

Roos van Geffen, theatre maker and scenographer.

Roos van Geffen was a student of Theatre Design at the Academy of Fine Art in Tilburg and at the Academy for Performing Arts in Maastricht. Since 1997 she creates installations and performances for a variety of festivals, among others The summer of Antwerp in Belgium, Festival VEO in Spain, Battersea Arts Centre in London. From 2005 until 2010 she created productions at Huis aan de Werf in Utrecht. In 2010 she started Foundation Immens to produce her own performances and projects. The successful performance Vangst, the collection of fears and desires, played at 4 summer festivals and will be touring in 2012.

Besides she works as a freelance designer of scenery and costumes. She co-operates on a regular base with Koos Terpstra at the Noord Nederlands Toneel, designs décor and costumes for theatres in Norway, for Tryater and quite a number of other productions. Roos was selected to represent The Netherlands at Prague Quadrennial 2011, the world exhibition for scenography, together with the designers Theun Mosk, Lena Mueller and Marloeke van der Vlugt.

“The essence of things can be found not by describing them, but by experiencing them”

In her performances Roos van Geffen creates environments, in which she invites her public to look at reality in a different way. The spectator gets a central position: he experiences, goes through things and observes. The theatre-maker takes the time to titillate in a subtle way the sensitivity of the spectator and open up his eyes for details that normally go unnoticed. In this way a space is created in which the audience can focus on the essence of being a human being. Her work is characterized by a quiet stillness, associative images and a clear, plain theatre language.

“Hartstocht” (2002-2008 in cooperation with Dries Verhoeven) is an example of a surprising and fascinating framing of reality. The visitor looks upwards through a mirror from a driving VW-bus. In that way he experiences the world turned upside down and sees details that he never noticed before. “Immens” (2006) is a sensory one-on-one performance. The spectator is guest of the performer who conducts a tea ceremony. In this silent meeting, the beauty of everyday miracles and the “untold” between two humans make themselves felt. The performance “We” works up to a moment of actual contact. The spectator sits just by himself in a wooden cubicle. In front of him faces appear out of the dark. The spectator is given time to really observe these faces, but he himself is as well being observed, described and spoken to. In this way the opportunity comes up to reflect on questions such as: “How do I look at you? Who are you? But especially the question: who am I? The performances of van Geffen titillate the senses, create a safe space for sometimes strong emotions and catch in the limited time a little bit of the essence of life. In that way she presents the visitor what she misses in modern society: a moment of serenity and self-reflection, an intense experience of stillness in an hectic world.

