

Is there such a thing as the truth?

Aperçu de l'inconnu

MICHAEL BIJNENS

The police investigation into the Nijvel gang has become a major debacle in Belgian legal history. In the early eighties, a number of savage raids were carried out on supermarkets, with the perpetrators using brute force and shooting several accidental passers-by in cold blood. Thirty years on, the investigation has reached a dead end. Michael Bijmens, known for his research-based plays, spoke to investigators involved in the case and wrote a fascinating piece of theatre.

This piece of theatre is so much more than yet another police series. Here we see each character battling a higher metaphysics, the impossibility of the truth.

DE STANDAARD

In twenty scenes we meet nine characters reflecting on their personal relationship with the labyrinthine dossier. The result is a series of detached, yet harrowing portraits. We encounter people who, in their quest for the truth, come up against their own limitations and the impact the case has had on their lives – from depression to alcohol abuse. Their words often reveal the powerlessness of dealing with situations beyond their grasp. It is not surprising therefore that the play is inspired by a quote from T.H. Huxley: 'The known is finite. The unknown is infinite.'

This is theatre that derives its reason from social maladies while at the same time providing something for the actors to get stuck in and viewing pleasure for the audience. Perfect theatre about the poignant imperfection of man.

FOCUS KNACK



AUTHOR



Michael Bijmens (b. 1990) grew up as the son of an Antwerp prostitute. In 2013 he graduated from the theatre school in Brussels and went on directly to make his name as a playwright. In his own words, 'an extensive case knowledge and an individual writing style' are central to his work. In researching his play 'La Linea' he immersed himself for months in the Mexico-US border region racked with drug-related violence. Cinderella is Bijmens' debut as a novelist.

ORIGINAL TITLE Aperçu de l'inconnu (2015, KVS, 45 pp.)

TRANSLATION RIGHTS The author is the rights holder. Please contact us to obtain their contact details.

TRANSLATION GRANTS Esther de Gries - esther@flandersliterature.be, Yannick Geens - yannick@flandersliterature.be