POETRY

The poetry of thinking, the thinking of poetry

Affairs of the Heart

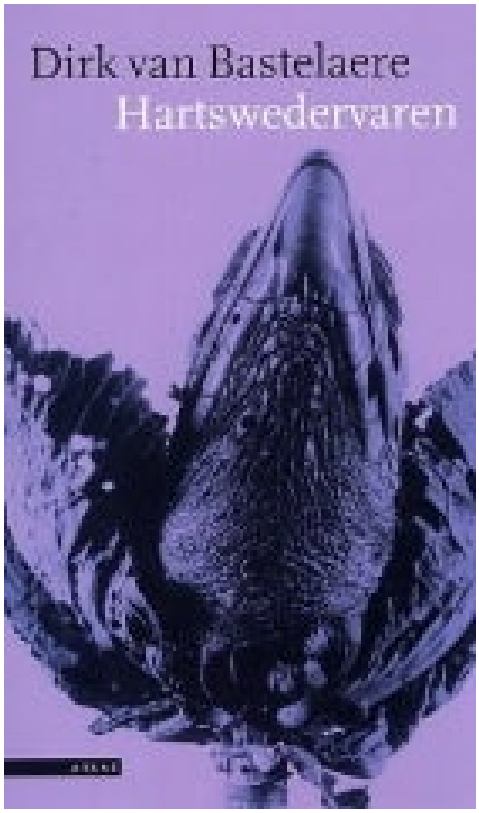
DIRK VAN BASTELAERE

Dirk van Bastelaere debuted with 'Five Years' (1984), including poems on the theme of the fragmentation of the ego faced with the chaos of the outside world. In 1988, Pornschlegel and other poems was published, one of the most controversial collections of the past twenty years. Partly thanks to these volumes, Van Bastelaere is seen as the major representative of postmodernism in Flanders. He favours a poetry that reflects on its own being and that stretches itself beyond its own limits. He advocates thinking as poetry as well as poetry as a way of thinking.

> **Van Bastelaere provokes, menaces and seduces, curses and sings, but ceaselessly knows to fascinate his reader, to tangle him in his web of words**
>
> ONS ERFDEEL

He has an extraordinary eye for form, structure and language and is strongly influenced by American poets such as Gertrude Stein and John Ashbery. His work is striking in its polysemic, complex character, full of references to paintings, pop songs, films and literature.

2000 saw the publication of 'Affairs of the Heart', generally acknowledged as his best and richest work to date. In this collection, the heart appears as an empty signifier which is accorded another meaning in every poem and is shown as a cultural construction. In 2006, he published the volume 'Forerunner of something big' (Voorbode van iets groots), until now his most recent volume.



AUTHOR

Dirk van Bastelaere (b. 1960) is a poet who also was involved with some literary magazines. In addition to poetry, he also writes essays, continuing in the vein of the post-structuralist thinking of Jacques Lacan, Roland Barthes and Julia Kristeva and drawing on contemporary thinkers as Boris Groys. The polemic character of his essays makes him one of the most committed poets in Flanders. *Photo © Patrick de Spiegelaere*

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TRANSLATION GRANTS Patrick Peeters - patrick@flandersliterature.be