

Leisurely strolling through
Brussels

Look! Over There, Look!

ERIC DE KUYPER

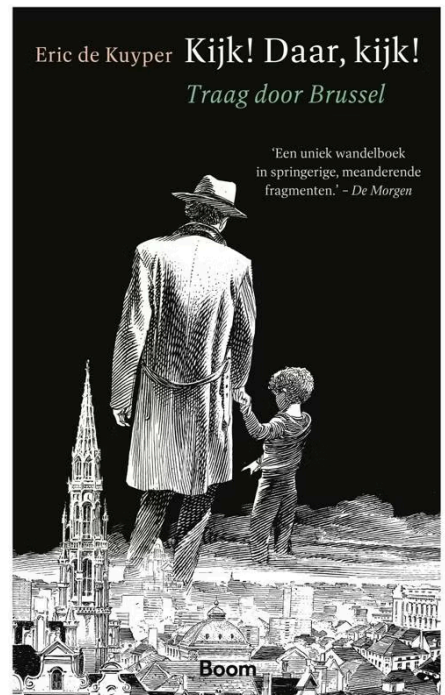
In 'Look! Over There, Look!' 81-year-old Eric de Kuyper explores the urbanisation of Brussels' municipalities and neighbourhoods in his signature, slightly old-fashioned style. He reflects on the architecture of streets and houses, façades and interiors encountered during his walks. The book offers a personal perspective on the city's 'architectural misery', while also celebrating successful interventions in the Belgian capital.

De Kuyper doesn't walk alone – he is accompanied by Gabriel, the young son of his housemate Emile. "Look, look!" Gabriel exclaims repeatedly. It is the child's sense of wonder that guides the gaze of the elderly writer. Gabriel's constant "look, look!" becomes a prompt to keep observing and noting. As they walk, Gabriel explains everything the narrator doesn't know. As a reader, you too start seeing the city through a child's eye.

Having lived for years in France, the Netherlands and Germany, Eric de Kuyper returns to his native Brussels. As he strolls through the cosmopolitan city, he encounters memories of a former life, seamlessly weaving them into his impressions of the present. With fresh eyes, he revisits the city of his youth.

Perhaps Eric de Kuyper *is* Brussels: a blend of styles, ideas and languages. He shows that Brussels can never be definitively captured. De Kuyper writes about the capital with open admiration and love, but also with a critical edge. "The lovelessness with which so many homes and buildings are treated breaks my heart. And then suddenly, a lovingly crafted detail."

This combination of emotional engagement and critical distance echoes one of his inspirations, the French writer Georges Perec. De Kuyper's urban explorations follow in the tradition of Perec's *voyages de proximité*: journeys through the immediate surroundings, paying attention to everyday elements that usually escape notice. In doing so, he adds an anthropological layer to his aesthetic observations.



AUTHOR



Eric de Kuyper (b. 1942) is a splendid maverick in Flemish literature. In addition to being a writer, he is a film director and theoretician, a semiologist and a connoisseur of ballet, theatre and opera. The autobiographical cycle about his youth earned him the title 'Proust of the Low Countries'. De Kuyper is a chronicler with a refined, light-hearted and ironic writing style. Keywords such as melancholy, refinement and beauty typify his kaleidoscopic collections of scenes. Photo © Stef Verstraaten

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TRANSLATION GRANTS Patrick Peeters - patrick@flandersliterature.be