

Guy Coolen: biography

Guy Coolen (°1966) studied Germanic Philology at the University of Antwerp, where he specialised in Dutch and English Literature. During these studies, he also obtained a degree in Agogics. Afterwards, he studied Theatre Studies with Carlos Tindemans and Luk van den Dries at UIA, and at Utrecht University he studied Medieval Literature. He continued at Ghent University to study Communication Science, where he obtained his PhD with a work on the Blauwe Maandag Compagnie. He obtained all his degrees with distinction.

During his studies, Guy Coolen worked for numerous small theatre companies as a volunteer assistant. He also wrote and performed several theatre texts. He was member of the editorial board of numerous magazines (including *Deus Ex Machina*, *E-tcetera* ...) and founded the magazine *Sardonicum* with a number of colleagues. During this period, he regularly gave lectures and organised debates and events. For Belgian author Hugo Claus' 60th birthday, he organised a grand event at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Antwerp.

After his studies, Guy Coolen went to work organising the Proms at the Flemish Opera, first as an extra, later as a directing assistant. This is how he assisted Robert Carsen in Aix-en-Provence. At Flanders Opera, he was co-founder and board member of Cherubino, Flanders Opera's youth association.

Since 1994, he has been artistic and general director of Muziektheater Transparant in Antwerp. The organisation provides residencies for composers, singers and theatre makers and delivers various music theatre projects all over the world. For instance, Transparant performed at the Munich Biennale, Salzburger Festspiele, Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, KunstenfestivaldesArts, Holland Festival, Covent Garden Festival, Festival d'Avignon, Bruges 2002, Salamanca 2002, Stavanger Cultural Capital 2008, and is regularly invited to the Opera de Paris, the Holland Festival, Festival Ars Musica, KunstenfestivaldesArts, and at festivals in Canada, Australia, etc.

Guy made Muziektheater Transparant an internationally profiled music theatre house that responds to the topicality of music theatre life. A few years ago, it added an important youth music theatre component: with the TRANSLAB project, it opened its doors to young makers.

Guy Coolen is a member of numerous organisations, including the European Cultural Parliament. He is a board member of Opera Europa, member of the Executive Council of the International Theatre Institute, board member of Cultural Treaty Flanders-Netherlands, board member of the theatre group Laika and chairman of the baroque ensemble B'Rock. Since 2008, he has also been artistic director of the annual O. Festival Rotterdam for Opera. Music. Theatre. which in 2015 was nominated for best opera festival and for the 'Innovation Award' of Classical:NEXT. In addition, Guy is intendant of Fast Forward, a programme of Fonds Podiumkunsten Nederland to support the international development of Dutch creators.

Guy Coolen enjoys writing and travelling. Besides musical theatre, he is an avid film buff and loves history. He speaks and writes Dutch, English, French and German.