

PRESS RELEASE

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DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE, YOUTH, SPORT AND MEDIA

Ivo Van Hove honoured with the Flemish Culture Prize for Overall Cultural Merit 2015

Today the theatre and opera director Ivo Van Hove received the Flemish Culture Prize for Overall Cultural Merit 2015 from the Flemish Minister of Culture Sven Gatz. The minister praised him for his rich and pioneering track record. The jury commended his impressive visionary career.

Ivo Van Hove (born in 1958) consecutively directed the theatre companies Akt, Akt/Vertikaal, De Tijd, Het Zuidelijk Toneel, and since 2001, Toneelgroep Amsterdam. In addition, from 1997 to 2004 he was the director of the Holland Festival, where he presented a selection of leading international theatre, dance and opera. He has worked as a guest director at La Comédie Française, Young Vic, De Munt, Schaubühne Berlin, Münchner Kammerspiele and New York Theatre Workshop.

His productions give a boost to the performing arts both in Belgium and abroad. With respect to content, almost anything can be discussed on stage. His approach is often extreme and subversive but always aimed at as wide an audience as possible. For each new text, Van Hove seeks an adapted, often unusual and surprising form. *'When starting out as a director he showed visionary leadership, often going against the grain,'* explained the jury.

Van Hove's first role as a director was 'Geruchten' in 1981 with thirty non-professional actors and Guy Cassiers in the leading role. The piece took place in a run-down laundrette on Sint-Jansplein in Antwerp. He quickly discovered that he could create a very personal message with classic texts. For the jury, this is precisely why Ivo Van Hove's work is so ground-breaking. He is better than anyone at translating classic texts, novels and films to the modern day. The theatre language he developed is both analytical and detached, as well as intensely physical and passionate.

Sven Gatz: *'The quantity of top-notch productions which Ivo Van Hove has created is incredible. They resulted in prestigious prizes, everywhere he went. As famous as he is worldwide, Ivo Van Hove has rightfully merited this Flemish Culture Prize.'*

Ivo Van Hove: *'I am deeply honoured with this prestigious Culture Prize. Even though my work has taken me far beyond the borders of the place where my mother and father brought me into the world, I feel that part of me still remains a villager, a Fleming and a Belgian. I have very high regard for the fact that Flanders is acknowledging my work in this way.'*

From the very beginning of his career, Ivo Van Hove has worked with the scenographer and lighting designer Jan Versweyveld. Last year, as work and life partners, they received the Amsterdam Art Prize in the *Proven Quality 'hors concours'* category.

In 2015 and 2016, Van Hove also managed to win other major theatre prizes for **A view from the bridge / Vu du pont** by Arthur Miller, in London, New York and Paris.

Visconti's **Les Damnés** was staged at the 70th Festival d'Avignon in 2016. After experiencing great success in New York, the musical **Lazarus** by David Bowie and Ivo Van Hove will be shown in London this autumn. This season Ivo Van Hove is directing **Hedda Gabler** at the National Theatre in London, **Salome** at the Nederlandse Opera and three shows at Toneelgroep Amsterdam: **De dingen die voorbijgaan** by Couperus – in co-production with Toneelhuis – Janáček's song cycle **Dagboek van een verdwenene (The Diary of One Who Disappeared)** – in co-production with Muziektheater Transparant and De Munt, and **Obsession**, the international co-production with the Barbican Centre, starring Jude Law. The latter will premiere in London in April 2017.

These last three productions will also be staged at the Kaaaitheater (Brussels), Toneelhuis (Antwerp) and deSingel (Antwerp) this season.

Flanders Culture Prizes 2015

On the recommendation of a jury of experts, the Flemish Minister of Culture honours a person or organisation that has made a significant contribution to the cultural landscape in Flanders during the previous season. Flanders Culture Prizes announce the winner at an important event in the sector, putting both the sector and the winner in the spotlight and recognising the achievements of both. The prize money consists of a sum of €10,000. For the Flemish Community Prize for General Cultural Merit, the Flemish government sets aside a sum of €20,000. Each winner also receives the small bronze sculpture 'La ultima isla' by [Philip Aguirre](#).

www.cultuurprijzen.be

#cultureprizes @deptCJSM

Background information

<http://tga.nl/employees/ivo-van-hove>

[Press server](#)

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