

## Lessons for humanity from a mole rat

# Groundwork

TIJL NUYTS

In 'Groundwork' a female naked mole rat tells the story of her mission. From her colony in the Horn of Africa she was sent to the VADERLANDSPLEIN, a square in Brussels. She waits in her hiding place for a briefing from her colony, which fails to arrive. The reason why she has been banished is told to us bit by bit when the mole rat takes us into her childhood, and into the intimate and sensual world and collective social set-up of her species.

**Bizarre, tense and surprising.**  
**'Groundwork' is a penetrating, socially critical and deeply literary work. \*\*\*\***

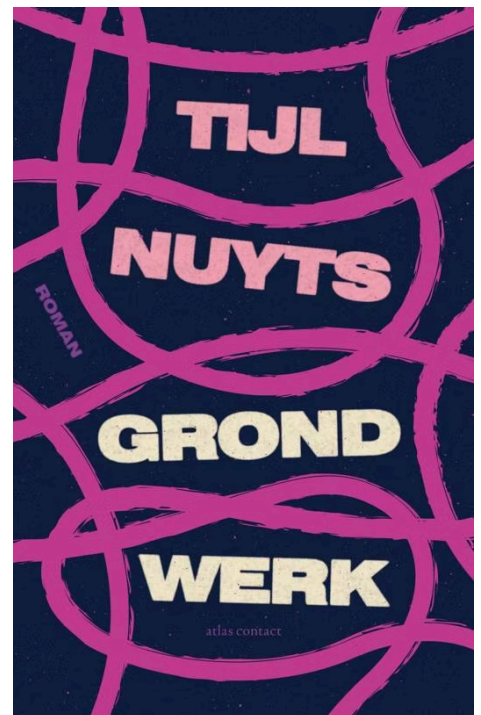
DE STANDAARD

While awaiting the briefing, she keeps herself busy by digging, undermining her new city. Sink holes appear everywhere, and they literally fragment the infrastructure of the political heart of Belgium and Europe. Observing her surroundings, she thinks far from highly of homo sapiens, castigating the species mercilessly and with humour. A meeting and growing friendship with a climate activist, however, produces an unexpected twist and distracts the mole rat from her mission. It gradually transpires that nothing human is alien to her, and she is not immune to love and jealousy.

**Fascinating and extremely original novel.**

TROUW

'Groundwork' is a debut novel by Tijn Nuyts, who has already won great praise with his prize-winning poetry. As in his poems, here he playfully explores themes including climate change, social inequality and the collective. With a naked mole rat, sometimes called the ugliest animal in the world, he has hit upon an original and unforgettable protagonist. The sensual language and compelling build-up to the denouement make 'Groundwork' a captivating reading experience.



### AUTHOR



**Tijn Nuyts** (b. 1993) is an author and poet. He investigates subjects like the climate, forms of society and ways of communicating in a way that is both playful and committed. His collections of poetry include 'Anagrams of a Naked Emperor' (nominated for the C. Buddingh' Prize) and 'Transports' (awarded the Herman de Coninck Prize and on the shortlist for the Grote Poëzie Prijs). He publishes his poetry in several literary magazines and often performs it. 'Groundwork', his debut novel, has been extremely positively received in the press. Photo © Stefaan Temmermans

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