

ERASMUS
PRIZE
ANNUAL
2022

Erasmus Prize Annual Report

David Grossman



Annual Report Erasmus Prize 2022

mending
a thorn world



Colofon

Erasmus Prize Annual Report

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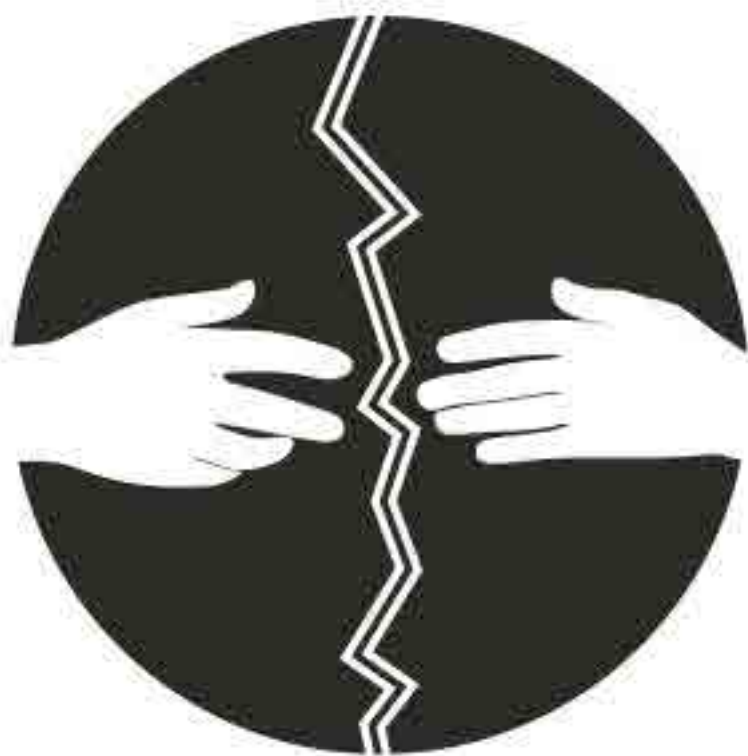
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Foreword

The Erasmus Prize 2022 was awarded to the Israeli writer David Grossman. The theme of the prize this year was 'mending a thorn world'.

After two years in which all festivities were postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we were once again able to organize an award ceremony at the Royal Palace in Amsterdam. The theme of "mending a thorn world" proved to be particularly relevant: following a long period of social distancing, people could come together once again in celebration.

Grossman's oeuvre spans four decades, during which he wrote twenty novels. Besides novels, he also wrote children's books, essays, travel stories, novellas and plays. His work has been translated in over thirty languages and is read around the world. Writing in Israel, Grossman does not shy away from dealing with delicate subjects in his work, such as the occupation of Palestinian territory, the Holocaust and generational trauma. His debut *The Smile of the Lamb* (1983) was one of the first novels that dealt with the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory. A recurring theme is that the path to reconciliation lies in the knowing of the other. He not only contrasts the experience of a young Israeli soldier with that of an elderly Palestinian resident, but also that of a child facing the monster of the Holocaust, and the grief of a father versus that of a mother after the death of their son. In his writing, he finds ways to bridge the gap between friend and foe, never abandoning the hope of achieving mutual understanding. Through the compassion he reserves for each of his characters, he manages to transcend the personal and touch on something that is universally human.

His Majesty the King, patron of the foundation, presented the Erasmus Prize to David Grossman on November 29th during a festive ceremony in the Royal Palace in Amsterdam, in the presence of Her Majesty the Queen and Her Royal Highness Princess Beatrix. In the subsequent reception offered by His Majesty the King, Grossman was warmly welcomed by a large audience of fellow writers, family, friends and admirers of his work. We are grateful to the Royal Family for their hospitality.

The widespread appreciation for Grossman's work in the Netherlands was reflected in the well-attended events the foundation had organized in his honor, as well as the considerable media coverage he received for winning the Erasmus Prize. In the days leading up to the award ceremony, several events took place around the laureate, including a biographical evening at the Internationaal Theater Amsterdam, in which an interview by Arnon Grunberg was interspersed with film and theatrical performances. Interviews appeared in all major Dutch newspapers and Grossman was a guest on the live TV programme *Buitenhof*.

In June 2022, before David Grossman received the Erasmus Prize, there was the long-awaited visit of Grayson Perry, winner of the Erasmus Prize 2021. After two years the Foundation was finally able to welcome Perry to The Netherlands. He performed his one-man show 'A Show for Normal People' at the Royal Theatre Carré, which was received with high praise by both the audience and the media. His visit to the Netherlands concluded with a festive reception at the British Embassy in The Hague.

Besides the Erasmus Prize, the Foundation also awarded its annual Research Prizes to five young PhD scholars who, according to the jury, produced excellent dissertations. During the award ceremony at the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, the jury pronounced the *laudatio* for each winner, after which the PhD students gave a short presentation on the continuation of their work.

This annual report contains short reports about all these activities.

We thank all our collaboration partners who took part so enthusiastically: Internationaal Theater Amsterdam, OBA, Royal Theatre Carré, KNAW and the British Embassy in The Netherlands.

Xandra Schutte, chair
Shanti van Dam, director

Grayson Perry in The Netherlands

In June 2022, winner of the Erasmus Prize 2021, Grayson Perry paid his long-awaited visit to The Netherlands. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions that were in place at the time, some of the events that were organized in celebration of the British artist could not take place in the previous year.

At last, on Sunday June 26th, Grayson Perry performed his spectacular one-man show 'A Show for Normal People' in the Royal Theater Carré in Amsterdam. His performance was met with much enthusiasm and a standing ovation from the largely Dutch audience, for whom Perry had made a few special adjustments. Raving reviews in two of The Netherlands' major newspapers further confirmed that the evening was a grand success.

In honour of winning the Erasmus Prize, a celebratory reception was held on June 28th at the British embassy in The Hague at the invitation of the British ambassador, Joanna Roper. The decorations of the prize had already been awarded to Perry symbolically by the patron of the foundation, His Majesty the King, during a digital ceremony in December 2021. At the reception, the chair of the board Jet de Ranitz could at last present the decorations to Perry in person. Cellist Maya Fridman performed a piece in honour of Perry, after which members of the board, the jury and old friends of Perry got the opportunity to meet and congratulate him in person.



Grayson Perry in Carré



**Grayson Perry's
'A Show for Normal People'
komt naar Carré**

nrc

Recensie | Theater

Kunstenaar Grayson Perry vult Carré met zijn sardonische lach en hoogmis voor zijn teddybeer

Theatershow Erasmusprijs-winnaar Grayson Perry, kunstenaar en travestiet, gaf zondagavond in het Amsterdamse theater Carré zijn 'Show for Normal People'.

De show vloeide voort uit de Erasmusprijs, de prestigieuze onderscheiding die Perry in december 2021 kreeg voor zijn bijdrage aan de kunsten. Door corona ging de prijsuitreiking in het Paleis op de Dam toen niet door. Na [een Zoom-sessie met koning Willem-Alexander](#), waarvoor Perry zich in een extravagante oranje jurk stak, vond de overhandiging online plaats. Er volgde een tentoonstelling over zijn veelzijdige werk in het Kunstmuseum Den Haag, en zondag speelde hij voor de allerlaatste keer deze show waarmee hij in het najaar langs Britse theaters toerde.

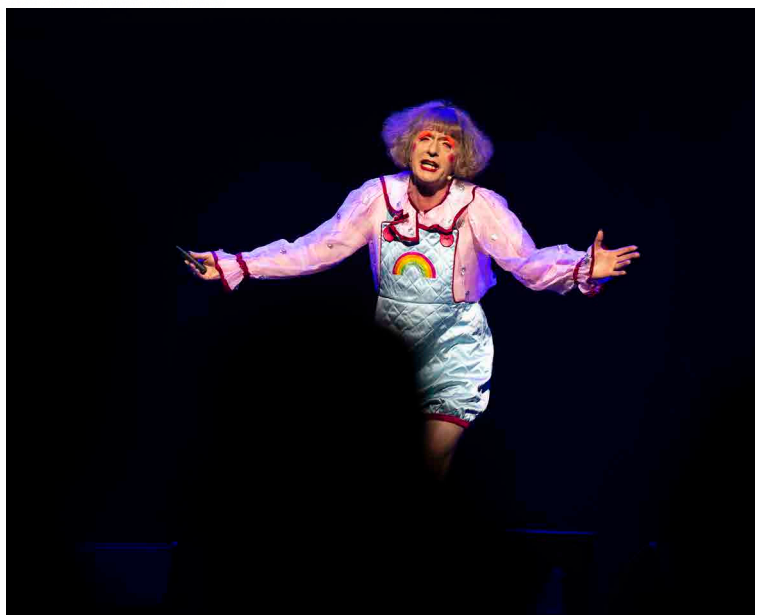
Trouw

Recensie Theater

Grayson Perry verandert heel Carré in aanhangers van de religie van zijn knuffelbeer

Grayson Perry
A Show for Normal People

★★★★★







Grayson Perry and member of the board Maarten Asccher



H.E. Joanna Roper, Grayson Perry, Philippa Perry and director Shanti van Dam

Citation 2022

David Grossman

Article 2 of the Constitution of the Praemium Erasmianum Foundation reads as follows:

“Within the context of the cultural traditions of Europe in general and the ideas of Erasmus in particular, the aim of the Foundation is to enhance the position of the humanities, the social sciences and the arts. The emphasis lies on tolerance, cultural diversity and non-dogmatic, critical thinking. The Foundation tries to achieve this aim by awarding prizes and by other means. A cash prize is awarded under the name of ‘Erasmus Prize’.”

In accordance with this article, the Board of the Foundation has decided to award the Erasmus Prize 2022 to Israeli writer David Grossman. The prize is awarded on the following grounds:

- The theme of this year's prize has been titled 'mending a torn world.' In the wide field of literature no one embodies this theme more than Grossman. In his work he seeks to understand people from within, and to regard the other with love, transcending borders of war and history.

- In a world dominated by serious tensions in which it often seems as if we don't know how to relate to one another, his extraordinary storytelling brings the unknown and feared 'other' closer, transforming conflict, pain and suffering into something that offers consolation. In his numerous novels and essays, Grossman possesses an incomparable ability to mend a torn world.

- The jury describes his body of work as a monument to the power of the imagination, which serves as a guide to 'how to be human'.

- He has demonstrated extraordinary courage in tackling uncomfortable political subjects, as well as themes such as friendship, living with the past, and the bonds that link generations. Whether his work deals with real conflict or the loss of humanity, hope, grief, or violence, it always goes beyond the particular to reveal universal human struggles.

- Grossman, like Erasmus, is a true humanist: he lets us see humankind, naked and fallible, noble and monstrous in equal measure. His work changes the reader and his compassionate way of portraying characters serves as an inspiration to us all.

Read by Shanti van Dam, director

*Grossman, like Erasmus,
is a true humanist: he
lets us see humankind,
naked and fallible, noble
and monstrous in equal
measure.*



Director Shanti van Dam reads the citation.



Chair of the board Jet de Ranitz, H.M. the Queen, David Grossman, H.M. the King, H.R.H. Princess Beatrix and director Shanti van Dam

Laudatio

Your Majesties, Your Royal Highness, Your Excellencies , ladies and gentleman,

We live in a world at war. Whether we experience real conflict around us or have unknowingly internalized war and are in conflict with fellow humans, with society, with ourselves or with life itself, we live in a permanent state of conflict. Duality is the deepest human experience. For everything has its counterpart in the world we know. How can we choose an enlightened path that benefits our collective existence and contributes to a more peaceful world?

We all have a part to play in the world, both in our immediate surroundings and in society at large, which is ultimately humanity itself. That is where the role of the writer comes into play. David Grossman was born into a heritage of prosecution, into a land torn by division, conflict and a search for identity. And he has put his writing at the service of the good of the world. By understanding the Other, even though there is no other, only another version of ourselves.

Anyone who has had the fortune of meeting David Grossman in person, as I was last summer in Italy, immediately understands that you cannot separate Grossman the writer from his art and mastery of literature.

There is an immense yet gentle force that draws you closer. The depth of sense of humanity you experience in his presence is deeply soothing. For that is the moment you realize that you had been living in a world at war, but suddenly that world disappears and is replaced by openness, kindness, curiosity, and a yearning to understand the other. A field of endless possibilities, a field of just being human. Making mistakes. Being lost and found again. A field of comfort, understanding, redemption even. Above all else, there is one thing outweighing everything: an urgent desire to understand human experience.

Although I am speaking of David Grossman, this prelude is not personal. For the eye of the writer, witnessing humanity in all its forms, is not personal.

With David Grossman's work we come to understand the deepest meaning of the Jewish term 'Tikkun ha olam'. The act of repairing the earthly world we live in.

To make the world more just, peaceful, tolerant and equal through kindness and political action. Repairing the world also means undoing the world as we know it. To go beyond the familiar notions and concepts. Beyond right or wrong. Beyond accusation, victimhood and blame. To understand the true meaning and experience of being human and finding the truth of the moment in order to reflect it back into the universe. Our collective field of understanding. Every reader of Grossman's work is a part of that act. Which means hundreds of thousands of readers experiencing an understanding of the unspeakable, being touched by it, weeping about it, intimately getting to know the human struggle, being led by this great writer to perform an act of kindness to the world. To us all.

To be able to perform tikkun ha olam one must be very clear, unsentimental, and have a love of truth. The truth of a situation, of a person, of life itself. But it also needs a gentle and sensitive heart. One that is not afraid to face darkness and light. That is brave enough to view and acknowledge all that we are as humans. Only then you can see what needs to be done to balance and restore order, and to make the world a little bit more whole than it was before.

In *The Smile of the Lamb* Grossman widens the human experience of conflict and war with metaphors and symbols, through the lives of men and women, occupier and occupant, to open the mind and descend into the heart's eye, to witness humanity with all its complexity and tender yearning. We witness the deepest meaning of occupation for human life as well as the loss of morale and identity of the occupier. All this is done with a perfectly clear eye, free of judgement. As life itself.

In *Falling Out of Time*, after the loss of his son, Grossman writes about this unthinkable tragedy in many voices. Even in this personal anguish he takes his fellow humans into the dark abyss with him. He turns it into a collective human experience and gives voice to all who have lost a child. Like a Greek tragedy, transcending the personal and making it a shattering universal condition.

In *See Under: Love* Grossman brilliantly explores the world through the eyes and voice of a child. For we as adults are like children in our inability to comprehend the holocaust and how humans could degrade and destroy other humans in such a way. Acknowledging the existence

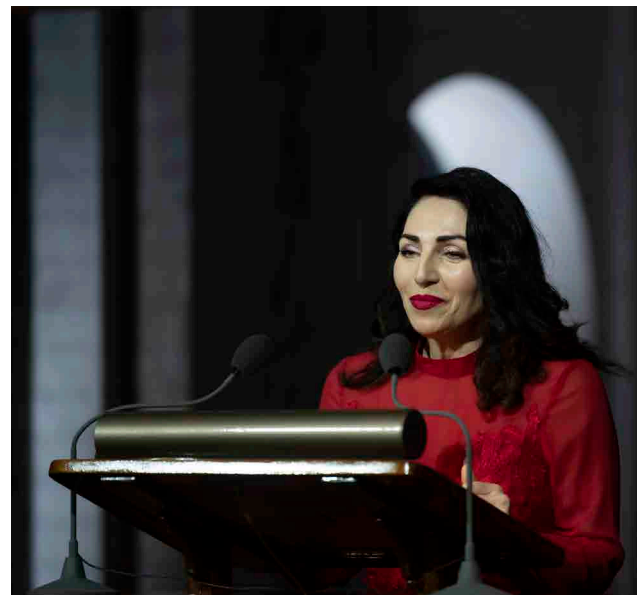
of a fellow writer who died during the holocaust and giving life to his heritage. With his giant yet gentle and unsentimental force, Grossman is brave enough to take something so big and write a deeply universal novel about it. That teaches us new perspectives.

A gentle heart is often mistaken for humbleness. But it is the heartbeat of our soul. The only way true intelligence and understanding of complex matters is delivered right into the heartbeat of the world is when it is filtered through the soft waves of one's gentle heart.

David Grossman, you are weaving an invisible web of force that undoes the world as we knew it and creates a world in a way that does it more justice.

David Grossman says that writers can weave an invisible web that has enormous power. A world-changing, world-creating power. The power to give voice to the mute. Tikkun ha olam: the recovery of the world in the deepest Kabbalistic sense.

The world we live in right now is in desperate need of a strong narrative, a powerful voice of understanding. One that guides us from division to unity, that opens our hearts and makes room for other narratives, that broadens our understanding.



David Grossman, you are weaving an invisible web of force that undoes the world as we knew it and creates a world in a way that does it more justice. With your work you are mending a torn world, showing us a way out of conflict, showing us a way out of blaming and victimizing. A world where there is hope. Where apathy has no place. Where understanding and a sensitive heart are superpowers for political change and a fulfilling life. If love is what holds the stars in the sky, then the invisible web you are weaving is what holds us in a loving embrace, as a reminder of the force of our own heart at moments when we feel alone in our hope for a better, just and peaceful future.

Read by Nazmiye Oral, on behalf of the Board



Sholto Kynoch (piano) and Raoul Steffani (vocals)



Laureate David Grossman gives his acceptance speech.

Acceptance Speech David Grossman

Your majesties, your royal highness, your excellencies, my dear friends, my beloved family, ladies and gentleman:

Sixty-one years ago, when I was an eight-year-old boy, I had a small revelation. It happened on the number 18 bus, in Jerusalem, while I was on my way to school early one morning. The radio was on, and they were broadcasting an interview with the pianist Arthur Rubinstein. The interviewer asked: "Mr. Rubinstein, on the occasion of your 75th birthday, could you sum up your life in one sentence?" Without hesitation, Rubinstein replied, "Art has made me a happy man. Thanks to art, I have known happiness."

I remember being amazed and even a little embarrassed: in the 1950s, with the heavy shadow of the past still hovering above us, the word 'happy' was not something you were supposed to say in public. I don't think I knew a single person – among my parents' circles of friends – who would have dared to claim, out loud, that he or she was happy. The passengers on the bus that day, weary people who lived in my working class neighborhood, certainly did not share the Americans' right to "the pursuit of happiness," which I would read about years later in the U.S. Declaration of Independence.

That incredible word, happiness (in Hebrew: *osher*) rolled down the bus like a gold coin, and I – with a child's eyes – looked at the imaginary coin and I knew: I want this thing Mr. Rubinstein speaks of. I want that special happiness. I want to be an artist.

More than six decades have gone by since that day, and art—writing—has brought me great happiness, much like the happiness I feel here today, with you. The happiness of being acknowledged, and even more so—of being understood. Even when writing caused me pain and suffering, it was a pain that had meaning, a suffering that comes with touching the authentic, primary materials of life. Literature—writing—taught me the pleasure of doing something delicate and precise in a coarse and murky world.

I am an absolutely secular man. I cannot believe in a God who would help me face the chaos of existence. And yet, writing has shown me the way – I'll call it the secular way – to have a horrifying sense of nothingness, of diving into loss and the total negation of life, while simultaneously experiencing a keen sense of vitality, of the fullness and

positivity of life. Even after the tragedy that struck my family when we lost our son, Uri, in the war, I learned that what allows me to withstand this duality of absence and presence – which to me is the essence of human existence – is to be immersed in the act of creation, of art.

Ladies and gentlemen, dear friends: the theme of the Erasmus Prize this year is "Mending a Torn World." This term originates in an ancient Jewish notion conceived over 2,000 years ago. I do not know whether Erasmus of Rotterdam knew of it, but there is no doubt that the concept guided his way of life and mode of thinking. "Mending the World" (in Hebrew: *tikkun olam*) describes a fundamental component of Jewish identity: an aspiration and obligation to improve our world; a sense of moral responsibility toward all people, whether Jewish or not; and a concern for social justice and even the environment.

If only I could say that the results of the recent Israeli election express these sort of humanistic, egalitarian, moral stances. They do not. Nevertheless, I remind myself again and again that there are still many people in Israel for whom despair is not an option. For whom apathy or escapism are luxuries they cannot afford and do not want. We are still here. Our parties might have lost, but our values and beliefs were not defeated, and they are more crucial than ever before.

Life in the Middle East has taught me to make do with little when it comes to my own wishes, too. Perhaps you are familiar with the anecdote about the American citizen who, during the Vietnam War, used to stand outside the White House for hours every Friday, holding a sign protesting the war. One day a journalist went up to him and asked, with a sardonic smile, "Do you really think you're going to change the world if you keep standing here?" "Change the world?" the man replied with surprise, "I have no intention of changing the world. I'm just making sure the world doesn't change me."

As someone who has spent his entire life in a disaster zone – again, the Middle East – I know how easy it is to give in to "the world," meaning, to cynicism, apathy, despair. And from there it is a short path to religious fanaticism, nationalism, fascism.

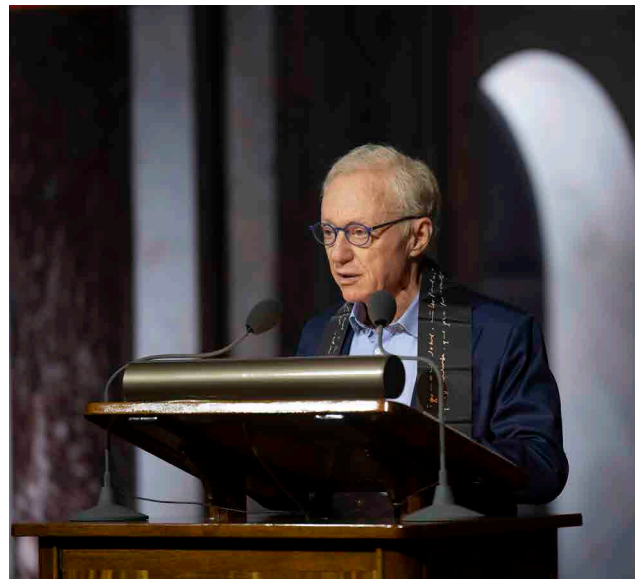
When I search for a mind that is truly free, a person who might serve as a role model for my struggle against despair, I think of the courageous, soul-baring Jewish Dutchwoman who lived here in Amsterdam during the Second World War and the Holocaust: Etty Hillesum willingly entered the Westerbork concentration camp, and was eventually murdered at Auschwitz.

Hillesum, as you know, managed to remain a free woman even under the harshest enslavement, and her entire being was a movement of the soul against the gravitational force of despair. This is what she wrote in her diary:

*At night, as I lay in the camp on my plank bed, surrounded by women and girls gently snoring, dreaming aloud, quietly sobbing and tossing and turning, women and girls who often told me during the day, 'We don't want to think, we don't want to feel, otherwise we are sure to go out of our minds,' I was sometimes filled with an infinite tenderness ... and I prayed, 'Let me be the thinking heart of these barracks.' ... The thinking heart of a whole concentration camp.'*¹

All of us, each of you sitting here in this auditorium, are living under far better conditions than those in which Etty Hillesum wrote those lines. Yet still, we all know that at any moment we may find that our freedom is taken away and we are surrounded by arbitrariness and tyranny, by the ills of racism, nationalism, fanaticism, by barbaric and thuggish behavior, like the conduct of Russia toward Ukraine—a belligerence that is currently endangering the world's security.

Literature—writing—taught me the pleasure of doing something delicate and precise in a coarse and murky world.



If such a moment arrives, if – under circumstance we may have trouble imagining now – the world ever turns upside down on us, as it has for millions of Ukrainians not too far from here, will we remember, will we persist in this private, heroic rebellion—to not stop being the feeling heart, the open, bared heart? And to not stop thinking?

To be the thinking heart. Again and again, the thinking heart.

¹ Etty Hillesum: An Interrupted Life. The Diaries 1941-1943. London, Picador, 1996. Translated by Eva Hoffman. Diary entry October 3rd, 1942.



Biography David Grossman

Born in Jerusalem in 1954, David Grossman is one of the leading Israeli writers of our time. After starting out as a radio presenter, he made his international breakthrough in 1989 with the novel *See Under: Love*, about the Shoah as seen through the eyes of a child. He has frequently voiced his support for peace in the Middle East. In 2006, he joined with Amos Oz in calling for an end to attacks on Lebanon, soon after which his own son was killed in action in the same war. That event became the subject of his 2011 book *Falling Out of Time*. Grossman has some twenty publications to his name, ranging from novels and children's books to collections of essays and travel reports. In his writing he employs a multitude of literary techniques and plays with language and the boundary between imagination and reality. Despite the heavy themes that he frequently addresses, his novels are also light-footed and full of grotesque humour. If anything characterizes him, it is his aversion to indifference. As he himself once wrote: '*Indifference is a very sophisticated way of cruelty.*'

David Grossman's oeuvre has been translated into numerous languages. *Falling Out of Time* has been adapted for the stage on various occasions. He has been the recipient of various literary awards, including the Prix Médicis Étranger, the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade and the Geschwister-Scholl-Preis. His 2015 novel *A Horse Walks Into a Bar* won the prestigious Man Booker International Prize and received rave reviews around the world.

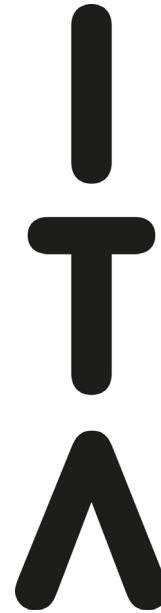
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Activities

An evening with David Grossman & Arnon Grunberg
November 23, 2022. Internationaal Theater Amsterdam

On Wednesday November 23rd, David Grossman was interviewed by the lauded Dutch writer Arnon Grunberg at the International Theatre Amsterdam. In front of a captivated audience, Grunberg and Grossman spoke about his body of work and about being a writer. Their conversation was interspersed with several musical and theatrical performances relating to Grossman's work. These included monologues from Dror Keren (*A Horse Walks Into A Bar*) and Rotem Carmeli (*Her Body Knows*) of the Cameri theatre in Tel Aviv, who were invited to Amsterdam for this special occasion. Dutch actors Nazmiye Oral and Gijs Scholten van Aschat performed a dialogue from *Falling Out of Time*, followed by a performance from Bach's Cello Suit no. 1 by Maya Fridman. It was a most special evening that culminated in a standing ovation. The programme was created in a co-production with ITA.



Arnon Grunberg and David Grossman at the Internationaal Theater Amsterdam



Maya Fridman



Dror Keren



David Grossman reads from his own work

November 25th, 2022. OBA Oosterdok Amsterdam

On Friday November 25th, David Grossman read a passage from his early novel *The Smile of the Lamb* in the theatre of the OBA Oosterdok, Amsterdam's largest public library. He was interviewed afterwards by writer and philosopher Joke Hermesen. They engaged in a short yet intimate conversation about the power of literature and what it means to be a writer.

Students of the undergraduate course Hebrew Language & Culture at the University of Amsterdam were also in attendance and were given the opportunity to ask questions. Prompted by the Erasmus Prize 2022, they participated in two lectures dedicated to David Grossman's work.

After the interview a large crowd gathered in the foyer, where Grossman signed copies of his books.



David Grossman and Joke Hermesen in the Openbare Bibliotheek Amsterdam



Media

David Grossman in the media

The awarding of the Erasmus Prize to David Grossman has garnered a lot of favourable media coverage.

In October 2022, an in-depth interview with Grossman by journalist Simone Korkus was published in De Groene Amsterdammer. Korkus visited Grossman at his home in Israel, as did journalist Stevo Akkerman of Trouw, who wrote another lengthy interview that was published in November 2022.

During his stay in The Netherlands, Grossman was interviewed by Michel Krielaars of NRC Handelsblad and Rob de Lange and Han Dirk Hekking of Financieel Dagblad. In the same week Grossman was a guest on the live tv-program Buitenhof, where he was interviewed by Pieter Jan Hagens.

In the days following the award ceremony in the Royal Palace Amsterdam, several columnists reflected on Grossman's acceptance speech. Michel Krielaars of NRC, Stevo Akkerman of Trouw, Natascha van Weezel of Het Parool and Rajaa Natour of the Israeli newspaper Haaretz mused on Grossman's captivating address.



David Grossman in the TV program Buitenhof, broadcasted on November 27th 2022

Interview David Grossman

‘We kunnen ons de luxe van totale wanhoop niet veroorloven’

De carrière van de Israëlische schrijver David Grossman, winnaar van de Erasmusprijs 2022 met als thema ‘verbinders in een verdeelde wereld’, begon met een levensveranderend incident. ‘Zo’n veertig jaar geleden reed ik in de bus naar huis...’

Simone Korkus

19 oktober 2022 – verschenen in **nr. 42**



Trouw

Wat bezielt David Grossman

Schrijver David Grossman
hekelte pogingen hem iets op
leggen. ‘Dan wil ik
vrijbreken en mijn eigen
lucht ademen’

De Israëlische schrijver David Grossman verloor zijn zoon in de Libanese oorlog maar weigert slachtoffer te zijn. Het getuigt van moed om te luisteren naar de verhalen van onze vijanden, zegt hij. Op 29 november ontvangt hij de Erasmusprijs.

Stevo Akkerman 19 november 2022

toef jaeger
@toefjaeger

‘David Grossman is net als Erasmus een ware humanist: hij laat ons de mens zien, naakt en feilbaar, even goddelijk als monsterlijk’ aldus de jury van @Erasmusprijs in @nrc @NRC_Boeken @nrccultuur @UitgCossee:

Translate Tweet



nrc.nl

Israëlische schrijver David Grossman wint Erasmusprijs
Thema ‘Verbinders’: De Erasmusprijs 2022 gaat naar de Israëlische schrijver David Grossman. ‘Hij is net als Erasmus een ware humanist’, aldus de jury, me...

Israëlische winnaar Erasmusprijs: 'Als er nu vrede komt, is die te laat'



Rob de Lange, Han Dirk Hekking

De Israëlische schrijver David Grossman krijgt dinsdag de Erasmusprijs voor zijn werk. Een gesprek over het kennen van de vijand, de teloorgang van de Israëlische democratie, permanente angst en een uitweg uit de spiraal van geweld. 'Er zijn vreselijke dingen in ons DNA gegraveerd.'

fd.

David Grossman is vereerd om de Erasmusprijs te ontvangen, 'want de prijs draait om humanisme'.

nrc



Interview

David Grossman: 'Bange mensen stemmen op krijgers'

David Grossman De Israëlische schrijver David Grossman krijgt dinsdag de Erasmusprijs voor zijn hele literaire oeuvre, waarin zijn inspanningen voor vrede in het Midden-Oosten een belangrijke rol spelen.

✎ Michel Krielaars 24 november 2022
🕒 Leestijd 3 minuten



Geen andere schrijver zet zich zo in om de wereld te repareren als David Grossman (Jeruzalem, 1954). Dinsdag ontvangt hij voor zijn inspanningen de Erasmusprijs uit handen van koning Willem-Alexander. Volgens de Stichting Praemium Erasmianum, die de prijs met het daaraan verbonden geldbedrag van 150.000 euro financiert, krijgt hij die voor zijn hele oeuvre waarin hij probeert „mensen van binnenuit te begrijpen en de ander met liefde te zien over de grenzen van oorlog en geschiedenis heen”.

HAARETZ

Israeli Writer David Grossman Wins 2022 Erasmus Prize

The prize, which includes a \$155,000 cash award, was bestowed on Grossman by Dutch King Willem-Alexander at the Royal Palace in Amsterdam on Tuesday for embodying 'tikkun olam,' repairing the world

nrc

Het denkende hart van David Grossman

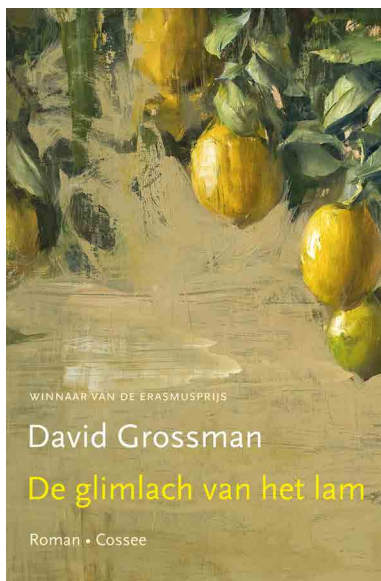
Michel Krielaars 2 december 2022
Leestijd 2 minuten

Onder de indruk van alle eerbetoon stond de Israëlische schrijver David Grossman dinsdag op het podium in het Paleis op de Dam. Zojuist had de koning hem de Erasmusprijs uitgereikt. En nu, na een muzikaal intermezzo, was het tijd voor zijn dankwoord. Hij haalde daarin een passage aan uit het Westerbork-dagboek van Etty Hillesum over de joodse vrouwen in haar barak die niet wilden nadenken of voelen over wat hun te wachten stond, omdat ze anders gek zouden worden van angst. Hillesum besloot daarop dat wel te doen en 'het denkende hart' van het concentratiekamp te zijn.



The Smile of the Lamb

On the occasion of the Erasmus Prize to David Grossman, a reissue of his novel *The Smile of the Lamb* was published by Cossee on October 13, 2022.



deVolkskrant

BOEKRECENSIE

Een overweldigende stroom gedachten in vroege roman van Erasmusprijswinnaar David Grossman ★★★★★

David Grossman ontvangt dinsdag de Erasmusprijs. Zijn literaire talent en verbeeldingskracht zijn ook onbetwist in de vroege roman die ter gelegenheid daarvan is heruitgegeven, en die bij uitzondering direct over het Israëlisch-Palestijnse conflict gaat.

Emilia Menkveld 24 november 2022, 16:57

Het Parool

Het Parool @parool · Dec 5, 2022

De Israëlische schrijver David Grossman kreeg afgelopen week de Erasmusprijs uitgereikt. Niet meer dan terecht, aldus columnist @Natascharosa.



Het is spijtig dat dit 'linkse geluid' – ik spreek zelf liever van een 'humaan geluid' – steeds zeldzamer wordt in Israël

Natascha van Weezel

Research Prizes 2022

The Praemium Erasmianum Foundation awarded its Research Prizes this year for the thirty-fourth time. Five prizes are presented each year to young researchers in the humanities and the social sciences who have written a PhD dissertation of outstanding quality at a Dutch university. The prize consists of a sum of € 3,000.

The jury assessed the nominations according to criteria such as originality, international significance, case-transcending character, style and legibility.

The jury consisted of:

Dr. mr. Maarten Asscher
Dr. Barnita Bagchi
Prof. dr. Antoine Buyse
Dr. Shanti van Dam
Prof. dr. Bas ter Haar Romeny
Prof. dr. Judi Mesman
Prof. dr. Jos de Mul

These are the winning dissertations of 2022:

Kila van der Starre

Poëzie buiten het boek. De circulatie en het gebruik van poëzie

Pauline Phoa

EU Law as a Creative Process. A hermeneutic approach for the EU internal market and fundamental rights protection

Eliza Ngutuku

Rhizomatic Cartographies of Children's Lived Experience of Poverty and Vulnerability in Siaya, Kenya

Marieke Oprel

The burden of nationality. Dutch citizenship policies towards German nationals in the aftermath of the Second World War (1944-1967)

Alexander West

Bujangga Manik, or Java in the Fifteenth Century



From left to right: Marieke Oprel, Kila van der Starre, Alexander West, Pauline Phoa, Shanti van Dam

Kila van der Starre

Poëzie buiten het boek. De circulatie en het gebruik van poëzie

Supervisor Prof. dr. Geert Buelens
Co-supervisor Dr. Laurens Ham, Dr. Yves T'Sjoen
Nomination: Utrecht University, Faculty of Humanities

Report by the selection committee

With her substantial and multifaceted study, Kila van der Starre went in search of poetry in the wider sense: not only on paper and in the ('book-focused') literary world, but also outside it: graffiti, tattoos, T-shirts, death notices, coffee mugs, social media, pillow cases, posters. Poetry turns out to be more than an intimate activity for small groups of practitioners and aficionados. Rather, poems are everywhere. And if poems are everywhere, they can provide pointers, in lots of places and in lots of ways, for literature education, the promotion of reading, poetry lessons, crowdfunding, community building and all other forms of lively, easily accessible literary and social culture.

Kila van der Starre's dissertation impresses on account of its thorough methodology and exceptional accessibility. Those two qualities even enhance each other, because her detailed surveys extend as far beyond the confines of literary theory as her subject itself does. That makes her research a textbook example of a doctoral study as an open process, with all the accompanying advantages and benefits. Moreover, the easy accessibility already referred to is strengthened by the extremely lucid and legible style in which this bulky book is written.



In short, this is a remarkably original, engaging and applicable (in the practical sense) dissertation. In these ideologically sensitive times, this study offers very practical findings with which to give substance to such subjects as diversity, inclusivity, democratization and accessibility in the field of poetry. In other words, *Poëzie buiten het boek: De circulatie en het gebruik van poëzie* is streetwise literary theory of great social relevance. A beautiful book.

Pauline Phoa

EU Law as a Creative Process. A hermeneutic approach for the EU internal market and fundamental rights protection

Supervisors: Prof. mr. dr. S.A. de Vries, Prof. mr. dr. A.M.P. Gaakeer, mr. dr. A. van den Brink

Nomination: Utrecht University, Faculty of Law, Economics and Governance

Report by the selection committee

This remarkable dissertation, with the intriguing title *EU Law as a Creative Process. A hermeneutic approach for the EU internal market and fundamental rights protection*, illuminates the law and the creation of jurisprudence with the lantern of literature.

Unlike the vast majority of legal experts, Phoa studies the work of the Court of Justice of the European Union not through its results, the judgements passed, but in a totally different way: as an intellectual journey. Tying in with the work of James Boyd White, the father of the 'law and literature' approach already mentioned, and the work of Paul Ricoeur, the French philosopher of hermeneutics, she researches in an original manner the traditions, writing style and way of working, including the rhetorical and narrative customs, of the European Court. Moreover, the study successfully reveals the tensions between narratives that are based on civil rights and those based more on economics and the market.

The book offers a good balance between theoretical reflections and concrete judicial examples, analysed with tremendous precision, of access to social allowances for economically inactive citizens and of the protection of personal data. But the multidisciplinary method developed by Phoa is applicable in many more cases and fields of law.

The jury found this dissertation to be clearly legible and excellently written, in an elegant style, and, because of that, perfectly understandable for non-specialists who make the effort. The form of the book, with its exceptionally artistic cover, reflects its contents: a truly creative process driven by an Erasmian spirit that shines throughout.



Eliza Ngutuku

Rhizomatic Cartographies of Children's Lived Experience of Poverty and Vulnerability in Siaya, Kenya

Supervisor: Prof. mr. dr. C.J.M.Arts
Co-supervisor: Dr. L.A. Okwany
Nomination: Erasmus University Rotterdam,
International Institute of Social Studies

Report by the selection committee

This book describes a one-year ethnographic study on how children experience their everyday lives in Siaya, a county in Kenya characterized by high poverty and low indicators of child wellbeing. Even on the surface, it is easy to see how such a study is both scientifically and societally relevant, but this thesis goes much deeper than what the surface suggest on all counts.

Instead of taking key concepts such as poverty, vulnerability, rights, and even childhood as self-explanatory and linear, this thesis takes a more open and questioning stance to dominant interpretations. With this approach, the study convincingly shows how these concepts are socially constructed and – if taken for granted – inevitably constrain the ways in which they are studied and understood. Without such constraints, there is room for contradictions, for innovative and more critical avenues of understanding children's lived experiences.

A study on vulnerable children can easily turn into a series of sad stories that tug at the heartstrings, but this thesis does a great job at analyzing these stories, and turning them into more than the sum of individual experiences, providing real insight into 'uncomfortable' truths. This integrative approach, using multiple theoretical frameworks as lenses and analytical tools, makes this thesis relevant to all academic fields that study childhood, poverty, development, and human rights.

Although the themes and literature central to this study are challenging, the thesis is written in a way that inspires, taking the reader on a journey from one beautifully formulated and profound insight to the next.

In sum, this thesis is profound in its breadth and depth, impressive in its innovative approach, and inspiring in its insights about the language and workings of inequality locally and globally. A true winner according to the jury.



Marieke Oprel

The burden of nationality. Dutch citizenship policies towards German nationals in the aftermath of the Second World War (1944-1967)

Supervisor: Prof. dr. Susan Legêne & Prof. dr. A.J.J. Nijhuis

Co-supervisor: Prof. dr. Wouter Veraart

Nomination: VU Universitu Amsterdam, Faculty of Humanities

Report by the selection committee

This dissertation reveals the all but forgotten history of German nationals in the Netherlands after World War II. It offers a theoretical and practical reflection on evolving 'citizenship' as a technical and normative concept for inclusion and exclusion. In this way, Oprel makes an important contribution to thinking about the political, social and cultural process of defining citizenship in the post-war years in the Netherlands.

The jury for the Dissertation Prizes was impressed by the scale of the research. It involved consulting, analysing and categorizing over 25,000 system cards with rudimentary details concerning citizens with the German nationality; reflecting theoretically on the digitization of such archives; researching legal systems and those who administer them; carrying out in-depth studies of carefully selected family histories; and talking to numerous people directly involved, especially children whose parents were declared enemy subjects.

Not only the scale, thoroughness and accessible style of the research, but also its originality commands respect. It involved a unique study of a largely forgotten – or probably repressed – piece of national history. In terms of method, this rich study successfully links the political, legal, historical and sociological dimensions of the theme, as well as the applied quantitative and qualitative research methods.

Although the research is primarily of value within the national context, it is also of international relevance. The brief comparison with similar policies in surrounding countries invites further comparable research. Finally, the jury notes the considerable relevance of this study today. Marieke Oprel wrote an impressive book, of great societal relevance.



Alexander West

Bujangga Manik, or Java in the Fifteenth Century

Supervisor: Prof. dr. Ben Arps
Co-supervisor: Dr. Aone van Engelenhoven
Nomination: Leiden University, Faculty of Humanities

Report by the selection committee

Alexander West describes his dissertation as an ‘edition and study’ of *Bujangga Manik*, a fifteenth-century narrative poem in Old Sundanese, a language of West Java. And it is – which in itself would have been enough to make Erasmus interested. But it is even more than that.

First, it is an absolutely exemplary edition and study. The text edition and translation are outstanding, and really every aspect that could be discussed, down to the box in which the manuscript is kept, is covered. West successfully combines traditional philology with modern approaches, also paying attention to the materiality of the text.

Second, the main title is not just *Bujangga Manik*, but it is *Bujangga Manik, or Java in the Fifteenth Century*. The poem itself gives us a unique, emic picture of West Java before the arrival of European colonists and before the Islamization. But West also adduces many other texts in a great variety of languages – including Portuguese, Classical Chinese, and Old Javanese – in order to give a comprehensive picture of late medieval Java. In addition, he brings in archaeological data, old photographs and images, as well as ethnographic studies. Thus *Bujangga Manik* becomes the starting point for a wide-ranging study, which offers new information on the larger area of Southeast Asia and beyond.

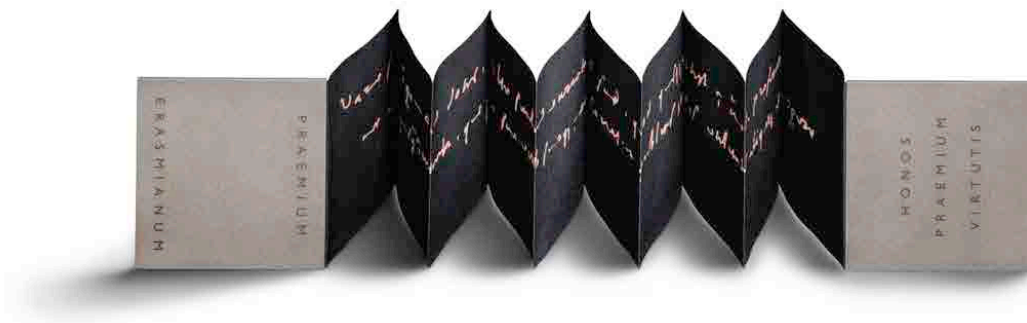
As West knows how to write and also structures his book extremely well, the result is a highly accessible, eminently readable, and even captivating book, that sets a new standard for the broad field of Southeast Asian philological studies and considerably advances our understanding of the Indonesian archipelago in the period before European contact.



Origin and Aim of the Praemium Erasmianum Foundation

On 23 June 1958, His Royal Highness Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands founded the Praemium Erasmianum. The aim of the organisation, as described in article 2 of its constitution, is to enhance the position of the humanities, the social sciences and the arts and to promote appreciation of these fields within society, within the context of the cultural traditions of Europe in general and the ideas of Erasmus in particular. The emphasis is on tolerance, cultural multiformity and undogmatic critical thinking.

The Erasmus Prize consists of €150,000 and adornments. The Board is composed of leading members of the Dutch cultural, scholarly and business communities.



The adornments are designed by Bruno Ninaber van Eyben. The adornments consist of a harmonica folded ribbon with a titanium plate at both ends. In closed form it is a booklet, when opened a ribbon with a text in Erasmus' handwriting. This text, taken from a letter to Jean de Carondelet (Basel 5 January 1523), is characteristic of Erasmus' thinking:

Diverse are the gifts of men of genius and many are the different kinds of ages. Let each one reveal the scope of his competence and let no one be envious of another who in keeping with his own ability and style tries to make a useful contribution to the education of all.

Erasmus to Jean de Carondelet Bazel 5 january 1523

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