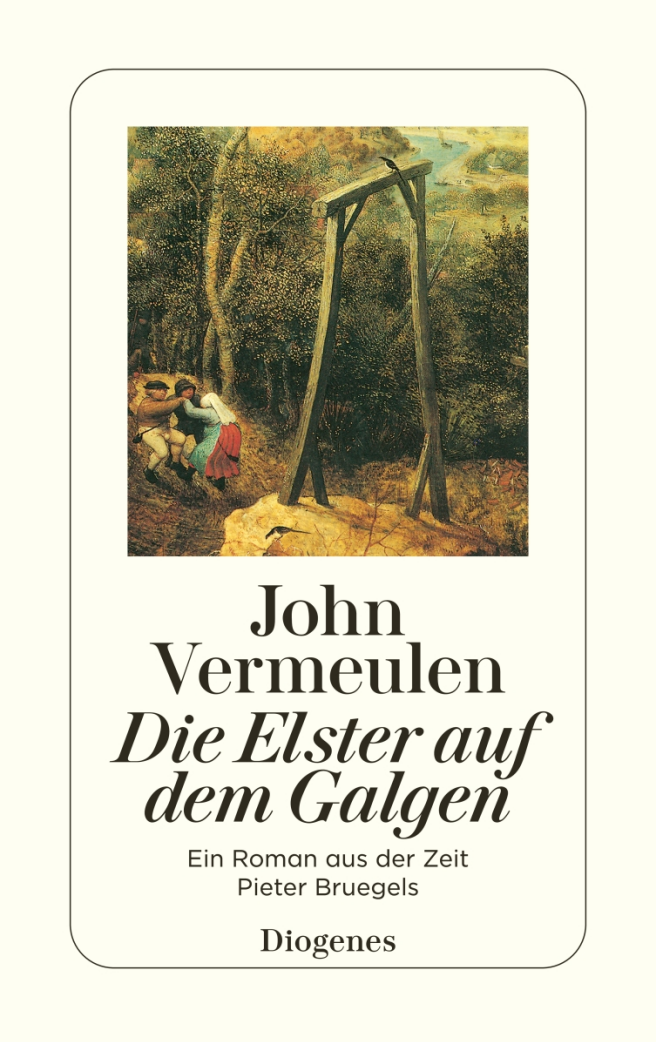
Diogenes

Book factsheet

John Vermeulen
Magpie on the Gallows

Published by Diogenes as *Die Elster auf dem Galgen*
Original title: *De Ekster op de galg*



A young boy secretly observes an horrific scene: people being brought to the gallows by the henchmen of the Spanish Inquisition, cheered on by a mob of voracious onlookers. The young boy preserves the impression in a sketch that, years later, will form the basis of a world-famous painting: Magpie on the Gallows.
At a still early age, the Dutch artist Pieter Bruegel aroused the suspicion and attention of the authorities, and was thrown into jail for paintings deemed to have ridiculed the Church. However, his genius was also recognised: Cardinal Granvelle, the influential governor appointed by Philip II of Spain, allows the young Bruegel to be educated as a painter in Pieter Coecke's atelier in Antwerp. From that time onwards, Pieter's life is in the hands of the cruel Church luminary, who remains in the background pulling all of the strings.
A well-researched novel that transports the reader, with extraordinary vividness, into the midst of Pieter Bruegel's life and work and into the most turbulent and horrible chapter in Dutch history. A book that merits comparison with de Coster's Legends of Ulenspiegel.

Contemporary Literature
496 pages
11.3 × 18 × 2.6 cm
November 1995

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Awards

2003 C.I.A.M. (Centrum voor Informatie over Audiovisuele Middelen) Preis für das Kurzfilmdrehbuch ›The Voodoo Machine‹
2003 Dutch award for science-fiction and fantasy für ›Ring van Eeuwigheid‹
2000 ›Internationaler Ambrozijn-Preis‹ für seine Kurzgeschichten
2000 ›John Flandersprijs‹ für sein Kinderbuch ›Het Internetmonstertje‹

Praise

Magpie on the Gallows

»A riveting read that arouses our curiosity not only in Bruegel, but in the era in which he lived.« – Hermann Wallmann / Hessischer Rundfunk

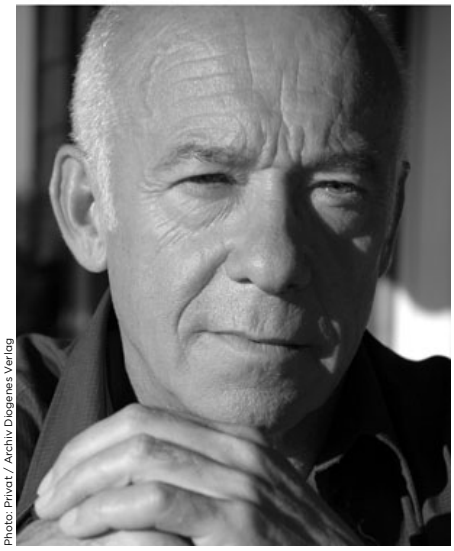
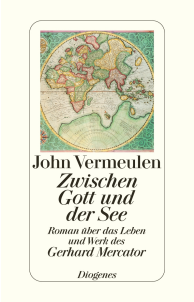


Photo: Privat / Archiv Diogenes Verlag

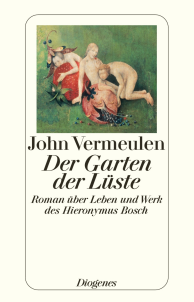
John Vermeulen was born in Antwerp in 1941. He died on August 23, 2009. Vermeulen was a journalist, sailor, and a writer who published his first novel at the age of fourteen. He has written some 25 works to date, including thrillers, science fiction, children's books, erotica and historical novels. He is the author of film and television scripts, plays and short stories. Vermeulen has received many awards for his writing.



The Painter of the Shadows
592 pages
2011



Between God and the Sea
688 pages
2005



Garden of Earthly Delight
592 pages
2002