

ARTSTALK

Colour Supplement

Number 21

July 2024



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This edition focusus very much on the visual arts. We have reviews of exhibitions in The Hague, Tilburg, Amsterdam and Utrecht. We also have a feature on Rotterdam-based surrealist artist Arthur Stam. The Rotterdam International Duet Choreography Competition - the RIDCC - took place at the end of June and we have a special report on that.

Michael HASTED
Publisher and Editor



Contributors

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Cover

Someone looking through a
peep-show box by Arthur STAM
exhibited at Kunstkamer in Delft.
Photo by Michael Hasted

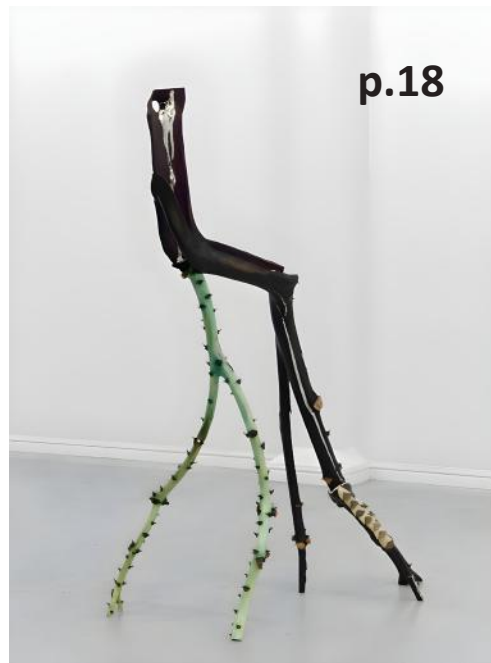
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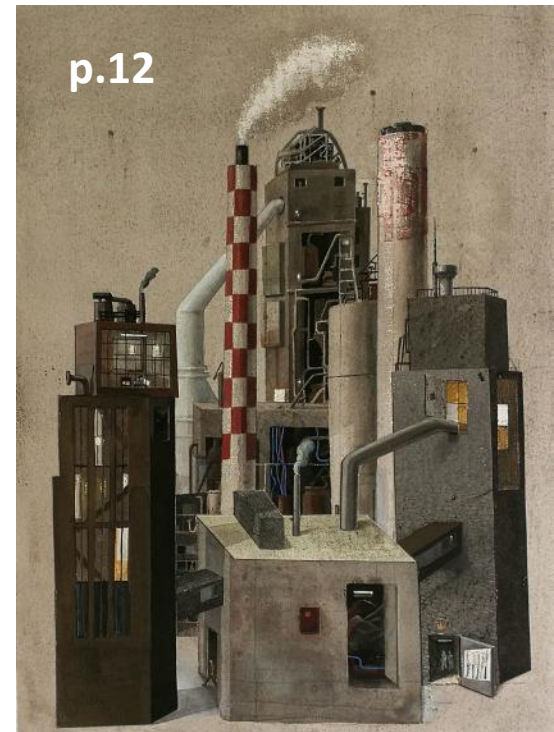
TASTEMAKERS OF THE 19th CENTURY at
Museum Panorama Mesdag in The Hague



KANDINSKY IN HOLLAND
H'ART (formerly the Hermitage)
in Amsterdam



14th EDITION LUSTWARANDE
Park De Oude Warande, Tilburg



ARTHUR STAM a realistic and
romantic surrealist



RIDCC in
Rotterdam



OTTO HAMER in Utrecht

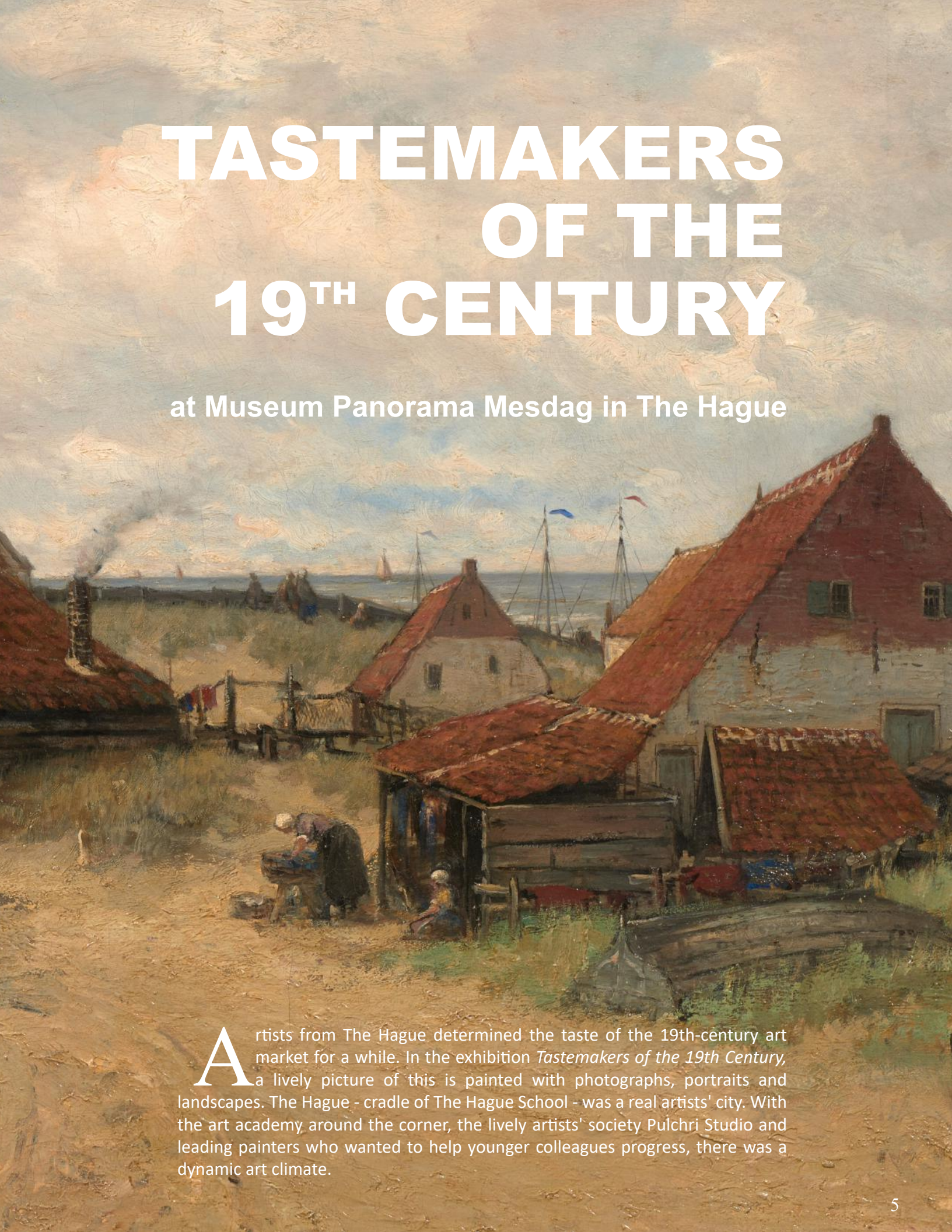


Hendrik Willem Mesdag. *A Neighborhood Near the Lighthouse in Scheveningen* (detail). Private Collection

H. W. Mesdag.

TASTEMAKERS OF THE 19TH CENTURY

at Museum Panorama Mesdag in The Hague



A vibrant oil painting of a Dutch coastal village. In the foreground, a dirt path leads through a grassy area where two figures are working. A small wooden shed with a red-tiled roof stands nearby. To the right, a large, multi-story house with a steep red-tiled roof and white walls is visible. In the background, a harbor with several sailing ships and a distant coastline under a cloudy sky complete the scene.

Artists from The Hague determined the taste of the 19th-century art market for a while. In the exhibition *Tastemakers of the 19th Century*, a lively picture of this is painted with photographs, portraits and landscapes. The Hague - cradle of The Hague School - was a real artists' city. With the art academy around the corner, the lively artists' society Pulchri Studio and leading painters who wanted to help younger colleagues progress, there was a dynamic art climate.

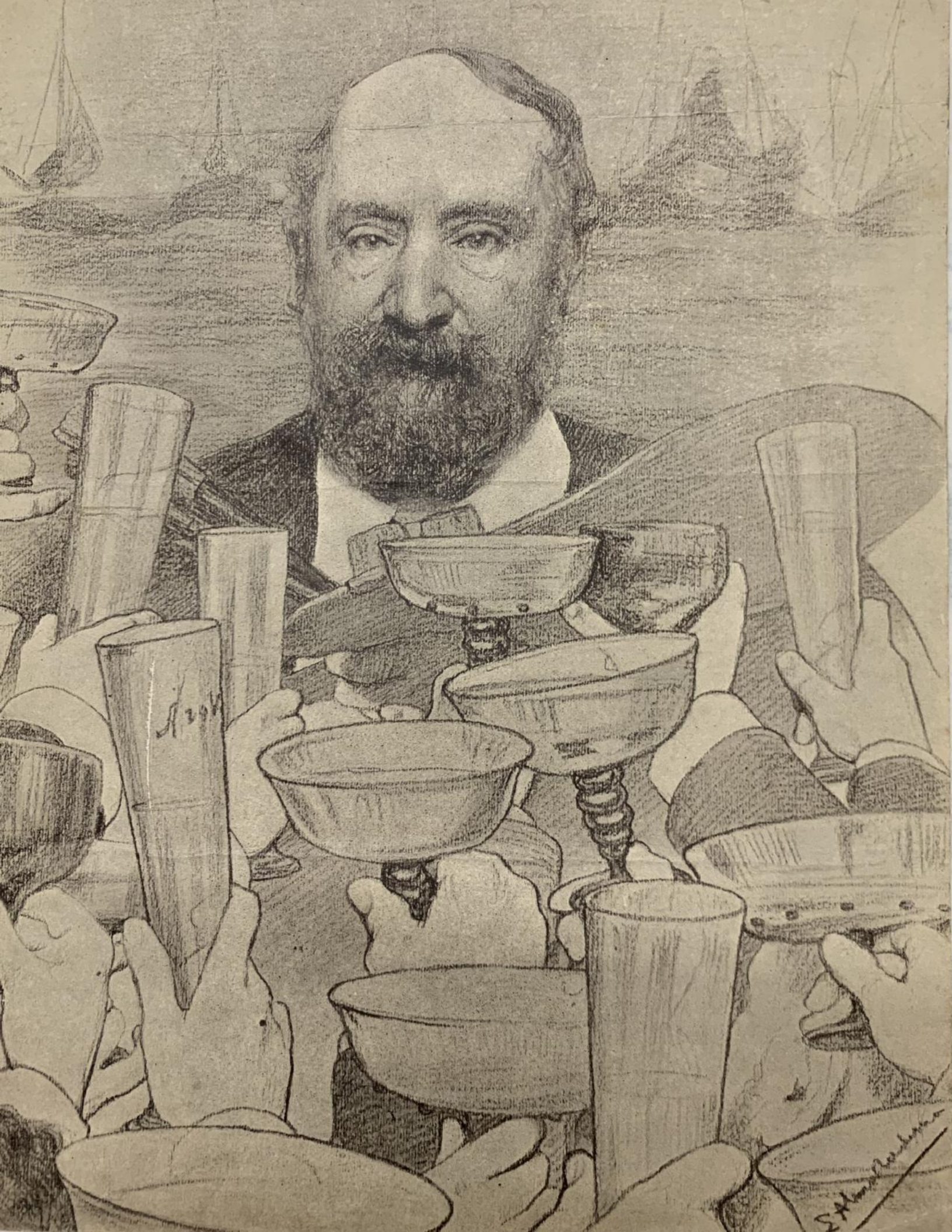
Hendrik Willem Mesdag and his wife Sientje van Houten were at the forefront of all this. They managed to reach a large audience with their Panorama and the (group) exhibitions they organized in the museum and elsewhere. Sientje Mesdag was also an independent spirit who became a role model for female colleagues.

The exhibition shows works from the collection of the artist couple Mesdag from the museum's own collection as well as recent acquisitions and special loans from private individuals. The new acquisition of the *Oriental Partygoer* by Marius Bauer is special. There are paintings, drawings and etchings on display by Jacob Maris, Floris Arntzenius, Barbara van Houten, David Artz, never-before-seen paintings by Hendrik Willem and Sientje Mesdag and works by the painters of the Panorama: George Breitner, Théophile de Bock, Bernard Blommers and Sientje Mesdag-van Houten.





Hendrik Willem Mesdag *Bommen op het strand*. (detail)
Museum Panorama Mesdag



Lourens Alma Tadema was unable to attend the seventieth birthday of his second cousin Hendrik Willem Mesdag. With this portrait that he made of Mesdag for the menus, he was still represented at the birthday dinner; it was on the plates of all 225 guests. Mesdag was praised by the art world in The Hague, partly because he so successfully promoted the Hague School painters as a group. Of course there were also opposing voices, others were bothered by his dominant role □

Tastemakers of the 19th Century continues at Museum Panorama Mesdag in The Hague until 2nd March 2025



Banketfabriek 2021. Mixed media. Photo by Michael Hasted

Arthur STAM

A Realistic and Romantic Surrealist

Kunstkamer, the bi-annual weekend exhibitions held in the eccentric home on the Oude Delft canal of Ramon Dykgraaf and his partner Marc Cals has become a bit of an institution in Delft. Usually showing five or six artists, the quality is always as high as it is varied. This Spring I was impressed by the work of an artist of whom I was aware but had not seen in any great depth. Seeing a selection of Arthur Stam's work in this show prompted me to take a closer look.

Born in 1953 in Delft, a city in which he spent the first thirty-two years of his life, he now lives in Rotterdam where he studied at the Academy of Visual Arts from 1971 to 1976.



Gist en Spiritus 2019
Mixed media on paper

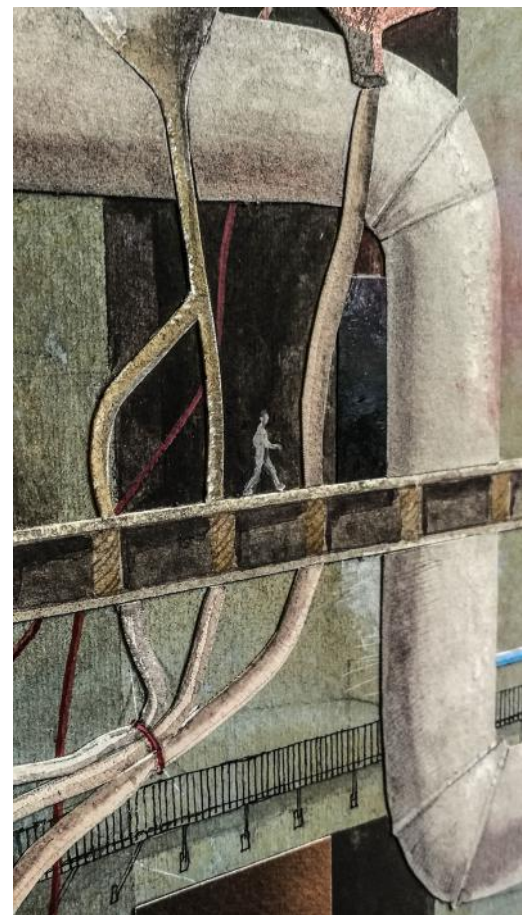
Surreal is a much over used and abused word or concept. André Breton, the dictator of Surrealism defined it in 1924 as, “Pure psychic automatism, by which one proposes to express, either verbally, in writing or by any other manner, the real functioning of thought.” There is a slight contradiction here in that ‘psychic automatism’ precludes the manipulation and refinement of those thoughts. It could be said that Miro, Max Ernst or, say, Yves Tanguy or Victor Brauner were true Surrealist painters where perhaps Magritte . Delvaux or even Dali were not in as much as their work had been curated and redacted in the transition from brain to canvas. Is an artist, like Magritte, who has an idea or sees a picture in his mind before painting it less of a Surrealist than one who lets his mind run wild, starting a painting without knowing how it will turn out?

It’s hard to say which side of the fence Arthur Stam stands. There is clearly a concept in much of the work but there also appear to be random elements, especially with the applied cut-outs from old books of engravings. Stam admits to being a surrealist but also to having a realistic and romantic side. There are often noticeable nostalgic aspects to his work, especially a fascination for industrial sites like the one he discovered while on an epic cycle ride in France, “. . . the mysterious beauty of a factory processing plaster and coal, a black Ural to scale, with walls around it.”¹

Continuing on that theme he has produced paintings on the iconic old Nederlandsche Gist en Spiritusfabriek in Delft which before the war was one of the world’s leading producers of penicillin, methylated spirit and industrial yeast. The *fabriek*, covering a very large site to the north of the city, is a significant presence if you live in that part of town. If you can’t see it with its tall metal chimneys glistening in the sun, you will probably be able to smell it.

For Arthur Stam the words *Gist* and *Spiritus* have an almost mystical, religious even, connotations. Words for him, as with the Surrealists of old, have a significance as important as pictures. Words create images in the mind unfettered by the need to apply pencil or paint.

But what of the works themselves? Stam creates with whatever is to hand. He paints pictures in the conventional sense but also makes collage paintings cutting up either specially painted pieces of paper or off-cuts from other work to create them. He regularly applies elements reclaimed from old books of engravings, often *Meyer’s Universum* and he sometimes creates pure collages à la Max Ernst.



Gist en Spiritus
(detail)





Werkplaats 2003 Mixed media on paper. 58 x 87 cm



A significant aspect of his work is the creation of tiny objects, sculptures, call them what you will, usually less than twenty centimetres in size, using *objets trouvés* like bits of wood or electrical components, frequently with the inclusion of minuscule human figures to defy any preconception of scale. His most intriguing objects are wonderful peep-show boxes – a device popular in the Victorian era whereby a scene, giving the impression of great depth like a stage set, is created in a sealed box with a peep hole at one end from which the tableau is viewed.

But much of Stam's work has common threads - there is often an element of solitude and emptiness. The rooms, apart from the objects in them, are empty and any figures included seem lonely or lost. Either wandering aimlessly or standing still, they try to understand where they are and what they are doing there. All these elements create a dreamlike world, reminiscent of Giorgio de Chirico's desolate arcades and haunted urban landscapes, and are the stuff of pure Surrealism.

Stam's paintings are usually quite small, all painted with a master's hand, employing a subtle palette of earthy greys and ochres. By applying the collage elements an extra dimension and textured layer is created, giving the work greater depth and richness.

Surrealism as a card carrying movement fizzled out with the death of André Breton in 1966 but there are those that still carry the flag, not least of whom is Arthur Stam □

¹ From a 2015 interview with Jos Poels for *Pulchri* magazine in The Hague

14th EDITION
LUSTWARANDE

is at Park De Oude Warande, Tilburg
from 7th July until 6th October





Milda Lemberaitė *Arapaima* 2018/2021
Photo by Ben Westoby

With the great emphasis on materiality that is currently noticeable in contemporary art, classic materials such as clay, textiles and stone are being reexamined by the current generation of artists. These materials have become an indispensable part of the post-media practices of the youngest generation. And now follows the oldest sculpture material, wood.

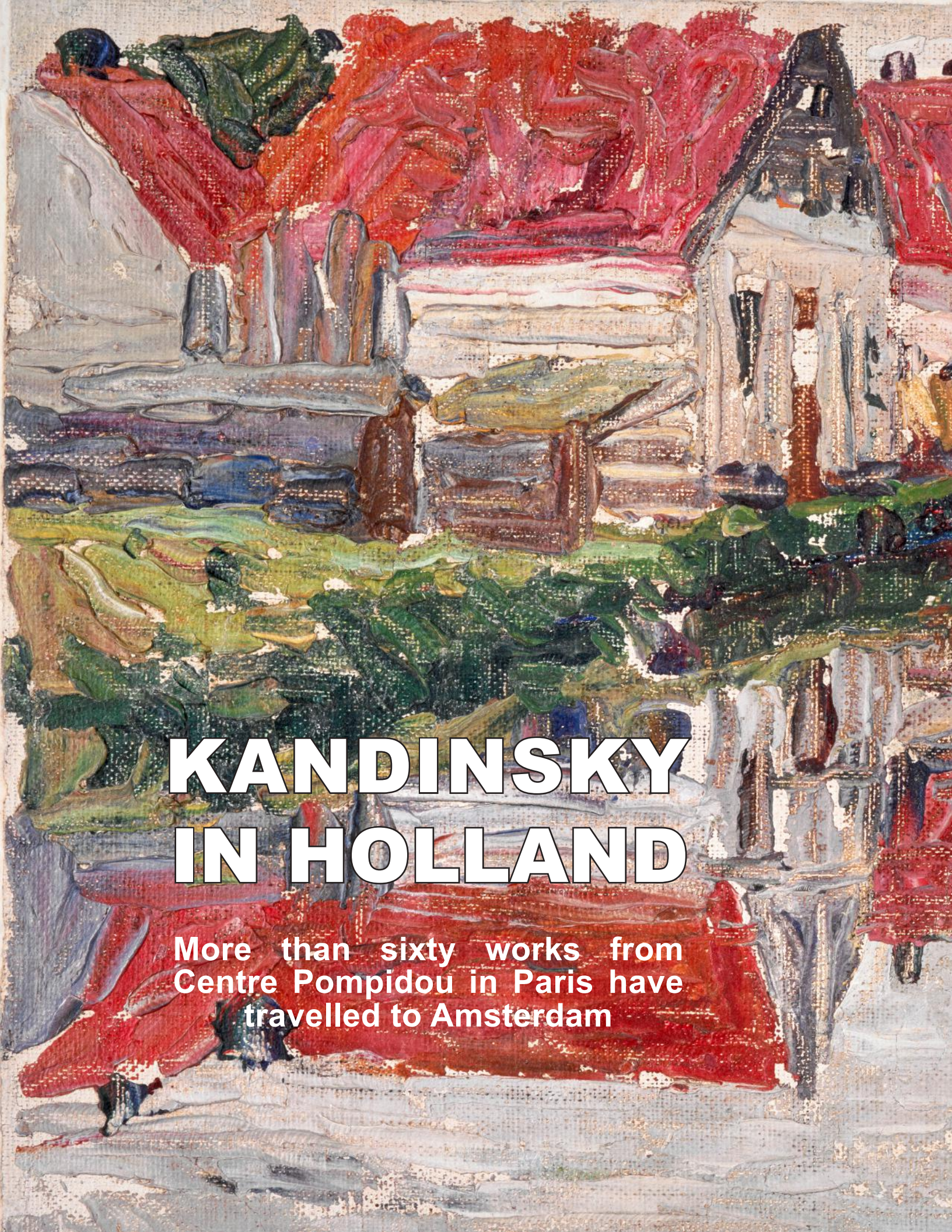
Wood has played a crucial role at important moments in human development (from hunter-gatherer to farmer, the discovery of the printing press and the success of the Industrial Revolution), as stated in an infectious and imaginative way by Roland Ennos is argued in his book *The Age of Wood* (2021).

Wood, a combination of carbon dioxide, sunlight and minerals, is one of the most universal materials in art. Not only is wood the oldest material, but it is also the most used material in sculpture over the centuries. That lasted until it was replaced by marble and bronze in the 16th century. A revaluation took place in the early 20th century, but wood would never again achieve its previous status. Only a small group of artists belonging to the 20th century sculptural canon continued to use wood, such as Sophie Taeuber-Arp, Constantin Brâncuși, Alberto Giacometti, Pablo Picasso, Henry Moore, Barbara Hepworth, Ossip Zadkine, Juana Muller, Isamu Noguchi, Louise Bourgeois, Maren Hassinger, Louise Nevelson, Carl Andre, Mario Merz, Giuseppe Penone, Donald Judd, Tony Cragg, Richard Deacon, Richard Long, David Nash, Martin Puryear, Georg Baselitz, Stephan Balkenhol, Tadashi Kawamata and Jimmie Durham.

It's very clear that wood is currently widely used in architecture. This also applies to contemporary design. But what about the use of wood in contemporary sculpture? Here too, a clear increase can be observed. The rise of artists who use wood in their artistic practice can no longer be ignored. In addition to Alma Allen, Huma Bhabha, Claudia Comte, Thomas Houseago and Oscar Tuazon, to name just a few, who have created a prominent position for the use of wood in their artistic practice, there is a new generation of artists who are doing so. Also mid-career artists those who work in wood are gradually coming back to the fore and even a great such as Paul McCarthy has incorporated traditional woodworking in monumental form into his unruly art practice.

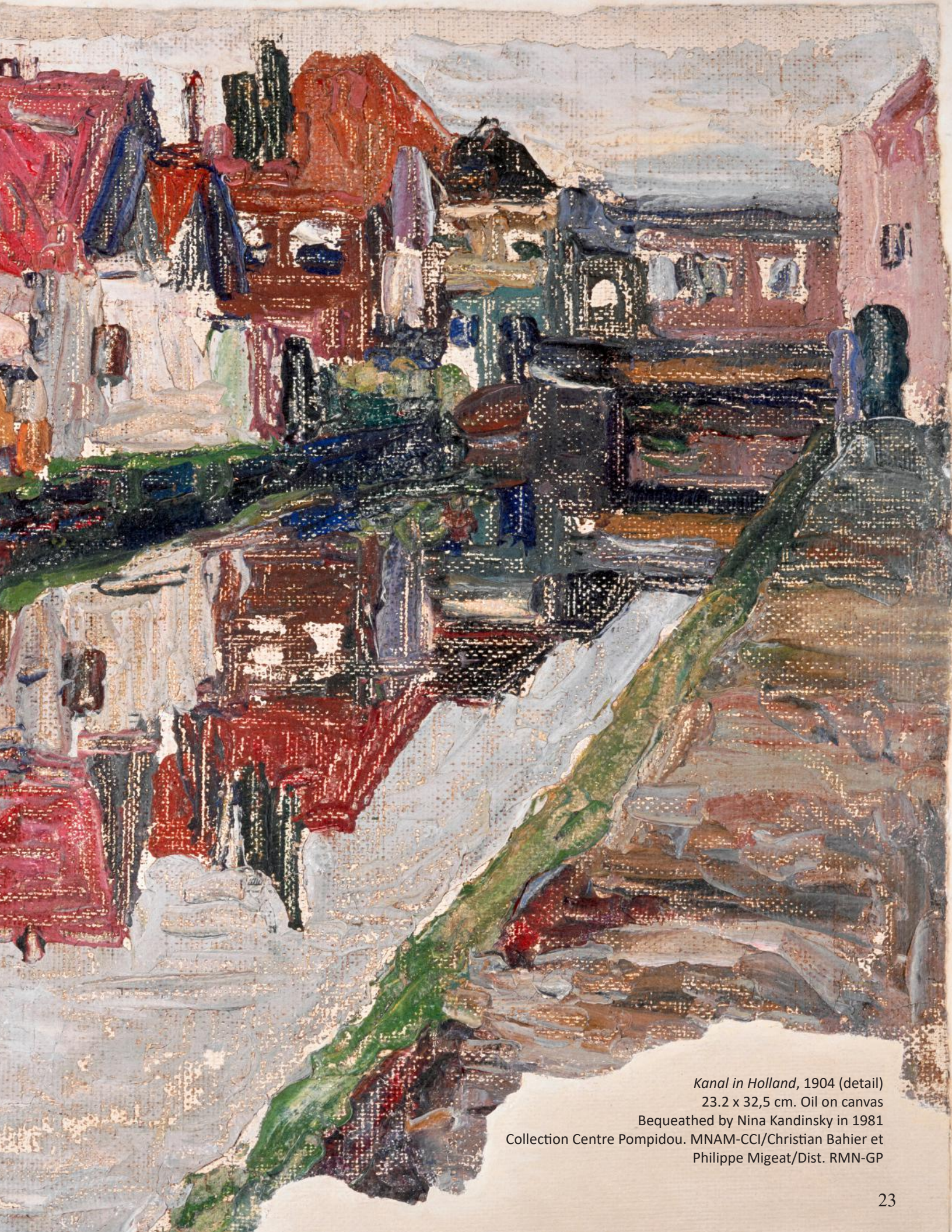
In addition to traditional methods, these artists explore new, computer-controlled methods of woodworking, installations that continue the tradition of Minimal Art, themes such as identity and gender, climate, social cohesion, relationships between contemporary sculpture and architecture and, in the context of sustainability, recycling. We can perhaps speak of a "wood turn".

Although wooden sculptures have never been missing in previous editions of *Lustwarande*, with works by Kevin van Braak, Tom Claassen, Anya Gallaccio, Henrik Håkansson, Terence Koh, Eva Rothschild and Ojārs Pētersons, the fourteenth edition focuses exclusively on the use of wood in the contemporary sculpture. That happens in the middle of the trees. The exhibition thus emphasizes the essence of what *De Oude Warande* is, *arbos*, the Latin word for trees □

An abstract painting by Wassily Kandinsky, featuring thick, expressive brushstrokes in a vibrant palette of reds, pinks, greens, blues, and greys. The composition is non-representational, with bold, gestural marks creating a sense of movement and rhythm. The background is a complex interplay of these colors, with some areas appearing more saturated than others. The overall effect is one of dynamic energy and emotional intensity.

KANDINSKY IN HOLLAND

More than sixty works from
Centre Pompidou in Paris have
travelled to Amsterdam



Kanal in Holland, 1904 (detail)
23.2 x 32,5 cm. Oil on canvas
Bequeathed by Nina Kandinsky in 1981
Collection Centre Pompidou. MNAM-CCI/Christian Bahier et
Philippe Migeat/Dist. RMN-GP



Akhtyrka. Nina et Tatiana dans la véranda, 1917. 27,5 x 33,6 cm. Oil in linen. Bequeathed by Nina Kandinsky, 1981. Collection Centre de documentation photographique du MNAM/Dist. RMN-GP



This exhibition at H'ART, formerly The Hermitage, is in collaboration with Center Pompidou in Paris which houses the most complete Kandinsky collection in the world. More than sixty works of art have travelled to Amsterdam, especially for the exhibition.

A number of paintings return after a long time to the country where they were once made by Kandinsky. These rare works show typical Dutch scenes from the early twentieth century. From a Scheveningen beach scene and the Rotterdam harbour to typical North Holland waterside houses. Four Dutch Kandinskys are on display in the exhibition.

These figurative, almost impressionistic paintings perfectly illustrate the artist's early years. Made in 1904 when he stayed in the Netherlands for a month with artist Gabriele Münter, his then partner. The exhibition also includes six photos that Münter took during the trip and two postcards. They are characteristic and artistic pictures of Dutch landscapes and Amsterdam canals. What is special is that a sketchbook from that same trip has been preserved, full of drawings and studies by Kandinsky that provide insight into the artist's choice of subject.

Various Dutch sketches are shown digitally in the exhibition. The original is kept in the Lenbachhaus museum in Munich. This Dutch Kandinsky collection is not only a unique travelogue of two well-known artists in the Netherlands, but above all it provides a glimpse into the artistic world of Kandinsky, who is only at the beginning of his promising career.

Wassily Kandinsky (Moscow 1866 - Paris 1944) became famous for his idea of 'autonomous' art. Abstraction,



freed from all references to reality. The exhibition provides a unique overview of his quest; a personal journey that made him one of the pioneers of abstract art. From his early figurative, almost impressionistic work to his characteristic abstract paintings, which later culminated in more organic and hybrid forms on canvas. Including crucial works such as *Mit dem schwarzen Bogen* (1912), *Im Grau* (1919), *Auf Weiss II* (1923), *Auf Spitzen* (1928) and *Entassement réglé* (1938). The latter work was an Easter gift to his wife Nina Kandinsky, inspired by the Fabergé eggs, made of precious stones and enamel, that the tsars traditionally gave to their wives. Some of his last paintings, such as *Accord réciproque* (1942) and *Peinture Inachevée* (1944), show the apotheosis of his work □

KANDINSKY at H'ART continues until 10th November.



Im Grau, 1919. 129 x 176 cm. Oil on linen. Bequeathed by



y Nina Kandinsky, 1981. Collection Centre Pompidou. MNAM-CCI/Philippe Migeat/Dist. RMN-GP



Rotterdam International Duet Choreography Competition

The *pas de deux* has always been an intrinsic and integral part of classical, or indeed any other form of dance. Great moments in ballet are often defined by great partnerships. The most famous and popular *pas de deux* by the likes of Petipa, Ashton and MacMillan tend to be in the great ballets like *Swan Lake*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *Coppélia* et al. One thinks of the great pairing of dancers like Rudolf Nureyev and Margot Fonteyn and even Mikhail Baryshnikov and Gregory Hines in the film *White Nights*. And that's not to mention Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers. So, bearing that in mind, it is surprising there has been no real emphasis or effort made to find specific new talent in this important aspect of dance.

In the six years since it was created, the Rotterdam International Duet Choreography Competition, despite its mouthful of a name and the cruel interruption by Covid-19, has become an important event on the international dance calendar. And judging by the myriad nationalities of the entries it could be said that Scapino Ballet dancer Maya Roest and former Scapino principle Mischa van Leeuwen have established a dance event of world significance.

This year, RIDCC took place from the 20th to 23rd June at Theater Rotterdam with the sixteen selected choreographers, chosen from 324 submissions, showcasing their talent and compete for substantial prizes. We have put together a more or less random assortment of entries to give you some idea of the rich and varied selection of performances from which this year's winner emerged . . .



LOGOPHILE by Shane Tyler Urton

After traveling the world as a performer with various renowned companies, Shane brings his duet to RIDCC . The term Logophile denotes a 'lover of words.' Language, in its diverse forms, serves as a conduit for connection. In *Logophile*, we see two individuals seemingly adrift in a forest. Narration, inspired by John Koenig's *Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows*, intertwines with the dancers' movements, enriching their emotional journey with poetic expression. As we evolve, so too should our modes of communication. In *Logophile*, dance theater becomes a vessel for the raw emotions that precede verbal articulation.

ARE YOU GUILTY? by Min Kim

Are You Guilty? explores the famous 'bystander effect', the social psychology theory that people are less likely to help someone in need if there are other people present. It asks questions about the nature of empathy and our appetite for coming to the aid of others.

Performed in the smokey cone of a sole spotlight above the centre of the stage without music or soundscape, this is like a little play, it could almost be Samuel Beckett or Eugene Ionesco. The two men, with the aid of a round table and a cheap plastic chair, investigate the "bystander effect" whereby people are becoming less and less willing to involve themselves in events they witness. Mr Kim's avowed intent was to explore the fine line between perpetrator and victim. Although there was no soundtrack there was quite a lot of noise mainly from hands being slapped on the table either aggressively or rhythmically. The performance is riveting stuff with some true suspense, though not entirely without humour.

Min Kim is a choreographer based in Seoul, South Korea. He is continuing to think about what kind of art work should be presented in today's era.





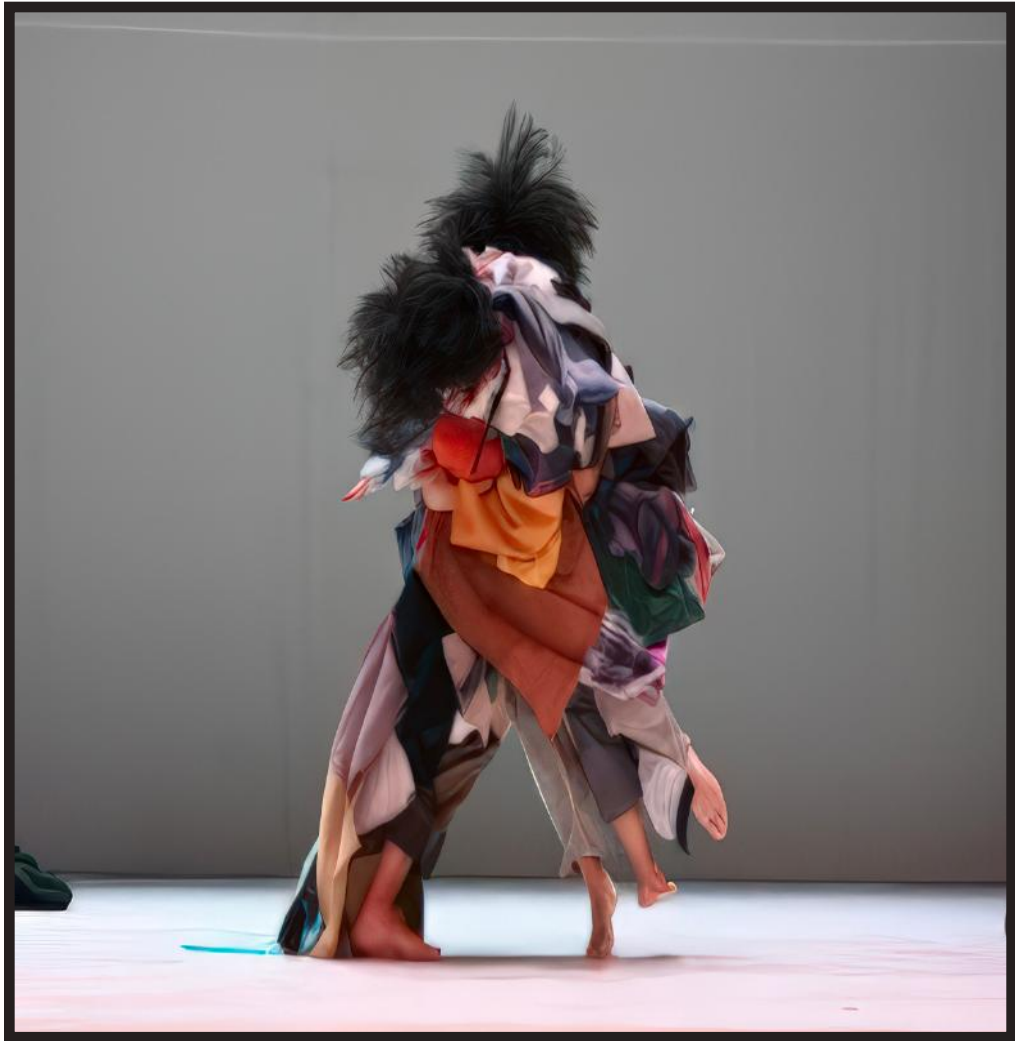
***HÀ-BI-TUS* by Alessandra Ruggeri**

“How often do we get dressed with clothes that are not our own? How often do we dress others with clothes that are ours?”

‘To inhabit our bodies’ is the most intimate gift we can give ourselves.

It’s not something we do naturally, we have to build it just like a dress. Sometimes it requires cutting pieces and adding others. It can be liked and approved, as well as disapproved. But when the form is intimately connected to its content and the content to its form, there is perfect harmony. But to what extent is it actually our choice?

Alessandra Ruggeri studied classical & contemporary dance and in 2018 she graduated from UDA Urban Dance Academy in Rome. She studied Floorwork and Contact Improvisation between Bxl and Paris. Since 2018 she dances in the DaCruDanceCompany. In 2022 she reaches the finals at the International Competition Cicbuny (Spain) as co-choreographer and dancer of the duet *The Conversation* and at the Premio Cerati (Italy); with the same work she performs in two tours in Spain in 2023. As choreographer of the performance *HÀ-BI-TUS* she won the FirstPrize in Choreographic Composition at Gubbio Danz Week 2023 and the Production Prize; with the same work she was selected as a guest at the FUTURO Festival 2024 in Rome and as Finalist of the competition Prospettive Danza Padova.





***SOMOS* by Carla Cervantes Caro and Sandra Egido Ibañez**

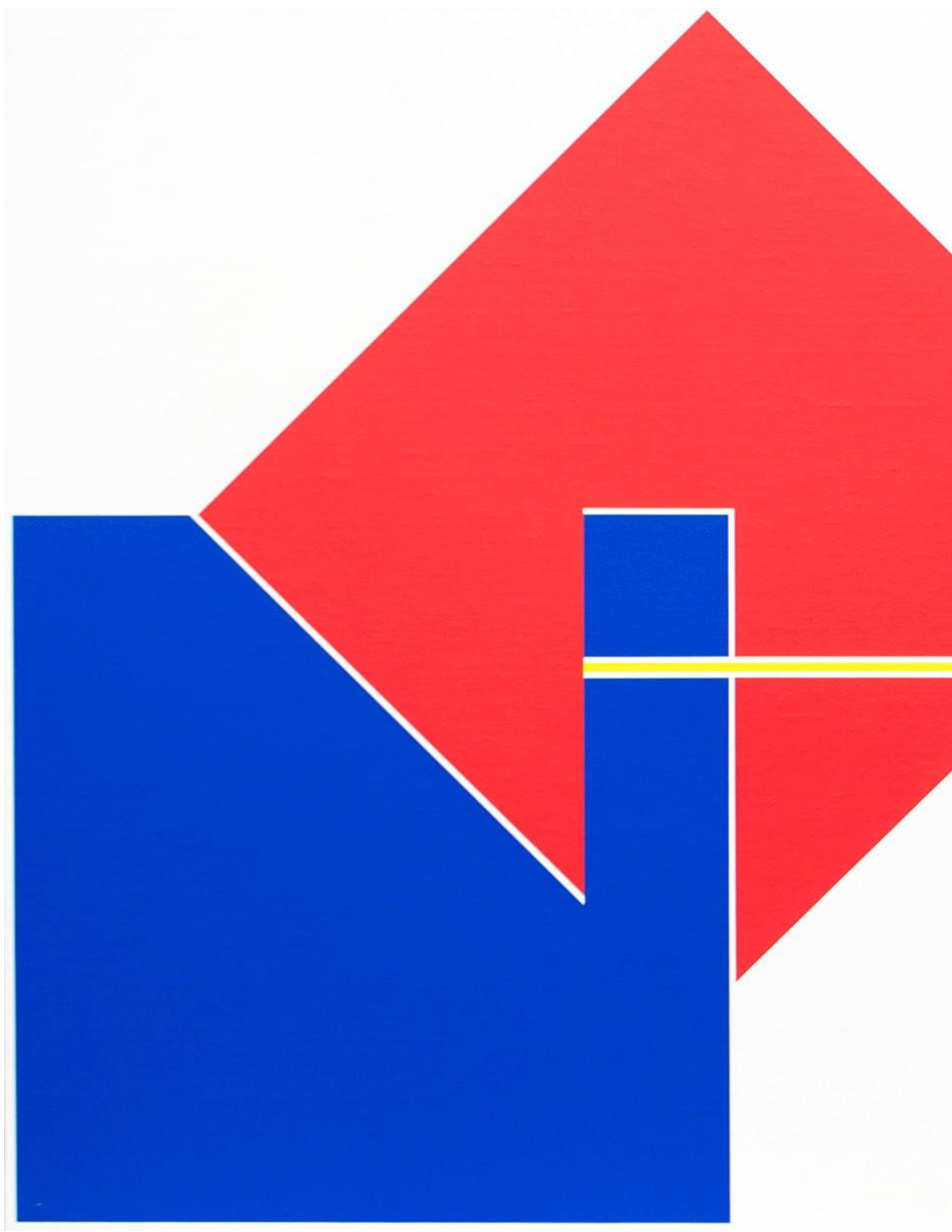
Carla Cervantes Caro and Sandra Egido Ibañez followed RIDCC for years and now they participate in the competition. Their duet *SOMOS* which is a dialogue and the story of its paths. It embodies a fusion of two bodies, each with its own story and essence, converging into one shared conversation. The construction of the spaces of silence and the knots of the words we never say. *SOMOS* is all the voids we have and all the paths we are.

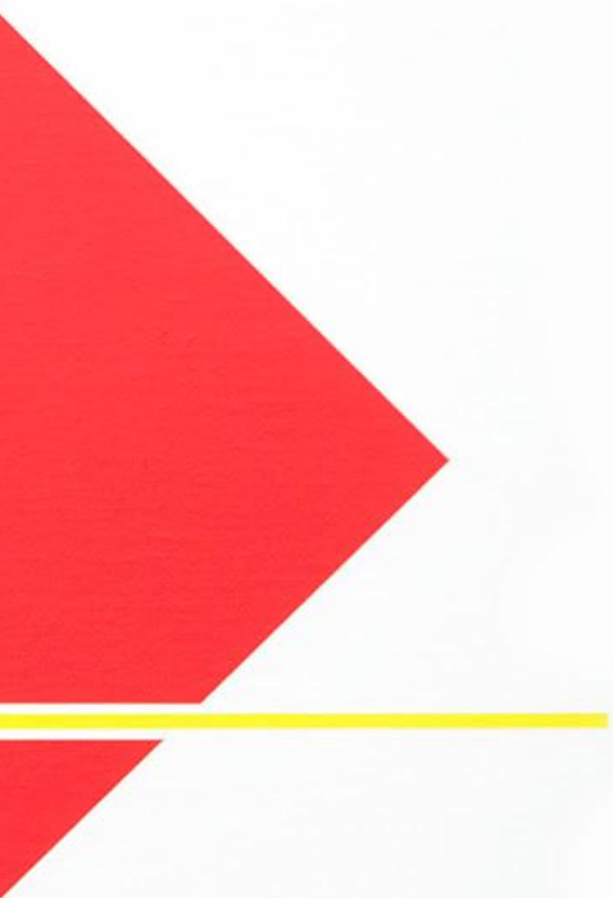




***LIFE IN LYCRA* by Andrea Costanzo Martini**

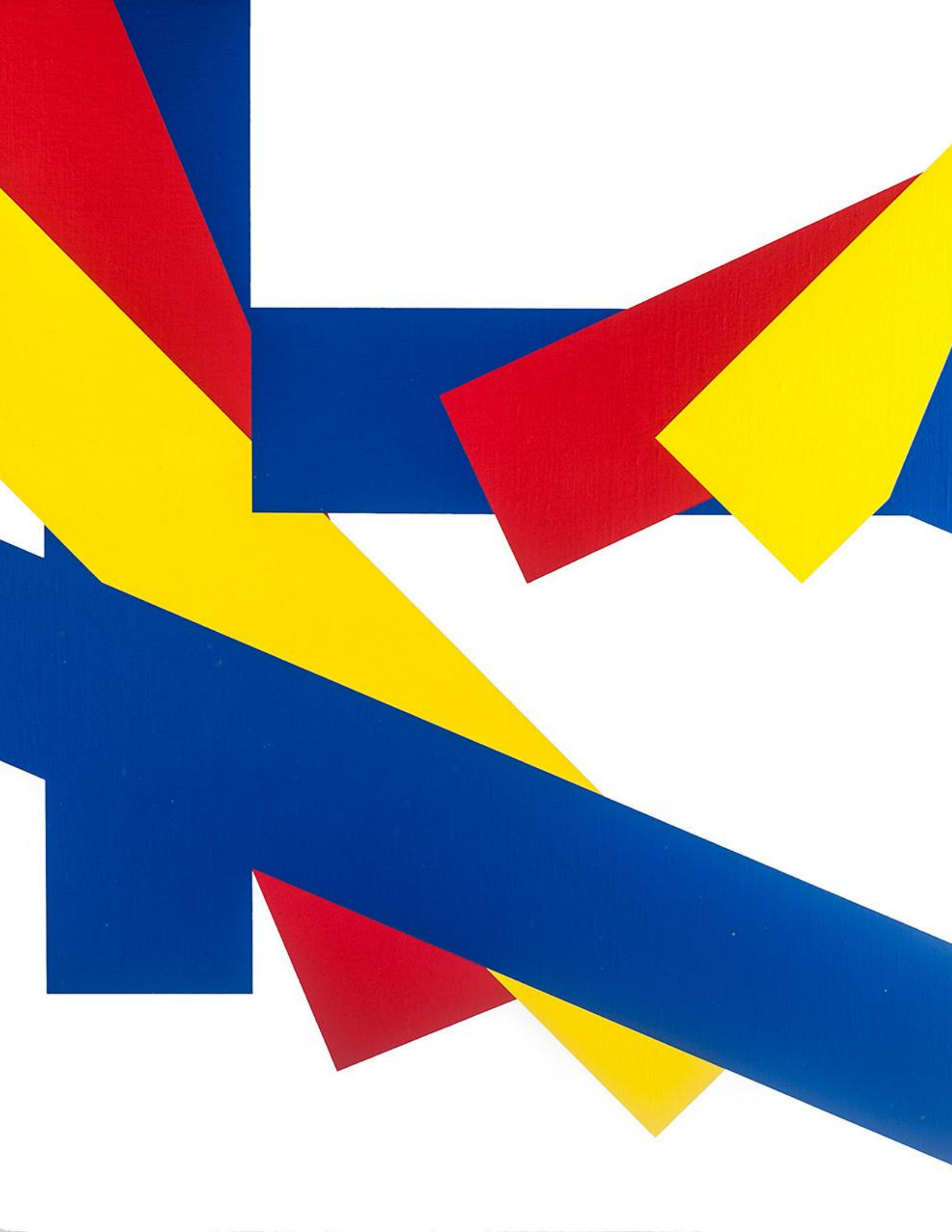
Andrea, born and raised in Italy, travelled to different countries to join several dance companies like Batsheva Dance Company. In *Life in Lycra* we witness a duel between a dancer and a choreographer. In nothing but outrageously tight Lycra outfits, they will fight for the audience's attention. With their bright and quirky strengths, they unravel the absurdity of taking things too seriously. □





OTTO HAMER

at Rietveld Schröder Huis in Utrecht





Otto Hamer (1938-2020) was an artist associated with Utrecht. Although he had studied at the Royal Academy for Art and Design in Den Bosch and at the Jan van Eyck Academy in Maastricht (without completing either course because he thought that being an artist would not amount to anything), he developed as an artist in Utrecht. He developed first as a bronze caster for the work of others, then with his own work in bronze and from the early 1970s as a painter of geometric shapes on canvas or panel.

He was also a socially involved artist. His goal was to contribute to the quality of society through his works of art, precisely through the design of the living environment. A number of major assignments concerned the furnishing of government buildings.

His work can be called geometric-constructivist art or, if you prefer, concrete art. Concrete art is a term introduced in 1930 by Theo van Doesburg for abstract art that had to be universally clear and the product of an artist's conscious, rational mind.

“The work is itself and does not want to suggest or evoke anything else, no emotion or reference to another reality.” He made use, as he himself said, of the achievements of the Style. You also see other aspects of him, tilts of figures, and areas of colour that move. He thus added the elements of time, space and chronology”.

Erasmuslaan 5-11 occupies a crucial place within the oeuvre of architect Gerrit Rietveld (1888-1964) because he tried to find an answer to the question of how the principles of Modern Living, briefly summarized as 'light, air and space' could be applied to public housing. After completion, Erasmuslaan 9 was furnished as a model home for promotion and managed by the Centraal Museum in Utrecht □

The exhibition runs from 5th to 28th July, 2024

Not Only, But Also

Here's a selection of events that are opening or continuing this month in the Rotterdam, Amsterdam and The Hague area and everywhere nearby or in between



Until 6th July

THE GOOD, THE BAD and the ALGORITHM

at Boom Chicago, Amsterdam



Until 7th July

CRAVING FOR BOIJMANS Museum building is open for five weeks

at Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam



7th July

MIRABEAU STRING A garden concert

at Museum Rijswijk



7th July

QETC' s **SONG BY SONG BY SONDHEIM**

at Manhattan Lounge Bar, Amsterdam



11th July

BIRDY

at Zuiderparktheater in The Hague



26th July - 2nd August

DELFT CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL

at Prinsenhof and other locations



Until 6th October

RICHARD AVEDON

at Kunsthall, Rotterdam



Until 13th October

JEFF COWEN

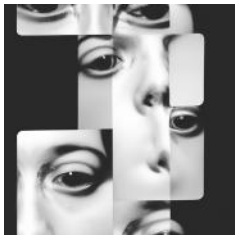
at Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam



Until 20th July

COMING OF AGE Three Divas in Concert

in Zwolle, Rotterdam (O Festival) & 's-Graveland



Until 11th September

PHOTOGRAPHY THROUGH THE LENS OF AI

at FOAM in Amsterdam



Until 10th November

NEW WAVE

at Stedelijk Museum Schiedam

**SUNDAY
JULY 7**



MUSEUM **rijswijk**

MIRABEAU STRINGS

**WALK IN
15:30 | BUBBLES**

**SHOWTIME
16:00 - 17:00**

**BAR OPEN
17:00 - 18:30**

**MUSEUM RIJSWIJK
HERENSTRAAT 67**

**ALL DAY MUSEUM ENTRY
INCL. PAPER BIENNALE**

**JOIN US FOR A DAY OF ART,
MUSIC AND NATURE**