

New Dutch Writing:

Featuring Simon Schama, Esther Gerritsen, Bart van Es and more

New Dutch Writing highlights the best contemporary literature from the Netherlands. Join us for this special event with Dutch and UK authors in conversation across politics, fiction and culture.

Headlined by **Simon Schama**, the day features Costa Book Award winner **Bart van Es**, newly translated authors **Esther Gerritsen** and **Jeroen Olyslaegers**, and **Herman Koch**, bestselling author of *The Dinner*.

Long famed as a model of tolerance and diplomacy, what's the Netherlands really like? Explore this question in the company of its authors and get books signed after the sessions.

Presented by the Dutch Foundation for Literature in association with Modern Culture

11.05pm – 12.15pm Opening panel: Joris Luyendijk and Naema Tahir

Dutch society has long been held up as a model of political and social tolerance, but is this the real story? Writer and journalist **Joris Luyendijk** wrote a first-hand account of the Dutch parliament *You didn't hear it from me, but...* and has reported on politics and conflict from across the Middle East. He recently returned to the Netherlands after 10 years in London, citing Brexit as the reason. **Naema Tahir** is a writer and human rights lawyer, focusing on the rights of immigrant women and is the author of *The Solitude of the Present*, a novel on immigration through the eyes of a child in London.

12.35pm – 1.45pm Esther Gerritsen and Herman Koch

Esther Gerritsen is a novelist and playwright who skewers contemporary life with her acerbic characters and dark themes – *Roxy*, the anti-heroine of her latest novel, is grieving for a dead husband, escaping on a road trip which strains the loyalty of her friends and family. **Herman Koch** is the bestselling author of *The Dinner*, and in his latest novel *The Ditch*, the mayor of Amsterdam, Robert Walter is consumed by jealousy as he suspects his wife of having an affair. Koch holds up a mirror to bourgeois society and shatters its image. The authors discuss their dark characters and view of society with chair **Suzi Feay**.

Lunch Break

Participants will need to make their own arrangements for lunch.

2.45pm – 3.45pm Bart van Es and Jeroen Olyslaegers

The history of war and occupation weighs heavily on the streets of Dutch and Flemish cities. Through biography and fiction, **Bart van Es** and **Jeroen Olyslaegers** have different ways to evoke the occupation, using family and

communal histories to shape the stories. Bart van Es' *The Cut Out Girl* won the Costa Book of the Year award through its telling the story of Little Lien and her hiding from the Nazis in occupied Amsterdam. Jeroen Olyslaegers' novel *Will* is a morally complex novel set in Antwerp amidst the streets where the author himself lives.

4pm – 5.15pm Simon Schama

Simon Schama made his name as a historian of the Dutch Golden Age, and his love affair with the nation and its artistic culture has only deepened over time. He published *Rembrandt's Eyes* in 1999 and his latest collection of essays, *Wordy*, steps forward through the centuries covering Piet Mondrian and the De Stijl movement, up to the rebirth of the Rijksmuseum, the ultimate repository of the nations cultural riches. In this keynote talk he discusses Dutch culture and his personal affection for its artists.