



Coincident to my visit to Amsterdam is [ITS Festival 2016](#). Here's how they describe themselves:

Every year, at the end of June, the latest crop of performing artists will flood the city of Amsterdam. Graduating actors, dancers, mime artists, (film) directors and other performing artists – national and international – will make their first appearance at several professional theatres in the cityheart of Amsterdam.

The International Theatre School Festival Amsterdam is the biggest European student festival where you can scout over 200 theatre talents in more than 50 unique productions. It is a wonderful opportunity to catch a glimpse of how the performing arts will look in the coming years. Alongside the productions, the festival programme is filled with inspiring debates, lectures and workshops.

Fertile ground for this fan of New Work and New Talent. This afternoon I saw [Een Lolita](#), a meditation on a future for Nabokov's characters, taking off on the idea of unrealistic expectations which faced the young anti-heroine and her lustful suitor:

We all know the famous characters of Nabokov's masterpiece. The sensual teen Lolita and the more-than-twenty-five-years-old man Humbert Humbert who falls madly in love with the girl, with fatal consequences.

In this play a man and a woman, no longer man and girl, wander around in the memory of the most important memory of their lives, thirty years ago.

With might and main they try to keep the memory alive. What if the highlight of your existence lies far behind you?

Quite good, although I sat too close to be able to both read the supratitles and watch the acting. Lesson learnt!

Tonight brings [Hedda](#), a modern take on Ibsen's classic:

**It's better to burn out than to fade away.**

She is gorgeous, rich, adventurous, bored and suicidal. She is the female Hamlet and a desperate housewife. She is Hedda.

Loek de Bakker graduates with his own version of Ibsen's Hedda Gabler (1890). His Hedda is young and wants to live life to the fullest, but she can't escape being bored to death. In an

attempt to feel any kind of excitement, she manipulates the people around her. When she's about to lose her last shred of freedom, she leaves this humdrum life with a bang. If no one around her acts big, she will.

Tomorrow I have a [triple-header of shorts](#), following my conference, but I may not be able to actually make that. Wednesday brings [The Odyssey](#), in which 8 different theatre academies each undertake to dramatize one of the islands in Homer's tale, with heavy metaphorical reference to today's refugee crisis (or so the promotional materials imply) in a performance which will have us audience trudging around from place to place. Not sure I have the best footwear for that, but I think so.

### **The Odyssey – a theatrical investigation freely based on Homeric motifs**

One of the most pressing problems facing our society at present is that of refugees, people who leave their home country for a variety of reasons in search of help, security, and a new start. And most of them come to us because of an idea: the idea of Europe. Europe is more than a common economic area and common external borders. Europe has a common system of values which starts with human rights and cultural similarities. It is absolutely true that this will change the very core of our society. But there are achievements that we can agree on, that make us who we are and are therefore part of our identity. To this end, the **Platform of European theatre academies** starts a theatrical investigation with the purpose of exploring this question of cultural unity. We do not want to leave this research to sociologists; we are interested in the attitudes of young people who are currently about to join the cultural sphere.

Finally, Thursday is [Geisha's Miracle](#), a dance piece featuring three young Asian performers testing the limits of western stereotypes of Oriental womanhood:

Three Asian performers invite you to experience their universe; shiny and blue, light and white. They take you on a journey to a place in between live and death, a place in between a transformative reality and a fountain of imagination. Geisha's Miracle is a synesthetic physical experience that reaches out to the perception of the audience. The surreal visual and musical landscape speaks not only to the ratio but also to the irrational sides of our beings, and asks us to immerse in the absurdity..

Lots to see!