

ULTIMA 2016 LITERATURE JEROEN OLYSLAEGERS

Jeroen Olyslaegers (born in Mortsel, 1967) is the author of plays, columns and novels.

His fifth novel 'Wil' was published in 2016 and instantly drew a lot of praise. The book describes Antwerp in the Second World War in a unique way. Violence and distrust lurk around every corner in occupied Antwerp. Wilfried Wils sees himself as a budding poet, but must also try to survive as an auxiliary police officer. Beautiful Yvette falls in love with him and her brother Lode is a reckless individual who sticks his neck out for Jews. Wilfried's artistic mentor, Nijdig Baardje, on the other hand, wants to destroy all Jews. Navigating uncomfortably between the two worlds, Wilfried tries to survive while the hunt for Jews continues relentlessly. Years later he tells his story to one of his descendants.

'Wil' is the last part of the W trilogy. The first two parts of the trilogy 'Wij' and 'Winst' were published in 2009 and 2012 respectively. They will be released again later this year. Key elements in this triptych are memory and identity, active victims and passive criminals, cherished uneasiness and disregard for decline.

'Wil' has been translated into English, French, German and Czech. At the start of 2017 Olyslaegers received the Fintro Literatuurprijs (formerly the Gouden uil) for this novel.

He started out in 1994 with 'Navel', followed by a collection of short stories 'Il faut manger' in 1996 and 'Open gelijk een mond' in 1999.

Together with Jan Fabre, Olyslaegers wrote the script for the play 'Mount Olympus. To glorify the cult of tragedy, a 24-hour performance' (2015). In 2009 Jeroen Olyslaegers wrote a theatrical adaptation of 'Wuthering Heights' by Emily Brontë for Artemis theatre in Den Bosch, NL. He also staged an adaptation of the Hendrik Conscience classic 'De Loteling' at KVS theatre, 'In het lot gevallen' (2005).

In 2003 he produced the text for 'Mood on the Go' for Het Toneelhuis (2003-2004) which was translated into French and German.

Since then he has also produced reviews for Humo and other magazines and columns for Studio Brussel and Klara.

In 2014 he received the Arkprijs van het Vrije Woord (free speech award) for his work and social commitment. In the same year he also won the Edmond Hustinx prize for playwrights for his theatre work.