

Language as a magnifying glass

Light Meters

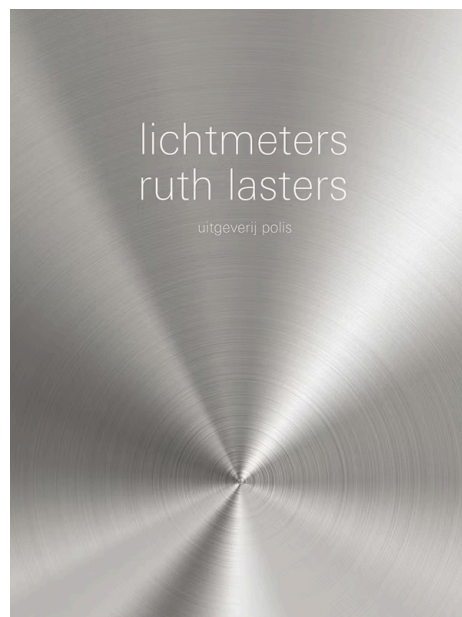
RUTH LASTERS

She connects a football game to the way our brain works, and flashing neon lights remind her of her own futility. Ruth Laster's poetry is characterized by playful leaps of the mind, yet they are never banal.

In 'Light meters', Ruth Lasters operates with a pair of silver scissors, filleting modern society affectionately, but uncompromisingly.

JURY REPORT VISB PRIZE

As a poet she is often inspired by objects from everyday life, such as black umbrella's or cherries lying on a plastic table cloth. Her language is clear, her tone shows an ability to put herself into perspective. She counters cynicism and desperation with tenderness, mild irony and absurdist humor. For Lasters, poetry is the number one place where she can exercise her thought in complete freedom. For that, she invents new words, leaving them out where you would expect them and tweaking the rules of grammar to fit her own idiosyncratic use of them. With the sense of purpose and curiosity of a scientist, she lets her imagination loose on the human species: she examines why elderly people walk with their backs hunched and wonders why we as humans don't form v-formations when afraid. Or she fantasizes about a place where you could relive the discovery of sorbet ice and the electron. Lasters employs language as a magnifying glass: she twists reality to see with a crystal-clear vision, against the loss of wonder, and for the gusto of discovery.



AUTHOR



Ruth Lasters (b. 1979), who works as a teacher in secondary education, made her debut in 2007 with 'Folding Plans'. Her second and most recent volume of poetry Light Meters followed after an eight-year hiatus and was awarded the Herman de Coninck Prize 2016. Besides poetry, she writes novels, columns and opinion. Photo © Koen Broos

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