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NEW BENCHMARKS



VICTOR SCHIFERLI

This summer, a part of my family found itself in northern Italy, where hailstones the size of hand grenades fell from the sky, while another part were staying in Sicily, where Palermo's airport was shut down due to forest fires. With luck, we navigated the mounting climate crisis, the question on our minds: how long can things go on like this?

If the current situation makes anything clear it's that we need to act now. Marcel Metze wrote a book – a political biography – on Shell, the originally-Dutch oil and gas giant that orchestrates its devastating quest for fossil fuels through political jousting, while placating autocratic regimes, all for the profit of this enormous company now helping destroy the planet.

We read about how the Dutch landscape looks (for now) with Renske Jonkman: flat as a pancake, a few metres below sea level and home to a constant south-westerly wind. Nicolaas Matsier observes the world in miniature perspective in a fascinating collection of reflections on maps, models and the like. Emigration at the start of the twentieth century plays a role in Cathalijne Boland's history of Europeans setting off by steamship for the United States. We find out how small and fragile nature is through Aglaia Bouma's book on insects and Miek Zwamborn's poetic descriptions of the wilderness on the Scottish isle of Mull.

This selection of Dutch non-fiction from the past six months also demonstrates that the world is in need of new benchmarks. Germany and France are becoming the new centre of Europe, which increasingly must fend for itself: Maarten Doorman considers their previous history. And the same goes for gender roles: Maaike Meijer has written a sensational book examining masculine behaviour. Women play important roles, too, in books about modern women's art (Mirjam Kooiman, Nathalie Maciesza and Renee Schuiten-Kniepstra), and about how we handle pregnancies (Trudy Dehue) and widows (Mineke Schipper).

Maaïke Meijer

Desperate Heroes — The Depiction of Masculinity in Literature and Film



Dutch title
Radeloze Helden.
*De verbeelding van mannelijkheid
in literatuur en film*

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Sample translation available

After decades of writing about the representation of women in cultural history, Maaïke Meijer decided to give literature, films and series by male creators about male protagonists another chance. And what she found there surprised her: the field is teeming with narratives that take as their subject an outspoken anti-hero, at odds with the prevailing social image of masculinity. Such stories are usually interpreted as being about the *human* condition. In this book, Meijer considers them as a reflection on the male condition, and finds in them the key to new windows on masculinity.

‘I’ve never really been able to place myself in the category ‘woman’, even though there are many versions. I feel more like I’ve had womanhood imposed on me – I’ve been turned into a woman. I feel affinity with men saddled with the job of being a ‘man’. I see myself as an ‘in-between person’. [...] My masculinity is second-hand, defensive. It was an act of resistance to having-to-be-a-girl. Does my second-hand masculinity give me any right to speak on this subject? Or can I only talk about anti-women, tomboys, butch women and girly-boys like myself? And do all other subjects come down to forms of unjustified appropriation? No,’ explains the author about her own background.

Meijer rereads writers like Herman Melville, Jan Wolkers, W.F. Hermans and Michel Houellebecq; she re-watches *Casablanca*, *The Power of The Dog*, *Dolor y Gloria*, *The Big Lebowski*, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest*, and TV series like *Borgen* and *The Queens’ Gambit*. She rewrites Freudian tales of castration anxiety and penis envy, replacing the

A leading Dutch feminist turns her gaze to representations of men

term castration anxiety with ‘Severance’. As she explains, this word fits better with what Freud meant by castration: the loosening of the symbiotic bond with the mother. Severance produces a sense of self and an awareness of language, and is familiar to both boys and girls.

The author explores her own fascination with non-binarity and describes the masculinity within herself. She considers male suffering with a view as critical as it is empathetic. *Desperate Heroes* is about destruction, war, violence, as well as redemption, about possible escapes from the delusion of maleness and toxic masculinity.

‘In *Desperate Heroes*, Maaïke Meijer aims to show that there is no single universal, powerful representation of masculinity. Men suffer. And can anything be done about that? Yes, look to *Big Lebowski’s* the Dude.’

Het Parool

‘In *Desperate Heroes*, Meijer mixes literary analyses with her personal experiences with masculinity. That approach works, at times moves, and also amuses.’

Trouw

Maaïke Meijer (b. 1949) is emeritus professor of Gender Studies, a biographer and journalist. Meijer has written on literature, popular culture, feminism and gender theory. Her biography of M. Vasalis (nominated for the Golden Book Owl and Biography Prize) was published in 2011 and that of F. Harmsen van Beek (nominated for the Biography

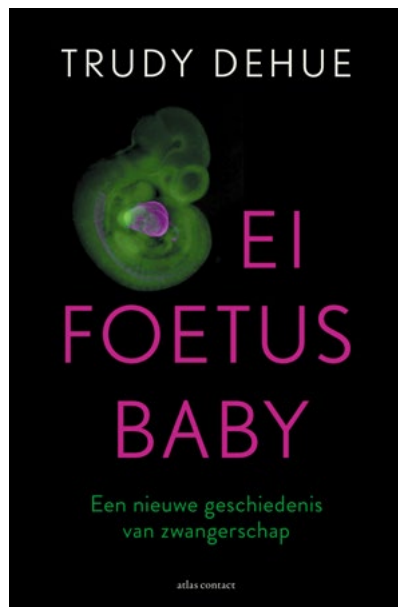
Prize and shortlisted for the Bookspot Literature Prize) in 2018.



Photo (© Fjodor Buis)

Trudy Dehue

Egg Foetus Baby — A New History of Pregnancy



Dutch title
Ei foetus baby.
*Een nieuwe geschiedenis van
zwangerschap*
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400, a few integrated illustrations
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No one can see through the abdominal and uterine wall into the womb. And yet with a few clicks of the mouse, we can access detailed information about human fetuses, embryos, and egg cells. This evokes wonder about the formation of new humans, but we rarely think twice about how the actual knowledge we have of them was gained and enshrined in our thought processes.

All our speaking, measuring, calculating and imagining starts with classifications. What should or shouldn't count as a planet, a mental disorder, a COVID infection, a poet or a refugee? The answers to these questions are inevitably normative. Facts and norms are not separate, as many think, but rather intimately connected. This does not necessarily mean that each fact is therefore as (in)valid as the other, but it does mean that in principle the composition should be assessable.

Take the example of pregnancy. It involves classifications like 'pregnant', 'mother' and 'embryo' and 'unborn child', a 'beating heart', 'abortion' and even 'murder'. What has been historically meant by these terms and how were their definitions arrived at? Such classifications also have pre-eminent consequences, because they give people rights, or take them away. Trudy Dehue calls the classifications hidden inside facts 'linguistic technology', and explains how they often turn out to be intertwined with the 'material technology' of, for example, pregnancy tests, the pill, ultrasounds, and IVF.

The advent of the 'pregnancy test' (material technology) allowed a woman to 'be pregnant' (linguistic technology) earlier than before, and this

A feminist revisionist history

has had both positive and negative consequences for pregnant women. What for centuries was termed 'inducing a period' has become 'abortion' or 'termination of pregnancy' due to the test. The Latin term abortion implies interference by a doctor in an unwanted conception, making it politically 'a medical-ethical issue'. This is different from the religious issue many still want to see in it, but also different from the private matter it once was and, according to many – including the World Health Organisation – should become again.

Dehue revises and revolutionises our thinking about pregnancy and women's bodies in a clearly-argued, readable account of the historical basis of the narratives we have created around the subject.

Trudy Dehue (b. 1951) was Professor of Epistemology and History of Science at the University of Groningen. She has published on the hidden presuppositions of human scientific knowledge in leading international journals. She is the author of *The Depression Epidemic* (2008), which received the 2009 Eureka Book Prize, and *Better People* (2014). In 2011,

Dehue was knighted, becoming an Officer in the Order of Orange Nassau for her extraordinary scientific work and its importance within science and for society.

'The evocatively-told stories of individual women are gripping and unsettling.'

de Volkskrant

'An important book [...] Anyone who wants to make big statements, religiously or otherwise, about pregnancy should read this first.'

Nederlands Dagblad



Photo (© Inge Hoogland)

Mineke Schipper

Widows — The Untold Story



Dutch title
Weduwen.
Een nooit vertelde geschiedenis
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246, integrated B&W illustrations
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en.vertalingendatabase.nl

Widows have always been more numerous than widowers, who usually remarry fast, almost always with younger women. For this and other reasons (such as war), men die sooner than their wives. According to a recent estimate, there are more than 258.5 million widows on earth and one in ten of them lives in extreme poverty. From ancient texts onwards, the need to represent women as weak and dependent is persistent, and widowhood has long been associated with an empty life.

Unaccompanied femininity has historically created so much fear that a widow's vagina had to be 'locked', i.e. declared inaccessible, temporarily or for life. Harassment and suspicion of murder or witchcraft – because why had he died and not she? – made many widows opt for the same fate as their dead husbands. 'Grief over your husband lasts to the door.' Ever heard that joke before? That's right, only the variant about dead wives is popular.

Schipper delves into the history of widowhood around the world and finds striking differences between their status and that of widowers. The loss of a life partner has traditionally translated for men into new freedom, but for women into disastrous loss. Special mourning rituals and seclusion are imposed on widows, and their mourning clothes served as warning beacons. Think of the women whose hair must be cut, who must only dress in black, or white, or to be condemned to mourning the rest of their lives.

Widowhood is a heavily neglected subject. From that thick fog of oblivion looms a staggering global legacy that has never before been mapped. The good news is that entrenched attitudes are slowly

The customs and restrictions of widowhood, around the world and throughout the ages

changing – and widows are visibly changing in step.

'We cannot change history,' writes Schipper, 'but we can look at the past with new knowledge and look at the future with new eyes. Far too many widows have been told against their better judgment that there was no future after the death of their husbands. Why should the partner who is still alive have to sit out the rest of her days without prospects?'

'In *Widows* Schipper shows the shocking sexism that underlies the way widows are treated. [...] Although their position is slowly improving, these vulnerable women deserve more attention within contemporary feminism. Schipper's contribution is a good start.'

Het Parool

'With her book, Schipper has placed the accounts of old rituals into a new context.'

NRC

Mineke Schipper (b. 1938) was Professor of Intercultural Literary Studies at the University of Leiden. She has professorships in Nigeria, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Burkina Faso and China. She received a Dutch knighthood for 'building intercultural bridges nationally and internationally, inside and outside the academy' and continues her scholarly

work at the Leiden University Centre for the Arts in Society. She wrote this book as a recent widow herself.



Photo (© Christiaan Krouwels)

Mirjam Kooiman,
Nathalie Maciesza,
Renee Schuiten-
Knipstra

More Than Muses — ‘The Art Girls’ on Women in Art



Dutch title
Meer dan muze.
Over vrouwen in de kunst
Year of publication
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264
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Meulenhoff
Rights
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In the 1980s the American pressure group Guerilla Girls protested against sexism in art, calling themselves ‘the conscience of the art world’. Why were less than 5% of the artists in the New York Met’s modern art wing female but 85% of the nudes in the artworks, despite all the lobbying of female art historians in the previous decade? The Dutch pressure group The Art Girls picks up where they left off and traces in this book the changes in the art world that have given women artists their rightful place.

Names like Tracey Emin, Frida Kahlo and Paula Modersohn-Becker are no longer unfamiliar, but have you ever heard of Elisabetta Sirani, Katsushika Ōi, Marlow Moss or Romaine Brooks? Elisabetta Sirani created the first artist’s training for women, Katsushika Ōi (ca. 1800 - ca. 1866) didn’t care what society expected of her and pounded out her own course. Non-binary artists Marlow Moss (1889 - 1958) and Romaine Brooks (1874 - 1970) uninhibitedly produced art that defied all expectations.

The book also tracks feminist artists such as Natalia LL (1937 - 2022), Adrian Piper (1948), Carolee Schneemann (1939 - 2019), Joan Semmel (1932), Maria Lassnig (1919 - 2014) and many others whose provocative artworks shook up society. Besides loud protest, it also covers silent devotion: from medieval nuns who were able to shape their artistic ideas without the brakes of marriage, to the spiritual inspirations of Hilma af Klint (1862 - 1944) that led to abstract works of art that were ahead of their time.

Reclaiming art history for the sisterhood and the future

More Than Muses is about the lives and work of dozens of women who have enriched the art world. These women are highlighted through four themes: makers (about idiosyncratic artists), muses (about what and who inspired the women to create their artworks), social manoeuvres (about the sensational jumps they sometimes had to make over social barriers) and power (artists who questioned the status quo with their work, as well as patrons who made a difference).

After reading *More Than Muses*, you will no longer be able to look at the paintings of Jackson Pollock without being reminded of the equally fascinating works of his talented wife Lee Krasner (1908 - 1984) or fellow abstract-expressionist Hedda Sterne (1910 - 2011). You won’t be able to think of the roaring twenties of Paris without also immediately seeing Romaine Brooks peering out from under their top hat.

‘An upbeat book in which a variety of female artists through the ages pass in revue through short biographical sketches and anecdotes.’

NRC

The Art Girls, originally a trio, has grown into a collective of women – and yes, also one man – who have proudly crafted the most beautiful stories about the most extraordinary creators, collectors and other heroines in art. *More Than Muses* contains essays by Birgit van Beek, Zaida Bouwmeester, Julia Fidler, Puck Gerkema, Ānanda T.

Hegeman, Sofie Huvaere, Maartje Knepper, Mirjam Kooiman, Laura Korvinus, Carlien Lammers, Wouter Maas, Nathalie Maciesza, Monique Rodríguez, Renee Schuiten-Knipstra, Hanna de Vos and Eva Zandkuijl.



Photo (© Jitske Schols)

Maarten Doorman

Hunter in the Forest — France, Germany, Europe



Dutch title
Een jager in het woud.
Frankrijk, Duitsland, Europa

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Given that France and Germany played a leading role in the formation and expansion of the European Union together, it is easy to forget that for centuries they were arch-enemies. Today, their close military and economic cooperation appears more crucial than ever – but will it last? Cultural philosopher and poet Maarten Doorman turns to the enduring images of their violent history to understand how their mutual perceptions have informed the subtle balance of power between them since 1945.

Doorman focuses his study on four wars fought between the countries – the Wars of Liberation against Napoleon, the Franco-Prussian War, World War One and World War Two – and the works of cultural expression these events have produced. He analyses music, film, painting and literature by famous artists from the nineteenth century to today, including Madame de Staël, Heinrich Heine, Georges Bizet, Patrick Modiano, Anselm Kiefer, François Ozon and Patricia Kaas.

The author uncovers the roots of some particularly stubborn stereotypes – France representing the rationalism of the Enlightenment and Germany the creativity of Romanticism – which thankfully seem to have disappeared with the Second World War. Or have these prejudices simply gone underground, ready to re-emerge at a moment's notice? Doorman notes that the way each country deals with the shame and pride of the past has diverged, with Germany oriented towards the future, and France towards its heroic, though not unproblematic, past.

France and Germany's history as arch-enemies and the balance of power in Europe since 1945

Hunter in the Forest is not a political reconstruction of this relationship, but rather a blend of cultural philosophy and history of ideas that provides insight into how the two countries view each other. To understand the cultural differences and shifting power balances between France and Germany is to understand the challenges to joint-leadership of Europe in the unpredictable years to come. By delving into the rich cultures of two of Europe's largest powers, the book also serves as an impressive counterbalance to the Anglosphere's ever-expanding dominance.

'Maarten Doorman has written an erudite book full of striking anecdotes about the relationship between the French and Germans as seen through their art.'

de Volkskrant

'An important book!'

Cees Nooteboom

'A fascinating study of the clichés Germany and France use to portray one another.'

Knack

Professor Maarten Doorman (b. 1957) is a philosopher and writer. He teaches the philosophy of culture at Maastricht University and is Endowed Professor of History of German Culture at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. He has contributed to the national newspapers *NRC*, *de Volkskrant* and the weekly *De Groene Amsterdammer*. His previous works include

Near and Far (2018), a collection of essays on history and art, and *Daphne's Navel* (2016), a book on art and political engagement.



Photo (© J. Rood)

Cathalijne Boland

The Journey of a Lifetime — The Holland America Line and Transatlantic Migration



Dutch title
Reuchlins Reis.
De Holland-Amerika Lijn en de landverhuizers

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Sample translation available

As the son of an ocean liner company founder, George Reuchlin's path in life was clear-cut. The twenty-one years between his first voyage to the United States at the age of sixteen and his last aboard the Titanic, would see the world of Transatlantic travel flourish like never before. In *The Journey of a Lifetime*, Cathalijne Boland brings to life Reuchlin's personal story in a time of mass migration, technological innovation and dramatic shipwrecks.

Between 1880 and 1914, twenty million immigrants – including many eastern Europeans and Russian Jews – would leave Europe for the Americas. As he prepared to succeed his father at the Rotterdam-based Holland America Line, George Reuchlin would work on both sides of the Atlantic and travel through central Europe to understand Europe's exodus.

A rapidly changing society, with the upsurge of trains, factories and urbanisation, and plagued by financial crises, cholera epidemics and antisemitism, had left many desperate to seek better fortunes elsewhere. The dramatic scale of this mass migration was encouraged and enabled by the stiff competition between ocean liner companies across the continent to build the biggest and fastest ships possible. In George's lifetime, the crossing dropped from a journey of weeks to a mere five days.

Through careful archival research, Boland brings to life in wonderful detail a bygone world of Transatlantic migration which largely ended with the outbreak of World War One. While George may have belonged to the upper crust of European society, ocean travel brought together people from

Turn-of-the-century mass migration, through the eyes of an ill-fated ocean liner director

different backgrounds with one shared desire: to find a home they could call their own. The divisions between classes and gender roles were stark, but Boland's reconstruction spans the worlds of the first- to third-class travellers and their families at home.

Part personal story, part social and maritime history, *The Journey of a Lifetime* is an enthralling and evocative piece of non-fiction storytelling with strong echoes and parallels today.

As an editor and journalist, Cathalijne Boland (b. 1970) has always worked in the world of books and magazines. *The Journey of a Lifetime* is her non-fiction debut.

'Sharp [...] Fascinating [...] I'm still racking my brain as to how Boland pulled it off. Let's stick with talent.'

Trouw

'Boland manages to bring her story close to the reader, even while including compelling documents and facts [...] Once you start reading, you cannot stop. A fine writing style, right to the very last page.'

******* NRC**



Photo (© Peter Arno Broer)

Marcel Metze

A Dangerous Game — The Political Biography of Shell



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Hoog spel.
De politieke biografie van Shell
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vanalbada@uitgeverijbalans.nl
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‘Thirteen decades of conflict and tension, crisis and war, corruption and violence, of manoeuvring in the highest circles and in the quagmires and minefields of the world.’ Since its founding in 1892, Shell has become one of the four largest oil and gas producers in the world. It’s success comes from acting as an independent and active political player, which tries to influence and bend the rules, if not to bypass them. To understand Shell’s refined methods, investigative journalist Marcel Metze spent decades piecing together the first comprehensive political biography of the company of its kind, in a style rich in detail and anecdotes.

Shell plays a high stakes game – high risk and high rewards – and over the years has developed an arsenal of sophisticated tools to win: from cultivating their own politicians, to supporting local military interventions, to setting up their own intelligence agency with ex-spies and -marines. The huge problems they create – like environmental pollution – are jobs for its legal and PR departments. The former to avoid liability, the latter to maintain a positive image, which is at least as important as extracting fossil fuels. The promising commercials and slogans about sustainability? Unfortunately, little more than lip service.

These tactics are the product of Shell’s history. Building on extensive archival research and interviews with dozens of insiders, Metze charts the company’s growth from its original fusion as a Dutch-British company in colonial Indonesia, through both World Wars, decolonisation, the

An unsparing portrait of the oil and gas giant that doubles as a troubling warning

OPEC crisis, into a multinational operating in seventy countries by 2022. The world looks very different today and yet three quarters of all oil deposits remain in unstable or autocratic countries. Metze places great emphasis on the who, what and how in Shell’s political game of influence around the world, with a focus on the UK, the USA and Europe.

Aside from revealing to the general public how a multinational like Shell operates, *A Dangerous Game* holds up a mirror to the society that has allowed, if not condoned, such a gross imbalance between ethics and business. Shell’s story serves as a troubling warning against a worldview based purely on the management of risks and the maximization of profits. A book for the readers of Steve Coll’s *Private Empire*, Daniel Yergin’s *The Prize* and Anthony Sampson’s *The Seven Sisters*.

Marcel Metze (b. 1952) is one of the Netherlands’ most renowned investigative journalists. He made his name as the author of revealing books about Philips Electronics, the big Dutch banks, political parties and the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management. Metze is a member of the international journalistic consortium ICIJ and founder

of De Onderzoeksredactie (now Platform Investico) and The Investigative Desk. *A Dangerous Game* is currently shortlisted for the Libris History Prize.

‘This is a highly valuable reference work.’
de Volkskrant

‘With this well-written history, which paints a detailed yet nuanced picture, Metze shows just how much Shell, as a political actor, is a heavyweight accustomed to getting its way.’
Tzum



Photo (© Flip Franssen)



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Huisgenoten.
Insecten in en om je eigen huis
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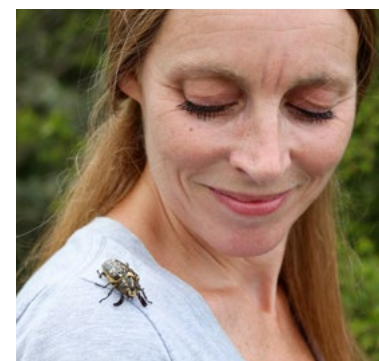
Almost three quarters of the animals on earth are insects. In *Housemates*, entomologist Aglaia Bouma entertainingly recounts her, at times, moving experience with these living beings that are generally met with little sympathy or enthusiasm. Discovery usually means annihilation. These small creatures often keep themselves hidden and most of them escape our attention. But if you know where to look you will find hundreds of species of insects scurrying, scuttling and flying around a home, all year round. They are fascinating to those who look closely.

Bouma does just this. With humour and great expertise, she takes the reader into the nooks and crannies of her attic, into the pots of herbs in the kitchen and the stones and soil in her garden. She tenderly rescues a queen wasp and keeps it chilled in a little box in her fridge so that it will survive. She shows us social cockroaches and caring earwigs, optimistic bumblebees and bizarre dryindae (which lay their eggs inside other insects), she points out assistance from unexpected quarters (other species) and it becomes clear why one bedbug or wasp can ruin it for the whole community.

Bouma does a fantastic job of enthusing the reader for even the most off-putting insects and explaining the complex ecological relationships between species, their life cycles and the food web, in an understandable and engaging manner. Her cameo stories usually end with wonderment and a plea for humans to at least tolerate these insects.

‘Cold, wind and rain drive people into their homes, where they endure the winter dressed in warm sweaters. Some people like this season. They can retreat into a shelter and relative safety, like being in a cocoon. Maybe this is how the pupae in my fridge would have felt if I can’t put them in the cold. But I did this for their own sake. [...] I foresaw a problem. This wasn’t my eaten-away kitchen herbs, I didn’t mind sharing them. No, it was the season, or more accurately, the lack of a season in my warm house.’

Aglaia Bouma (b. 1970) is a writer, speaker and entomologist. She is a researcher at Naturalis and has a popular column on insects in the broadsheet *NRC*. Her first book *Insect Kingdom* (2020) was translated into Italian.



‘After reading Bouma’s book, you get the urge to open your doors wide to all those fascinating housemates – let them stay, room enough! And it is precisely this connectedness that we need in order to tackle the insect crisis. If we feel enough positive emotions for these special animals, reason should hopefully follow.’

NRC

‘In *Housemates*, Aglaia Bouma opens our eyes to the tiny creatures in our immediate environment. [...] Bouma’s light, humorous tone is a breath of fresh air in the doom and gloom that hangs over this subject.’

de Volkskrant

Nicolaas Matsier

Of Untruthful Size — Maquettes, Miniatures, Models



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Op onware grootte.
Maquettes, miniatures, modellen
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‘Almost everything has been shrunk at some point. There are maquettes for unbuilt churches and museums, there are sandcastles, there are Eiffel Towers, there are mini landscapes, there are glass models of invertebrate sea creatures, there is a mini heaven, there is a hydraulic forest in the Northeast Polder – too many to mention.’ Writer and poet Nicolaas Matsier has, for years, been fascinated by the human desire to play with scale. In *Of Untruthful Size*, he brings together the intriguing stories of forty-three miniatures – and one or two enlargements.

What we reduce in size makes us larger. Reduction allows overview. The world of model objects and their purposes, however, is vast. They are made as souvenirs or grave goods, to predict the future, to help educate, for research, for beauty’s sake, to play with, to plan military assaults, to thank deities for a safe journey or healing, to recreate crime scenes.

This practice spans centuries and cultures, from ancient Egyptian sarcophagi to South-American colonial dioramas to Malawi nativity sets made of ebony. In Antwerp there is even Museum to Scale, an initiative featuring hundreds of exhibitions rooms and their artworks, at a scale of 1:7. Smaller still are works of ‘micro-art’, such as a portrait of Kim Il Sung, painted on a grain of rice.

Matsier is interested in the larger histories behind these objects. He describes Louis XIV’s drive for conquest through his breath-taking models of fortified towns, and Adolf Hitler also crops up, his nose hovering over a model of Linz, the city of his youth. The author often uses these histories as a starting point for associative

A beautifully-illustrated exploration of the human urge to shrink and enlarge

reflection. A model of Mont Blanc inspires a short history of geology, a planetarium – the heavens made to human size – invites musings on the limits of human knowledge.

Of Untruthful Size is an entertaining ode to the art of looking at things big and small. In an increasingly digital world, the book’s richly illustrated format allows readers to share in an essential aspect of Matsier’s contagious enthusiasm: the undeniable craftsmanship of this vanishing art.

‘It is a collection of genuine curiosity which comes to life, above all, through Matsier’s animating way of writing.’

Vrij Nederland

‘As nimbly as a model ship maker, Nicolaas Matsier constructs big histories in a small format.’

De Standaard

Nicolaas Matsier (b. 1945) has published several collections of short stories, novellas and novels, such as *Closed House* and *The Forty-eighth Hour*. He has translated works by Stefan Themerson and Xenophon, among others. He was editor of the magazine *Raster* and writes for *de Volkskrant*, *NRC* and *Vrij Nederland*. His work has been awarded the

Bordewijk Prize and the E. du Perron Prize.



Photo (© Keke Keukelaar)

NEW & NOTEWORTHY

TRAVEL

A literary journey into the wildest reaches of an unspoiled island

Miek Zwamborn Together — Along Mull's Coastline



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Surrendering herself to the elements, immersing herself in oral history, walking, swimming and foraging, Zwamborn settles into her new home on the southern tip of the Isle of Mull. Through poems, letters, essays, drawings, maps and photographs, she guides the reader past volcanic eruptions, millennia-old bogs, abandoned farms, Celtic rainforests, fluctuating mudflats, and an all-encompassing sky. Zwamborn comes into contact with a multitude of organisms and sketches their fascinating connections. She writes about the power of nature, enthralling sea creatures, twisted oaks and beached whales, as well as the complex relationships between the islanders.

Miek Zwamborn (b. 1974) is a conservationist, poet, artist and writer. Her work in the Scottish Hebrides involves running a project to explore the natural environment with scientists, designers and artists. Her previous book, *The Seaweed Collector's Handbook* was published by Profile Books, Greystone, and Matthes & Seitz.

'She doesn't try to actively convert anyone but Miek Zwamborn's story about her self-sufficient existence on the Isle of Mull gently invites you to think about whether your life could be more sustainable.'

Trouw

Dutch Non-Fiction Autumn 2023

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What we can learn from the wind, and how do we make use of it?



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Piper Verlag (Germany)
Sample translation available

Renske Jonkman Uitwaaien — Going With The Wind The Dutch Way

In this uplifting literary essay, Jonkman considers how the Dutch hold their own in a country a few metres below sea level where there is an almost constant strong south-westerly wind. The Dutch verb *uitwaaien* – walking in the wind – is a typically Dutch habit, synonymous with clearing your head and surrendering to forces of nature stronger than yourself in order to regain your strength. Drawing on her personal life story in which the wind has played an important role, Jonkman observes the Dutch landscape and how it has shaped Dutch character over the centuries.

Renske Jonkman (b. 1982) writes articles and interviews for *de Volkskrant*, *National Geographic* and *Trouw*. She is the author of three novels, the last of which, *This Drowned Land*, is about the Dutch people's relationship with their polder landscape.

Praise for *Dit Verdrongen Land* (This Drowned Land):

'This novel does what good literature should do: showing the complexity of life and exploring new connections whilst still moving the reader with brilliant storytelling.'

De Groene Amsterdammer

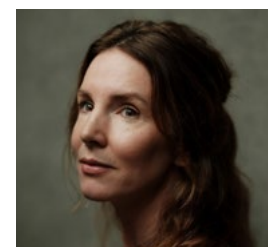


Photo (© Frank Ruiter)

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NATURE WRITING

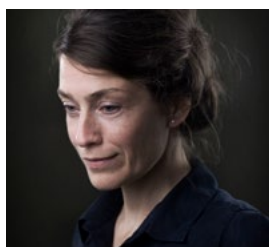
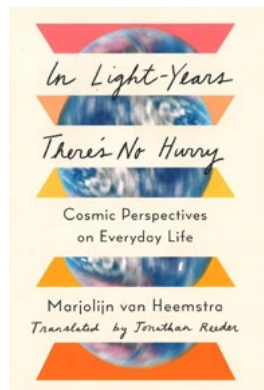


Photo (© T. Posthuma de Boer)

RECENT TRANSLATIONS



Marjolijn van Heemstra

In Light-Years There's No Hurry

Dutch title
In lichtjaren heeft niemand haast

Published in
English by W.W. Norton & Company (2023)

Translated by
Jonathan Reeder



Etty Hillesum

The Works

Dutch title
Het werk (Etty)

Published in
German by C.H. Beck (2023)

Translated by
Simone Schroth and Christina Siever

Other translations
English (Novalis), French (Seuil), Italian (Adelphi), Portuguese (Assírio & Alvim), Spanish (Fonte)



Bregje Hofstede

In Search of Sleep

Dutch title
Slaap vatten

Published in
Polish by Linia (2023)

Translated by
Robert Pucek

Other translations
Bulgarian (Colibri), English (Greystone Books), German (Oktaven)

A selection of recently published translations from the Dutch.
For more information please go to our online database of translations:
en.vertalingendatabase.nl



Huib Modderkolk

There's a War Going On But No One Can See It

Dutch title
Het is oorlog maar niemand die het ziet

Published in
Greek by Alexandria (2023)

Translated by
Margarita Bonatsou

Other translations
English (Bloomsbury), German (Ecowin)



Annemarié van Niekerk

To Bring Back the Heart

Dutch title
Om het hart terug te brengen

Published in
Afrikaans by Tafelberg (2023)

Translated by
Daniel Hugo



Francine Oomen

Riding the Wave

Dutch title
Oomen stroomt over

Published in
French by Presses de la Cité (2023)

Translated by
Noëlle Michel

Other translations
Czech (Motto/Albatros Media), German (Droemer Knaur), Norwegian (Gyldendal), Spanish (Penguin Random House Grupo), Swedish (Albert Bonniers)

FAQ

Who makes the selection?

Our aim is to showcase the best non-fiction from the Netherlands. Most titles will have been published recently and will have done very well in terms of reviews, sales and awards or nominations. Equally important is the question: 'Does it travel?' We work with an advisory panel, which gives us recommendations and input on new non-fiction.

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.

Are all the 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 non-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 brochure eligible, too?

Yes. Our decision 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. If the translation is good, the translator will be added to our list. If the translation needs work, we can make suggestions. If the translation is beyond repair, you will be advised to hire somebody who is on our list.

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 digitally through our website: www.letterenfonds.nl/en/translation-subsidy. Board meetings are held six times a year.

Can we 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: www.letterenfonds.nl/en/travel-costs.

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The Dutch Foundation for Literature supports writers, translators and literary festivals, and promotes Dutch literature abroad. Translation grants are available to foreign publishers to reduce the economic risks of translating as-yet unknown authors. The subsidy covers up to 70% of the translation costs, with recognised classics qualifying for up to 100%.

For more information, please see:
www.letterenfonds.nl/en/translation-subsidy.

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