

Scintillating chase

A Rope in the Air

MATTIAS DE LEEUW

A dangling rope takes us on a chase through a city in this scintillating picture book without words. Everyone is fascinated by the rope, and it is grabbed in turn by a water ballerina, a super hero, a window cleaner, a monkey in the zoo and a bandit on the run. Gradually, a whole procession builds up of people trying to catch the rope and vehicles racing after them. But then they suddenly run into an obstacle. And where *does* that rope come from?

This is unmistakably De Leeuw's universe: a simple concept, coherently articulated without the need for words.

JAAPLEEST

In this cheerful story, Mattias De Leeuw exploits the innate flamboyance of his drawing style. The flowing acrylic paint with which the illustrations are coloured in keeps just escaping the lines, adding to the dynamism that characterises the book. A closer look also shows that all the spreads collectively form a single, elongated landscape across which the rope flies. Without making things too complex, De Leeuw cleverly ramps up the tension to a chaotic climax, after which all ends happily. Blissfully unaware of the havoc he created, the paraglider whose climbing rope was dangling behind him climbs back up the mountain again.

De Leeuw never fails to enchant us

PLUIZUIT



AUTHOR



Mattias De Leeuw (b. 1989) has a smooth style with spontaneous, flowing lines. This fluidity means that his illustrations are often full of whirling motion, which works well in the large format he often uses. He employs a cheerful colour palette with striking touches of colour, using thick spontaneous brushes to make rough strokes and adding the details with a pen. His pictures convey as much magic as the text, and are packed with details, visual jokes and little side stories that appeal to both young and old. *Photo © Noortje Palmers*

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