

## DRAMA

# A portrait of human longing

# Desire

## LOUIS JANSSENS

In 'Desire' four queer men are on stage together. During what's known as the 'blue hour', that transition period when night becomes day, they share their (unfulfilled) longings, thoughts, doubts and fears with each other and with the audience. The four men explore the different modes and perspectives of desire, and share those things we are normally too reticent to show. Some of the desires expressed are funny, because they're so familiar or grotesque, or amount to commentary on the play itself. Others are instances of the characters seeking out ambiguity and vulnerability. By having the courage to expose themselves, they describe not just their personal desires but those of humankind in general. Don't we all yearn to experience something, to be loved and feel connected?

**Beneath their longing, the gaping hole of impotence grows increasingly big and poignant. Janssens makes poetry out of desolation. \*\*\*\***

TROUW

'Desire' is tightly composed and divided into three parts: 'I want', 'I don't want' and 'I want'. The central part also deals with the antithesis of desire: fear and sorrow. It is striking that the thematic richness of the play is embedded in a remarkable formal and textual restraint. The language and phrasing of 'Desire' are simple but powerful, while the composition and repetition form a polyphony and evoke images that feel both intimate and universal. 'Desire' has been unanimously praised by the press in the Netherlands and Belgium, and was selected for the TheaterFestival 2024.

**A moving, inspiring and powerful gesture of acceptance and solidarity**

JURY OF THE THEATERFESTIVAL

JANSSENS, BAAIZ, FABRÉ,  
SMITS, SEYNAEVE

## DESIRE

DE NIEUWE  
TONEELBIBLIOTHEEK

## AUTHOR



**Louis Janssens** (b. 1995) graduated from the Drama department of KASK in Ghent in 2018. As an actor he has appeared at theatres including Muziektheater Transparant and Tuning People/fABULEUS. Janssens' solo performances have been selected for the TheaterFestival several times. He also writes for theatre magazines such as Etcetera, Rekto:Verso and the Theaterkrant, and teaches drama at the Royal Conservatoire of Antwerp. Photo © NISRAN

**ORIGINAL TITLE** Desire (2023, De Nieuwe Toneelbibliotheek, 43 pp.), written by Louis Janssens, with contributions from Peter Seynaeve, Mourad Baaiz, Mick Galliot Fabré en Joshua Smit.

**CHARACTERS** 4 characters (4 M), première 23 August 2023

**PRIZES** Selected for the 2024 TheaterFestival.

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