scientist is forced to put all her cards on the table in this psychological page-turner

Relationships are a careful balancing act: what should you say and what is best kept to yourself? Should you share everything with your partner or is it acceptable to keep some things secret? That is the key question in acclaimed author Marijke Schermer's riveting fourth novel.

The protagonist is Nicola, a microbiologist. As a scientist, she looks at the world through a microscope and keeps herself in the background. That serves her well in her work doing research on bacteria, but real relationships with other people need more than that. A partner wants to know about your feelings; friends want to be supported and support you in turn; children crave a sense of warmth and familiarity.

Nicola's closed-off nature has long been a sticking point in her relationship. But when her girlfriend of seven years breaks up with her, Nicola is stunned. Nicola hasn't told her that her application for a research grant has been turned down and for her girlfriend, this is the last straw – if you love someone, you share that kind of news with them.

Newly single and professionally adrift, Nicola decides to simply observe. She continues her research into bacteria in her own time and tampers with some of the results. She low-key stalks a man named Louis; they end up getting involved, but she doesn't tell him much about herself. Letting herself into his house before they've even had a conversation, falsifying data – she figures it's alright to cut some corners every now and then.

This is what makes the novel so exciting. As a reader, you're in Nicola's head, but you soon realise she's an unreliable narrator. Does she have an accurate view of herself? Should we believe her? *In the Eye* is a well-crafted psychological thriller. Schermer's prose often draws comparisons to Rachel Cusk and Zadie Smith, who similarly blur the boundaries between fact and fiction.

Gradually Nicola realises she can't just be an observer. Life demands engagement. Her daughter Marie, a climate activist, demonstrates this when she glues herself to the highway in protest. The novel builds to a powerful dénouement: Nicola finally opens up about her past, making her new relationship a genuine fresh start.

'Marijke Schermer describes emotions in painstaking detail. She observes, dissects, plumbs emotional and psychological depths – and keeps on looking until she's found the perfect words, whittling her prose down to taut, spare observations.'
Het Parool

'In the Eye is that rare thing – a novel you can read and reread while reflecting on your own life and relationships. Cheaper than therapy – and perhaps more effective.'
Trouw

'Keen psychological insight in prose that will remain with you for days.'
Knack Magazine

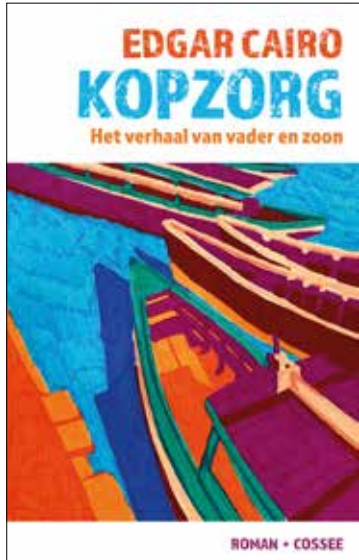
'An excellent novel, packed with emotional truth and an elegantly turned narrative.'
Ian McEwan on *Breakwater*

Marijke Schermer (b. 1975) is a novelist, playwright and director. She was born in Amsterdam, grew up in Groningen and studied at the Arnhem Theatre School (ArtEZ). She has written plays and librettos and directed her own and other people's work. In 2009, she received the Charlotte Köhler Prize. Her works for the stage have been translated into English, German, French and Romanian. She has written short stories and the novels *Mensen in de zon* (People in the Sun, 2013), *Breakwater* (2016, shortlisted for the ECI Prize and longlisted for the Dublin Literary Award) and *Love, If That's What It Is* (2019, shortlisted for the Libris Literature Prize). *In the Eye* is her fourth novel.



Edgar Cairo Temekoe

Classic



Publishing details

Kopzorg. Het verhaal van vader en zoon (1979)
222 pages with an afterword by
Thalia Ostendorf

Publisher

Cossee
Stella Rieck
rieck@cossee.com

Love and distance between a father and son in colonial Suriname in the '50s and '60s

'Trees that don't grow in step with the forest become isolated, wither, die.' This line is emblematic of the novel *Temekoe* (1979) by the Surinamese author Edgar Cairo, which has recently been republished. It tells the story of a complex father-son relationship, while at the same time painting a portrait of a society after the abolition of slavery, which continues to leave profound psychological wounds.

The nameless narrator tells the story of his father Nelis, who is orphaned at a young age and grows up with his aunt in violent, impoverished surroundings. He nonetheless manages to build a life for himself and start his own family. He is particularly devoted to his son – he'll do anything to look out for him and make sure his every need is met. But once his son is grown, that devotion gives way to a mysterious distance.

The leitmotif in the story is urban and rural life in Suriname. He paints a picture of a life of hard work and passionate play, from sexual flings to magic and superstition. Cairo weaves this riotous story from a series of episodes, rooted in the tradition of oral storytelling. The impact of the plantations continues to reverberate through everyday life – people are desperately impoverished and weighed down by a feeling they should 'know their place'.

We also see this reflected in the father's attitude. He's a hard worker, conscientious, sees it as his job to keep a roof over his family's heads and put food on the table, but at the same time he lacks confidence, self-respect and increasingly ignores his own needs. Over time, he comes to understand that he does love his son, but that, because of his background, he doesn't have enough left over for himself. Decades later, his son is desperately trying to understand why his father turned his back on him.

'Cairo considers Suriname's history of slavery to be central to the country's present. This theme – the postcolonial trauma of slavery – makes this book extremely topical (...) A fascinating revelation.'

Trouw

'Being betwixt-and-between is a great topic for a novel, but few authors are able to convey this as powerfully as Edward Cairo in this book.'

NRC

'As I grow older he grows away from me, I from him. To him, I have become like a matchstick that you throw away after use. Done, out! Like a chest, a suitcase that our elders fill in their rituals to say goodbye to the spirits of doom and then dispose of, hide, deep in the forest, so that they might be eternally cured of the burden that torments their lives. Oh, it seems as if, his whole life, again and again, the Black man has to say goodbye to the past, as if his own life were unworthy of him – always a farewell ritual.'

Translation Kristen Gehrman

Edgar Cairo (1948–2000) moved from Surinam to the Netherlands in 1968. He studied in Amsterdam and made his debut with *Temekoe* (1969), a novella written in Sranantongo, which he rewrote in Dutch ten years later as *Kopzorg* (1979). He published novels, short stories, novellas, plays and poetry and was also known for his performances as a poet.



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Mathijs Deen

The Rescuer

Thriller



Publishing details

De redder (2024)
381 pages
62,000 words
20,000 copies sold

Publisher

Afbabet
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Rights

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Schultze-Kossack Agency
On behalf of Mare Verlag
Annette Wolf
annette.wolf@mp-litagency.com

What secrets do the heroes of the sea carry with them?

In Deen's sublime third Wadden Sea thriller, a mystery unfolds against a spectacular backdrop. The psychological depth and literary brilliance of Deen's works are reminiscent of the great Scandinavian authors in the genre. Alongside the murder case – below the surface of the water, if you will – he constructs a riveting psychological drama.

Like other legendary fictional detectives, Liewe Cupido is a man of few words. It's not just about keeping his cards close to his chest – he'd rather keep quiet about painful things, even to himself. That has everything to do with the skeletons from his own closet, especially his father's mysterious death by drowning when Cupido was a teenager, which left him bereft and adrift – and which he still feels a sense of guilt about.

The Rescuer is about a cold case: a body is found off the coast of Britain, a tugboat captain who went missing twenty years earlier after a shipwreck that drew both German and Dutch rescue services. At the time, neither were able to bring him home. The ingredients of the story are vintage Deen: the legal no man's land of the Wadden Islands (Cupido is with the German police, yet grew up on the Dutch island of Texel) and the stunning descriptions of this harsh, stormy landscape, which make the reader yearn to be out there, at the mercy of the elements.

Deen reveals how this decades-old murder turns people's lives upside down – especially within the community of gruff rescue workers on the German island of Norderney. Cupido is assisted by young detective Xander Rimbach, who combines a disarming insecurity with a remarkable intuition.

The Rescuer is a story about pride, poison, grief, parenthood and faith. The mounting suspense reaches fever pitch when Michael Waagmann appears on the scene, an old rescue worker who turns out to be extremely manipulative. The book culminates in a gripping finale that shakes even the unflappable Cupido to his core.

'As usual, Deen's narrative voice is assured and wide-ranging, deftly alternating perspectives without being overly fixated on his detective protagonist, with a keen sense of the idiosyncrasies of the Frisian world between Texel and Flensburg.'

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung

'A lot of crime fiction also makes some kind of statement about the society in which the crimes are being committed. But few authors manage to be as subtle and non-didactic about it as Mathijs Deen in this book.'

Frankfurter Rundschau

'A unique contribution to the Dutch thriller genre – one made by a journalist who never would have ventured into writing crime fiction if it hadn't been for his German publisher twisting his arm.'

De Volkskrant

Translated titles

Unter den Menschen (Among the People): German (Mare, 2019).
Der Schiffskoch (The Ship's Cook): Germany (Mare, 2021), Italian (Iperborea, 2022).
Der Holländer (The Dutchman). German (Mare, 2022).
Der Taucher (The Diver). German (Mare, 2023).
Der Retter. Ein Fall für Liewe Cupido (The Rescuer): German (Mare, 2024).

Mathijs Deen (b. 1962) writes non-fiction, short stories and novels. In 2013, his book *The Wadden Islands* was published to critical acclaim and sold over 30,000 copies. In 2018 he published a collection of travel stories called *Down Old Roads: A Journey Through Europe's History*, which was nominated for the Bob den Uyl Prize and received the Halewijn Prize. *The Lightship* (2020) was longlisted for the Libris Literature Award. His work has been translated into English, German, Italian and Korean. The German translation of *The Diver* (2023) debuted at number 26 on *Der Spiegel's* bestseller list and went into its second print run within the first week. The book was rewarded with the Gouden Strop, the prize for the best thriller in the Dutch language.



© Merlijn Doornik

Erik de Graaf

Mondrian: A Better World

Graphic
Novel



Publishing details

Mondriaan: Een betere wereld

With an afterword by Wietse

Coppes

320 pages

Approximately 11,600 words

Full colour

Publisher

Scratch Books

Chris Mokken

chris.mokken@scratchbooks.nl

Translated titles

Eclats, Cicatrices

(Shards, Scars). Belgium

(Dupuis/Champaka, 2020).

Graphic novel about the key period in Mondrian's life in which he perfected his art

The world-renowned painter Piet Mondrian (1872–1944) believed it was an artist's duty to strive for harmony and equilibrium in art, in order that it could serve as a blueprint for human society. His way to achieve this was to strip his work of all noise and distraction and use only universal shapes and primary colours.

Despite differences in size and placement, all shapes and colours are equally important in Mondrian's paintings, as he believed should be the case with people in real life. Graphic novelist Erik de Graaf's fascination with this philosophy led him to investigate what moved this iconic Dutch artist, in art and in life. Through in-depth online and offline research, travel and interviews, De Graaf has pieced together this sensitive reconstruction of Mondrian's last eleven years.

As a narrative artist, De Graaf seeks to create stories that move people. He searches for the great in the small, the extraordinary in the ordinary. The main story is interwoven with portraits of Mondrian's friends and colleagues, like Peggy Guggenheim and Harry Holtzman, who share their views of the artist. Between 1933 and 1944, Mondrian lived in Paris, London and New York, moving as far away as possible from the impending doom of WWII. De Graaf takes the reader back into those years. His drawings of the architecture of these cities are so beautifully vivid, readers will feel as though they are there.

The episodes in Nazi Germany are drawn in greyscale contrasting with Mondrian's colourful pictures as tries to find a sense of harmony in his painting. De Graaf's crisp, clean style is influenced by the artists he deeply admires: Yves Chaland, Joost Swarte, Seth and Chris Ware. He brilliantly conveys Mondrian's attempts to bring light into an ever-darkening world.

On Shards/Scars:

'Erik de Graaf's diptych deserves a place in the canon alongside *Maus*, *The Beast is Dead*, *Alan's War*, and the graphic novel version of Anne Frank's *Diary...*'

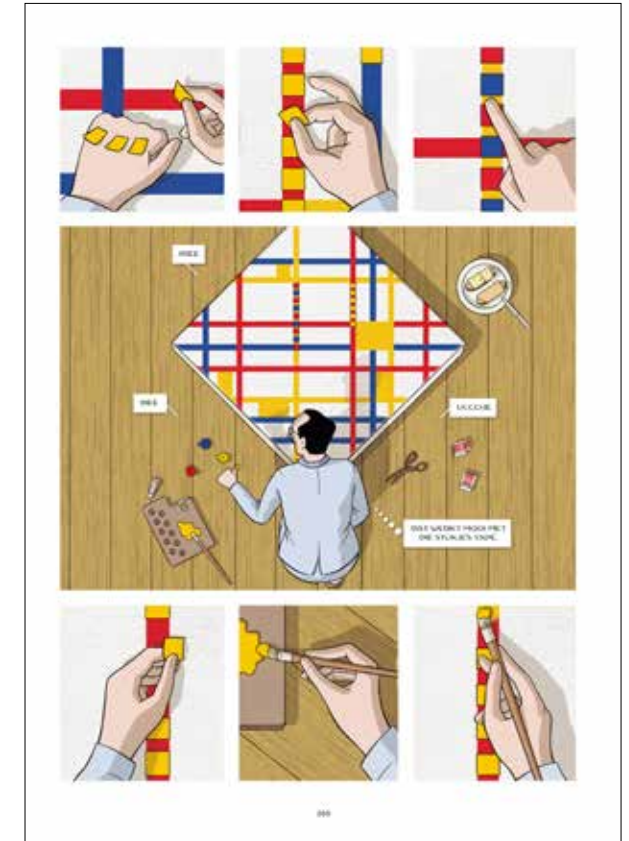
Stripgids

'Heart-wrenching storylines and deftly wrought flashbacks...'

Zone 5300

'An impressive testimony.'

NRC



Erik de Graaf (b. 1961) is an illustrator and designer. He was educated at Kunstacademie Rotterdam and graduated in graphic design and advertising. He made his debut with *Verbleekte herinneringen* (Fading Memories, 2003), in 2020 he published *Scherven/Littekens* (Shards/Skars), a two-part story set in World War II, which has been translated into French.



Recent translations

This is a selection of recently published translations from the Dutch. For more information please go to our online database of translations: letterenfonds.nl/en/translationdatabase1



Gerda Blees
Somos luz

Brilliantly written, richly faceted novel about the human need for belonging

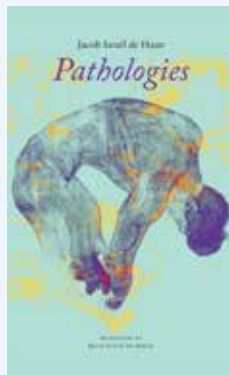
Translated into Spanish by Micaela van Muylem for Serapis, 2024.



Anjet Daanje
Der erinnerte Soldat

Traumatized World War I veteran suffers from identity loss

Translated into German by Ulrich Faure for Friedenauer Presse, 2024.



Jacob Israël de Haan
Pathologies. The downfall of Johan van Vere de With

Controversial landmark novel in the history of LGBT writing

Translated into English by Brian Doyle-Du Breuil for Seagull Books, 2024.



Mariken Heitman
Wilde Erbsen

Contemporary search for identity and a virtuoso game with the laws of nature

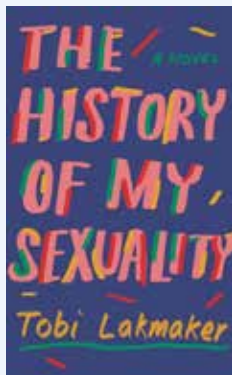
Translated into German by Christiane Burkhardt for Klett-Cotta, 2024.



Tom Hofland
Il cannibale

Magical realism and dark humour in a neo-gothic novel about a corporate reorganisation

Translated into Italian by Laura Pignatti for Carbonio, 2024.



Tobi Lakmaker
The history of my sexuality

An honest and hilarious debut about love, gender and becoming a writer

Translated into English by Kristen Gehrman for Granta, 2024.



Jente Posthuma
What I'd rather not think about

Loving depiction of twins who have grown apart

Shortlisted for The International Booker Prize

Translated into English by Sarah Timmer Harvey for Scribe, 2024.



Jaap Robben
Au crépuscule

Moving novel gives a voice to the silent grief of the mothers of stillborn children

Translated into French by Guillaume Deneufbourg for Gallmeister, 2024.



Astrid H. Roemer
Off-White

Moving portrait of a woman finding peace as well as a searing portrait of the legacy of colonialism

Translated into English by Lucy Scott and David McKay for Two Lines Press, 2024.



Pieter Waterdrinker
Csajkovszkij utca 40

Author's personal history and a savage account of Russian nihilism and cruelty

Translated into Hungarian by András Szőnyi for Európa, 2024.



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Managing director

Barbara den Ouden, Victor Schiferli and Romkje de Bildt will be present at the Frankfurt Bookfair (4.1 F32), and will be more than happy to make an appointment or arrange a videocall with you.

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