

“Wat is echt, wat is nep op Theaterfestival Boulevard,” Hanny Alkema, *Trouw*, 06.08.2019. Translated by Patrick Lennon. <https://www.trouw.nl/cultuur-media/wat-is-echt-wat-is-nep-op-theaterfestival-boulevard~b2fa5100/>

### **Wonderfully ambiguous**

While the tents and terraces in the centre of 's Hertogenbosch determine the atmosphere of Boulevard, the real work is happening in the theatres. And if the theme is taking on a wonderfully ambiguous meaning anywhere, it is in 'True Copy' by the Flemish theatre group Berlin (co-produced by Het Zuidelijk Toneel). Bart Baele and Yves Degryse have roped master forger Geert Jan Jansen into participating in their performance.

For twenty years, Jansen fooled the art world with forged paintings by Picasso, van Gogh, Miró, Matisse, Chagall and so on and so forth. In the end, a spelling mistake led to his exposure. In 'True Copy', he acts as narrator, actor or curator of his work. His own work, you might say, because by his own admission he didn't copy, but added self-created paintings that fitted seamlessly into certain periods of the masters themselves.

Karel Appel himself recognized an Appel by Jansen as genuine. 'True Copy' plays magisterially on that confusion and the totally overstrained art trade. Against a backdrop made up of over more than thirty forged works and videos being screened, Jansen talks about his tricks and methods.

Things get dangerous when he recounts the discovery of the Picasso stolen from Rotterdam's Kunsthall. That 'find' made the world press last year but was in fact a joint project by Berlin and Jansen. The dividing line between real and fake is straddled ever more sharply but also imperceptibly. It is no longer possible to say with certainty whether or not a famous painting was really left for three weeks under a doormat to make it look old.

And is Jansen in fact really Jansen? When his version of Picasso's 'Dora' is auctioned off live in the theatre, bids far exceed €3000. 'True Copy' uses theatre simply and above all grandiosely as a means between imagination and credulity. What is true, what is false? Is cult art or counterfeit? One thing is certain, 'True Copy' delivers an art kick that greatly deepens the theme of Boulevard.