

ARTSTALK

Colour Supplement

Number 17

March 2024



ARTS TALK

Colour Supplement

Number 17

March 2024

Our biggest issue yet - seventy pages full of articles on art, dance and opera in Holland plus a great deal more.

2024 marks the fortieth anniversary of Korzo Theater in The Hague and we have a special twelve-page article on the history of the former cinema which became an important location for contemporary dance.

We also report on this year's Art Rotterdam as well as a couple of breath-taking theatre performances. We report on two old master exhibitions, one in The Hague, one in Leiden and two shows of contemporary art, one in The Hague and the other in Rijswijk. This and lots more in the March edition of ArtsTalk *Colour Supplement* . . .

Michael HASTED
Publisher and Editor

Contributors

Wendy FOSSEN
Astrid BURCHARDT

Photographers

Anne Claire de BREIJ
Marco BORGREE
Maarten NAUW

Cover

GREGORIAN TREASURES - Wishful Singing
in collaboration with the VOCES8 Foundation.
Photo by Anne Claire de Breij



p.4



The Hague School in a Different Light at Kunstmuseum in The Hague

Gregorian Treasures by Wishful Singing on tour



p.10

Contents

p.12



De Apocalypse by Opera2Day on tour



p.18

Anita Groener at Museum Rijswijk

p.22



Art Rotterdam 2024



A new book on Frans Hals

p.32

p.34



Korzor in The Hague celebrates its 40th anniversary

p.50



The Underground by NITE

p.46



Rembrandt's Four Senses at Museum De Lakenhal, Leiden

Roelant Savery's *Wonderous World* at Mauritshuis in The Hague

Salon des Refusés at 1646 in The Hague

p.54



Scapino Ballet's *Summer Creative* in Rotterdam

p.64



p.62



The Hague School
in a Different Light
at Kunstmuseum in The Hague





Willem Maris, *Donkeys on the beach*, c. 1865-1866, oil on canvas 38,1 x 54,7 cm.
Kunstmuseum Den Haag - bequest of De Jong-Rouffaer



J.M.

Jacob Maris *Fishing Boat*, 1878, oil on canvas, 120 x 105 cm, Kunstmuseum Den Haag

The Hague had a flourishing artistic climate in the early 1860s. Artists like Jozef Israëls, the Maris brothers, Jan Hendrik Weissenbruch and Hendrik Willem Mesdag moved to the city and started depicting the world around them in an innovative way. Their mentors, the romantics, had idealised landscapes, but this group of artists took to the great outdoors, and opted to depict things in a realistic manner. Their greatest skill lay in rendering the huge skies and the light reflected on water. The Hague School enjoyed great success, dominating the art market until the First World War, and inspiring younger painters like Breitner and Van Gogh. Their work continues to appeal to the imagination to this day. *The Hague School in a Different Light* at Kunstmuseum Den Haag will explore this success, taking visitors on a journey to a time of fishing barges and fishing folk and the first railways.

Most Hague School paintings show the landscape of Noord and Zuid Holland provinces. Thanks to the invention of ready-made paint in tubes and the construction of new railways, the artists were able to get out and about and work outdoors where they made numerous studies in oils. These would serve as inspiration during the colder winter months. So, although the landscapes are painted in a realistic manner, they do not always represent a particular situation. The focus is on



Willem Roelofs, *May in Noorden*, c. 1882, Oil on panel, 20,1 x 42,2 cm. Kunstmuseum Den Haag

depicting light and atmosphere. Willem Maris once famously said, 'I don't paint cows, I paint light'.

The Hague School in a Different Light will illustrate the enduring attraction of the Hague School on the basis of six themes: sentiment, spontaneity, light, poetry, experiencing nature and landscape in transition. Each theme will include both highlights and less well-known

works from Kunstmuseum Den Haag's collection. In addition, one of the works in each of the thematic groups will feature in an unexpected encounter with an artist from another period. This might include a portrait by Jozef Israëls alongside one by Van Gogh, a painting that reflects industrialisation in combination with a contemporary photograph that documents



change, or a poem that expresses a sensation evoked by an artwork.

The painters of the Hague School were there at the birth of Kunstmuseum Den Haag in 1866. They were among the co-founders of the museum. Artists like Anton Mauve and Jan Hendrik Weissenbruch donated some of their best work during their lifetimes, ensuring

they would represent them in the future. There are always several works by artists from movement on display in our permanent exhibit, *Discover the Modern*. The museum also regularly organises exhibitions in order to show more of its sizeable Hague School collection, which includes paintings, oil studies, drawings and sketchbooks. □



GREGORIAN TREASURES

Wishful Singing creates a worldwide audience for Gregorian chant in collaboration with the VOCES8 Foundation

Photo by Anne Claire de BREIJ

Wishful Singing, a group of five classically trained Dutch singers, in collaboration with Herman Finkers, has created a new buzz in the Netherlands around Gregorian chant. This medieval music has a characteristic unison way of singing, without time signature or beat. More than 10,000 people have attended Wishful Singing's Gregorian concerts since the start of the collaboration with Finkers in 2016. During the lockdowns, more than 6,000 people also participated in the online Gregorian chant courses. The great interest in the above activities shows that there is a great need to learn more about this special art form that is the basis of the European music we know today, whether it is Bach, The Beatles or Beyoncé.

Now the ladies of Wishful Singing are joining forces with Paul Smith, CEO of one of the world's most renowned a cappella organizations, the VOCES8 Foundation. This foundation reaches 40,000 people in England and beyond every year with its educational activities. These activities are performed by the singers of the ensembles VOCES8, Apollo5 and the VOCES8 Scholars.

Together with the young, talented professional singers who are part of the VOCES8 Scholars program, the Wishful Singers will give an accompanying *Gregorian Treasures* tour with concerts in April and June in the Netherlands, England and France.

The programme is a journey through the rich history of Gregorian chant and includes both well-known and lesser-known Gregorian pieces, performed according to

the original medieval manuscripts. In addition, Wishful Singing and the VOCES8 Scholars will perform modern compositions inspired by the Gregorian heritage, including works such as *Ubi Caritas* by Maurice Duruflé and *Ave Generosa* by Ola Gjeilo. Highlights of the program include the moving *Miserere Mei* by Allegri, in which polyphonic singing and Gregorian psalmody come together.

Wishful Singing and VOCES8 have created the online course *Gregorian Treasures*, a learning programme for everyone, with and without singing experience, who wants to become acquainted with the mystical beauty of Gregorian music. Participants gain knowledge of singing style and music notation. What is special is that there are also some of the secrets of old manuscripts from the 10th century are revealed, usually only accessible to professors and academics.

'Very few people sing Gregorian chant, even though it is incredibly beautiful and wonderful to sing,' says Marjolein Stots, second alto at Wishful Singing. 'In collaboration with the VOCES8 Scholars, we have the opportunity to share this unique repertoire with a global audience. The program is a journey through the rich history of Gregorian chant and includes both well-known and lesser-known Gregorian pieces, performed according to the original medieval manuscripts □

The tour starts on 12th April in Amsterdam, followed by concerts in Breda, Alkmaar, Nijmegen, Zutphen, Utrecht and Groningen.



J.S. Bach's

DE APOCALYPSE

by Opera2Day with the Netherlands Bach Society

Michael HASTED

Photos by Marco BORGREVE





This production was originally staged in February 2022 for only one performance at the Koninklijke Schouwburg in The Hague but because of the lingering pandemic it was put in the fridge, as the Dutch say. It has now returned and will be touring until June before visiting Leipzig and Münster in Germany.

Although there are dozens of fine operas to choose from it is perhaps disappointing that the vast majority of productions on offer are the usual suspects supplied by Messrs Verdi, Puccini, Mozart and Wagner.

Fortunately there are companies that eschew the easy, popular choices and find lesser known works to bring to the public's attention. But even this vast canon of operatic work is not enough for Opera2Day who, once again, have contrived a brilliant new opera.

Billed as 'the opera that Bach never wrote', *J.S. Bach – The Apocalypse* is a collaboration between Opera2Day and Netherlands Bach Society whose 100th anniversary the production was created to celebrate.

The advantage in doing new or unknown works is that it gives the producers a blank canvas on which to work and nobody has any preconceptions. With *J.S. Bach – The Apocalypse*, Opera2Day's artistic director Serge van Veggel paints with a rich palette and very broad strokes and has created a stunning piece of theatre.

The opera tells the story of Jan van Leyden, a ne'er do well 16th-century Dutch actor, pub owner and tailor with the gift of the gab, an Anabaptist who believed that the end of time was near. He convinced his followers that they would be among the chosen ones at the Last Judgment. They moved to Münster in Germany and founded a fundamentalist community, expelling the Bishop and all Catholics from the city. Van Leyden crowned himself king of this 'New Jerusalem'.

Ratifying the old maxim that you should be careful what you wish for, things became less utopian than everyone had been led to believe and Van Leyden's New Jerusalem soon turned into Dante's Inferno.

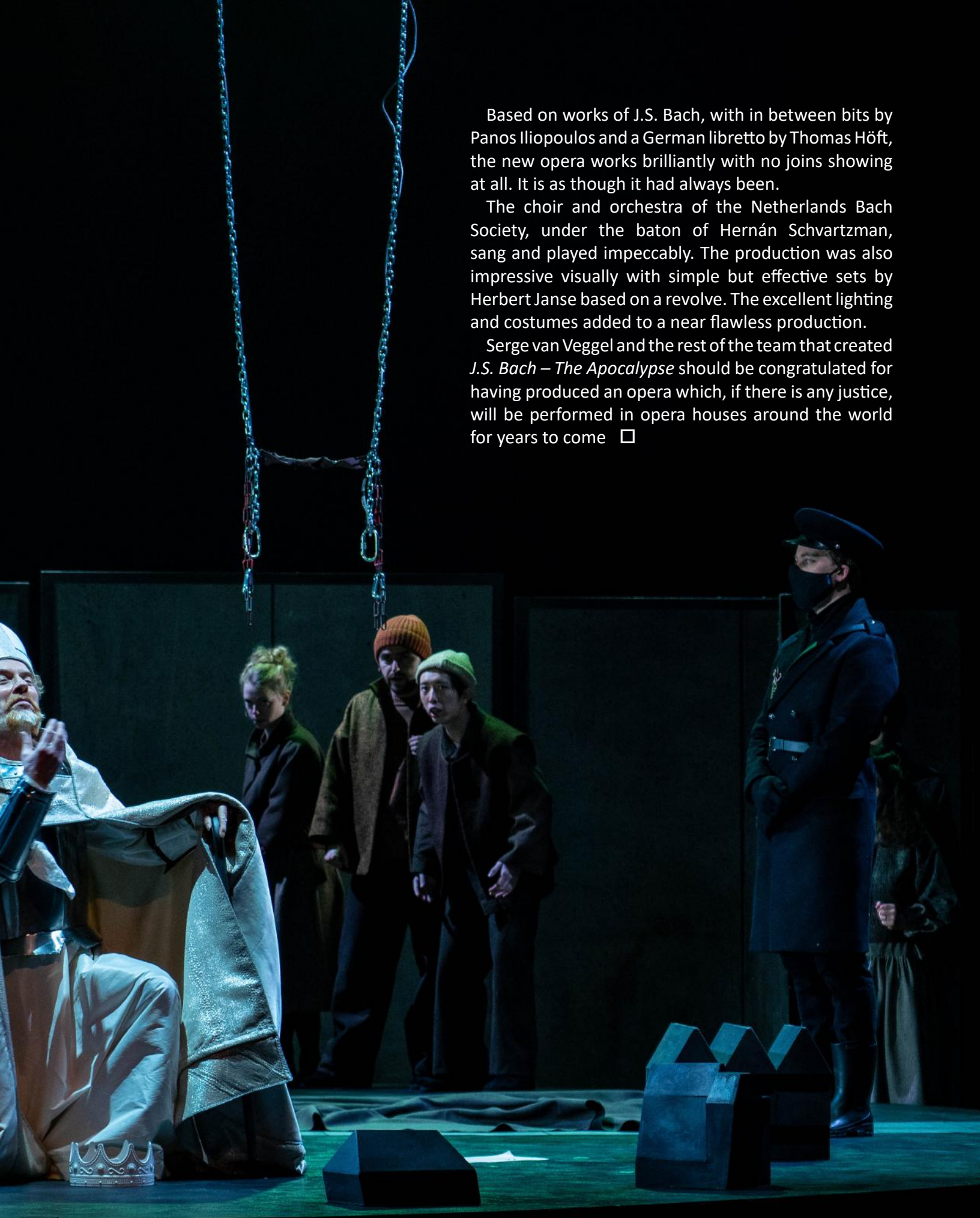
J.S. Bach – The Apocalypse starts in 1536 with the execution of Van Leyden and two of his cohorts. One of the other prisoners confesses and repents and the opera takes the form of a flashback with him acting as narrator, and very well it works too.



Based on works of J.S. Bach, with in between bits by Panos Iliopoulos and a German libretto by Thomas Höft, the new opera works brilliantly with no joins showing at all. It is as though it had always been.

The choir and orchestra of the Netherlands Bach Society, under the baton of Hernán Schvartzman, sang and played impeccably. The production was also impressive visually with simple but effective sets by Herbert Janse based on a revolve. The excellent lighting and costumes added to a near flawless production.

Serge van Veggel and the rest of the team that created *J.S. Bach – The Apocalypse* should be congratulated for having produced an opera which, if there is any justice, will be performed in opera houses around the world for years to come □



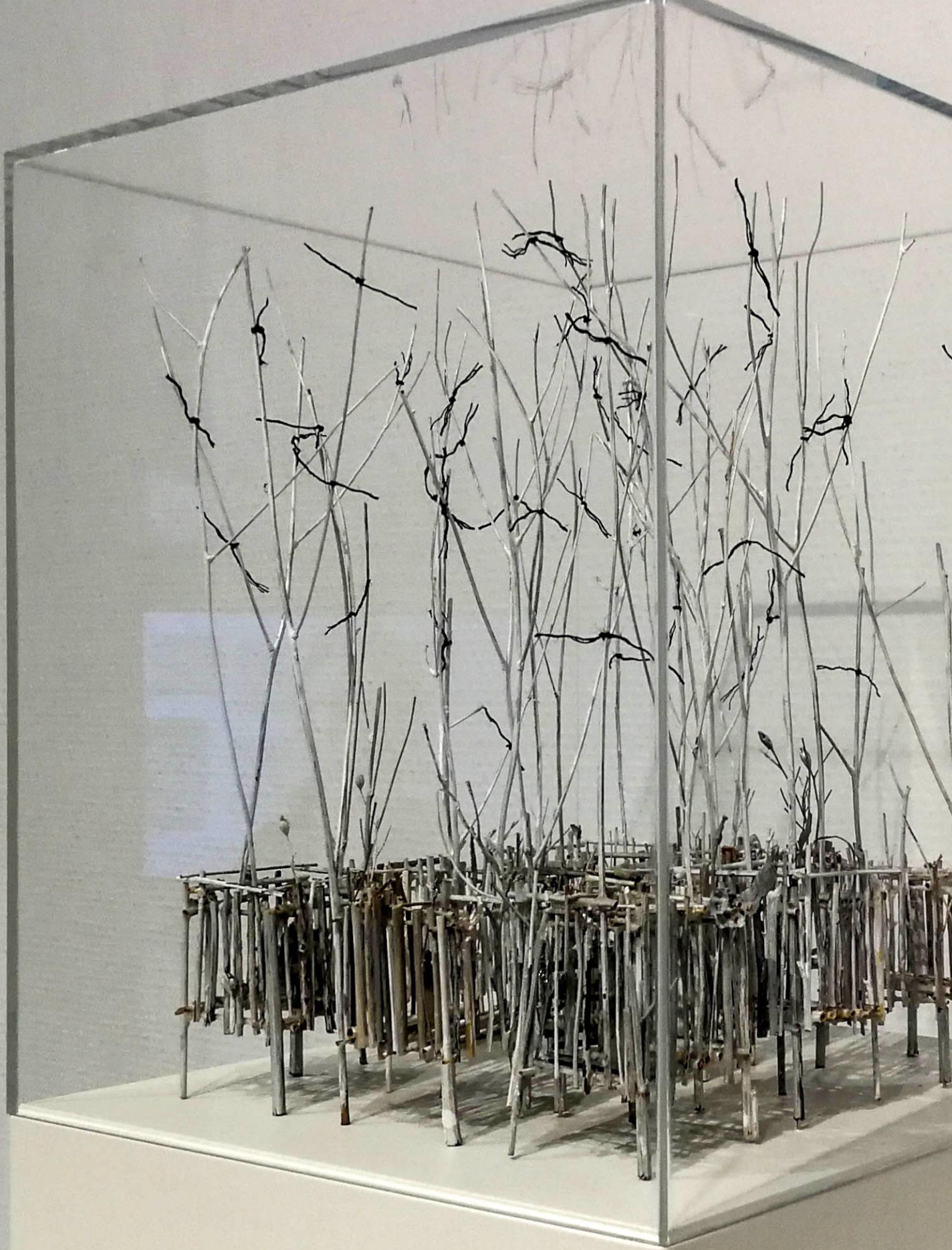


Photo by Michael HASTED



ANITA GROENER & HERMANUS BERSERIK

at Museum Rijswijk

Astrid BURCHARDT

Museum Rijswijk is one of my favourite places as it never fails to surprise and enchant with its exhibitions and ambiance. This time the museum has given over its entire ground floor main room for *To the Edge of Your World*, a huge installation by Anita Groener, her reward for having been voted, by the public, the most popular participant in the museum's 2022 *Paper Biennale*.

This exhibition once again demonstrates that size really does matter. The outstanding aspect of this installation is that the individual components are small, very small. And that is where the strength lies, much as the monumental scale of Anselm Kiefer's work over at Voorlinden is an important factor in the work.

The artist's inspiration comes from trees – trees that had a life, trees that have died, decayed, crumbled to mere piles of twigs that most people would simply crush underfoot on a nature walk . . .







Hermanus Berserik *Jonge fietser*, ets, aquatint, 1977

At first, Groener's very delicate series of pieces appears charming, even nostalgic though maybe a little obsessive. Her multiple creations shown here are constructed from tiny twigs about the size of match sticks, fashioned into what resembles miniature cages or baskets, some but not all ornamented by dried grasses or leaves. There are over four hundred of them lined up on a narrow shelf around the gallery. A large table arranged diagonally across the room is laid out with similar tiny bits and pieces.

The artist's inspiration comes from trees – trees that had a life, trees that have died, decayed, crumbled to mere piles of twigs that most people would simply crush underfoot on a nature walk. But Anita Groener lets these seemingly insignificant remnants show off a new beauty and live again, each one individual but part of a greater group identity.

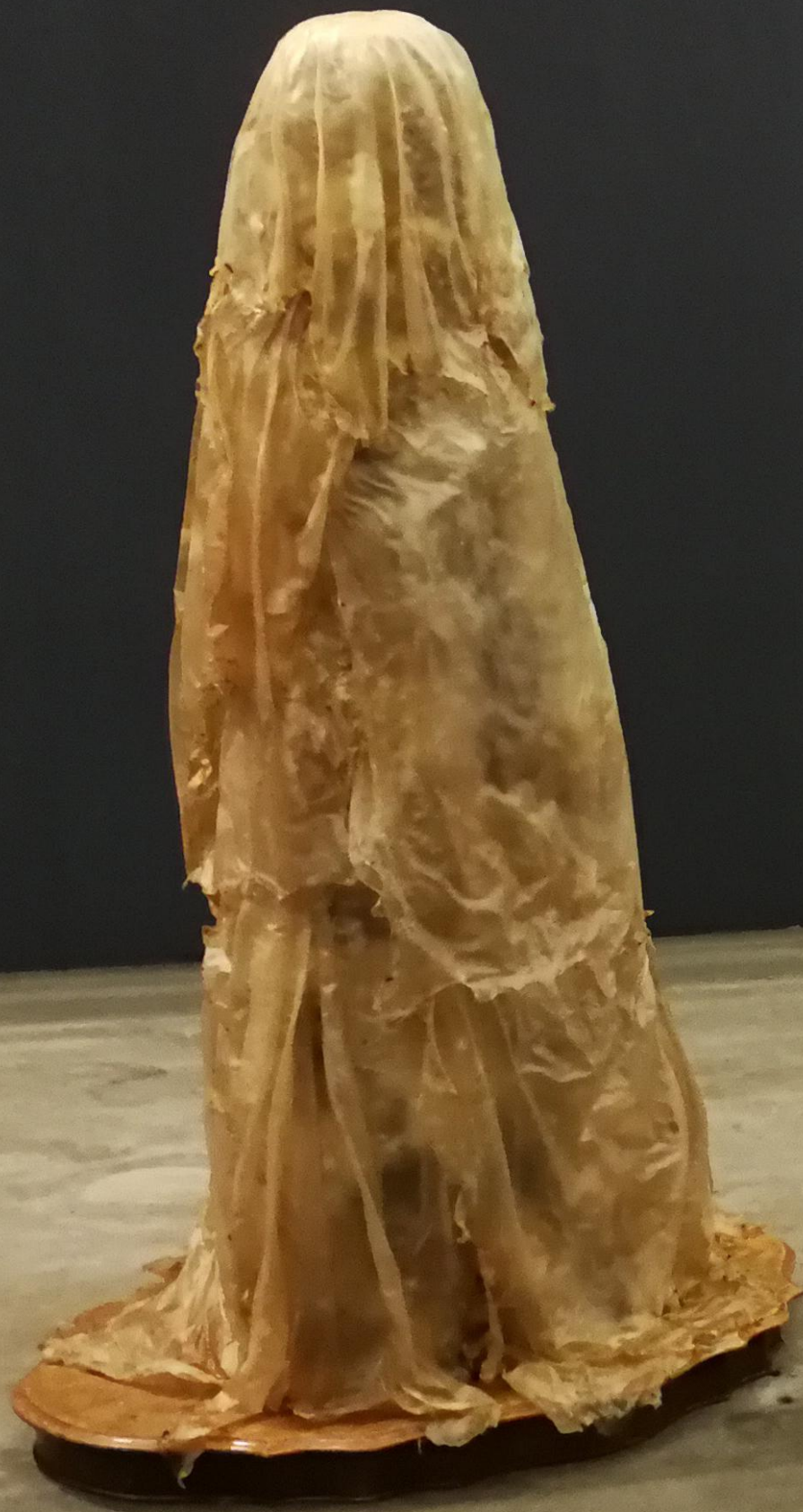
Anita Groener is a Dutch artist who has spent much of her long career in Ireland as lecturer and head of the Faculty of Visual Arts in Dublin. Also on show are small intricate drawings made up of gossamer-fine black ink lines. Her body of work covering many other aspects, both social as well as political, is included in collections worldwide.

We had gone to Museum Rijswijk specifically to see the Anita Groener but while we were there discovered something equally interesting. Upstairs in the smaller rooms is a delightful exhibition of Hermanus Berserik (1921-2002). The museum is showing a large collection of the prolific artist's work many of which it owns. He was a wonderful painter, print maker, illustrator of books and for advertising as well as teaching at the Royal Academy of Fine Art. Born in The Hague, he lived and worked in the gardener's house of the De Voorde estate in Rijswijk.

Many of Berserik's paintings are quirky and humorous, primitive almost, others slightly surreal. Some of my favourites were his paintings or prints of clowns, of his young son wearing funny hats or two absurd looking cyclists. Berserik appears to have found his subject matter in his immediate environment, also drawing attention to even the most ordinary items, such as a chest with a few bottles or slightly dimly lit Dutch landscapes.

These exhibitions are highly recommended, as is a visit at any time to the excellent Museum Rijswijk □

Both exhibitions continue at Museum Rijswijk until 7th April



Sculpture by Spanish artist and NN Arts Award nominee Mónica MAYS

ART ROTTERDAM 2024



Over one hundred stands, the work of twenty-two artists in the grounds outside plus another eighty-six artists showing in the *Prospects* section. Michael HASTED went along with his camera to take some pictures and have a look at the art . . .



There are few things I enjoy more than a good curry. I often order thali, a sort of taster menu with several different dishes, plus rice and a chapati. It consist of maybe four or five different curries, each served in a small bowl - there are some you love and others that perhaps you are not so keen on. And, despite the portions being small, together they make quite big meal and at some point you have eaten sufficient and need to stop. Art fairs are a bit like a thali. In general there are lots of galleries showing stuff that's not brilliant and the fairs are so big that at some point your feet hurt and you have had enough.

Art Rotterdam is, by international standards, medium size. So it is quite manageable in two or three hours and the standard this year is very high. It has just over one hundred stands, twenty-two artists showing in the grounds outside plus another eighty-six young artists showing in the *Prospects* section, which I will come to later.

Held on the ground floor of the sprawling iconic Van Nellefabriek on the banks of the Rhin-Schie Canal as it flows into Rotterdam the fair has art of all types and something for all tastes. In the main section where galleries, were showing their artists, several stands stood out.

I really liked the Artistic Matter stand which was made possible by Ali Keles and Lakeside Capital Partners

and presented by Weisbard Galerie Foundation and Annemarie Fine Art. Tomáš Libertiny's spectacular works are all made from beeswax, more often than not from honeycombs. The bees are kept just outside Rotterdam in a specially constructed lakeside bee farm and a beekeeper is on the company pay-roll.

A few of the other stands that caught my eye were the Valerius Gallery from Luxembourg who was showing fine paintings by Eric Mangen, one of which on unstretched canvas covered two walls; The Modest Show from Manchester which had the excellent, rather surrealist photo-based work of John Robinson. Rotterdam's Frank Taal Gallery had a very mixed selection of gallery artists. But certainly the most memorable piece in the show was a four meter high rabbit made of straw which you could smell long before you could see it. There were dozens more stands worthy of mention, but clearly I can't list them all. Obviously, most of the galleries showing were Dutch but there were many from around the rest of Europe and I even spotted one from New Zealand.

Art Rotterdam is, of course, a commercial fair where dealers come there to sell art and do business and, having spoken to many of them, they do very well. But Art Rotterdam is much more than that. It is the flagship of Rotterdam Art Week during which it presents, in conjunction with the city's Kunsthal and Nationale-Nederlanden, the prestigious NN Art Award for which





Eric MANGEN *Sacred Monsters* (detail)
2023 mixed media on unstretched canvas
on show at the Valerius Gallery from
Luxembourg



authenticity and innovation are the main criteria. This year's winner of the €10,000 prize was Peim van der Sloot. The other nominees were Maaïke Kramer, Jan van der Pol and Mónica Mays.

Alongside the main show, in a huge hangar-like room

reached through a long corridor is *Prospects*, showing eighty-six young artists who have been educated in The Netherlands, who have received support from the Mondriaan Fund and whose work can be seen during Art Rotterdam. For me this is the best part of



Olaf MOOIJ *Church of Our Unbelieving Faith* Mixed Media on wheels

the Fair. Not only is it quieter and more relaxed but the standard of the work on view is uniformly high. I particularly like the sculptures of NN Award nominee Mónica Mays from Madrid who lives in Amsterdam.

During Rotterdam's Art Week most of the city's

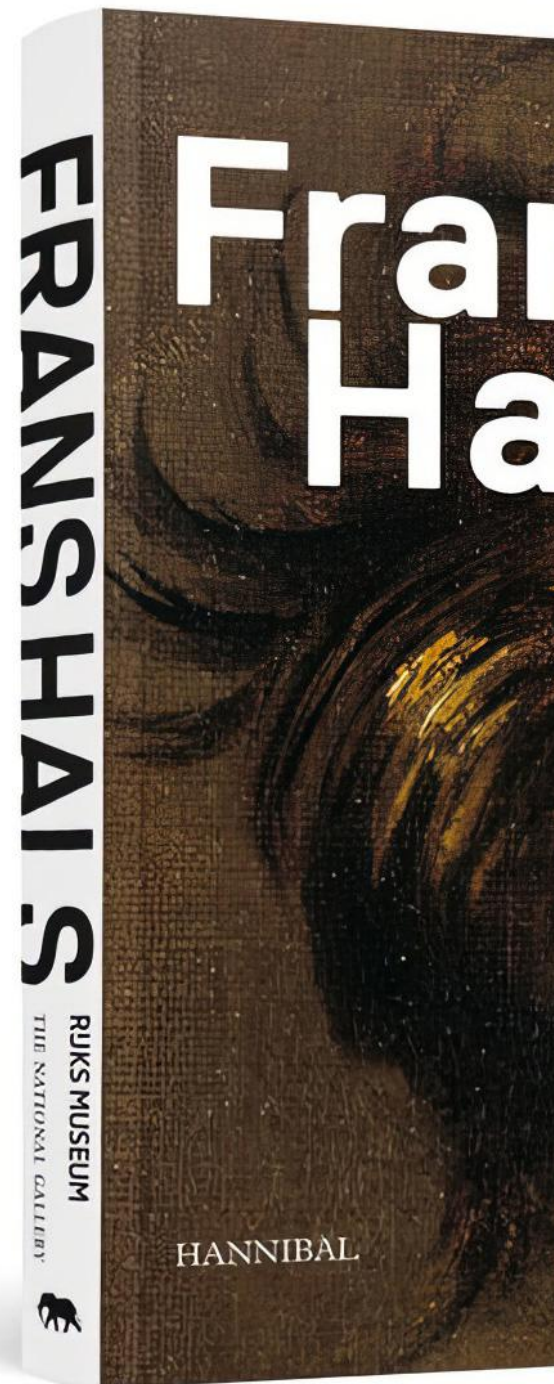
galleries and institutions mounted events or special exhibitions, so there was a lot happening and plenty to do in the city □

Mention *The Laughing Cavalier* to most people and they will almost certainly know the bright-eyed, coquettish smiling figure in an opulent outfit sporting an oversized black hat, an image which has appeared not only on beer labels and chocolate boxes but also in TV series from Sherlock Holmes to *The Monkeys* (yes, you hear me right). But it is doubtful that many know who created this painting.

A major exhibition on Frans Hals (1582-1666) at Amsterdam's Rijksmuseum is putting this to rights. Drawing on works, many kept in Berlin and London's National Gallery, a lavish book published by the excellent Hannibal Books in Belgium has been produced. It does not dwell on the usual crowd-pleasers such as the ubiquitous Cavalier or the paintings of large groups of Dutch militias who protected cities of the new Dutch Republic after the traumatic years under Spanish occupation. Frans Hals himself was a member of the militia in Haarlem. In the vast paintings rosy-cheeked militia men in black with lace trimmed boots pose, lances held high or dining copiously, swathes of raw silk sashes wound around their ample middle portions and tied into ostentatious bows. But I digress.

The book is a tribute to Hals' astonishing ability to paint not only faces but also cloth, lace and textures with bold, rough strokes which, from a distance, appear to be fine detail but up close the brush strokes display not only the painter's talent but an unerring authority that bears no contradiction. Occasionally, in his time, he was accused of being a 'rough' painter. His technique of course was not entirely new. It had been done in Italy and some suspected that that was his inspiration.

This fascinating book is a feast for the eyes. It shows the details of Hals' painterly prowess in abundance and lets you feel the artist's hand as he worked. In a museum you would never have the privilege of getting that close to these masterpieces. It is said that only Rembrandt could equal Frans Hals 'tour de force' with the brush. Included are many portraits of important





Dutch figures but also of ordinary working people. One of his extraordinary talents was to depict people smiling or laughing, one of the hardest to achieve for a painter. There can be little doubt that his ability for fast, bold brush work was the forerunner to Impressionism. Van Gogh said of Hals, 'He has twenty-seven blacks to choose from.'

The book about Frans Hals' work and life is written by Bart Cornelis, Friso Lammertse, Justine Rynnooy Kan and Jaap van der Veen, four experts of the art of the Dutch Golden Age working with or for the Rijksmuseum, the National Gallery London, Mauritshuis in The Hague, among others.

The book was initially produced when the exhibition was at the National Gallery London. The show opened at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam on 16th February and runs until 9th June before moving on to Berlin □

Astrid BURCHARDT

The hardback, in Dutch, is available from bookshops and online

Publisher	Hannibal Books
Hardcover	219 pages
ISBN-10	9464666625
ISBN-13	978-9464666625
Dimensions	24.4 x 2.3 x 29.8 cm

The English language paperback edition is available from Amazon

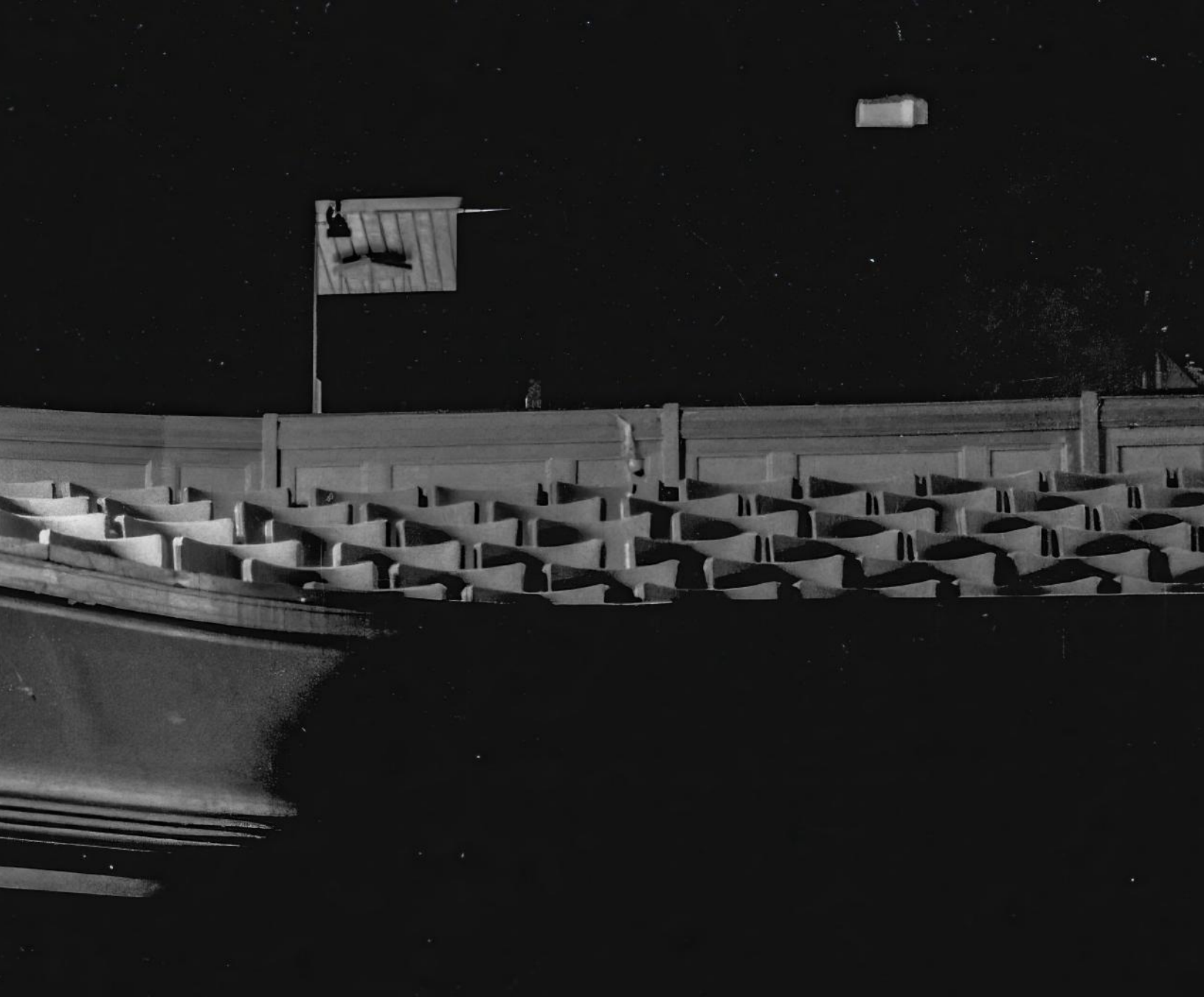
Publisher	National Gallery London
Paperback	244 pages
ISBN-10	1857097122
ISBN-13	978-1857097122
Dimensions	25.15 x 1.78 x 28.45 cm



KORZO
was
CORSO

The contemporary
venue in The Hag
rubble of the o
exactly
Michael HASTED

Photos courtesy of M
Anouskha Hagen, Leo



**dance and music
ue rose from the
ld Corso cinema
y forty years ago.
has been looking
into its history**

Marjo Brandse, Korzo Theater,
n Wechgelaer and as credited



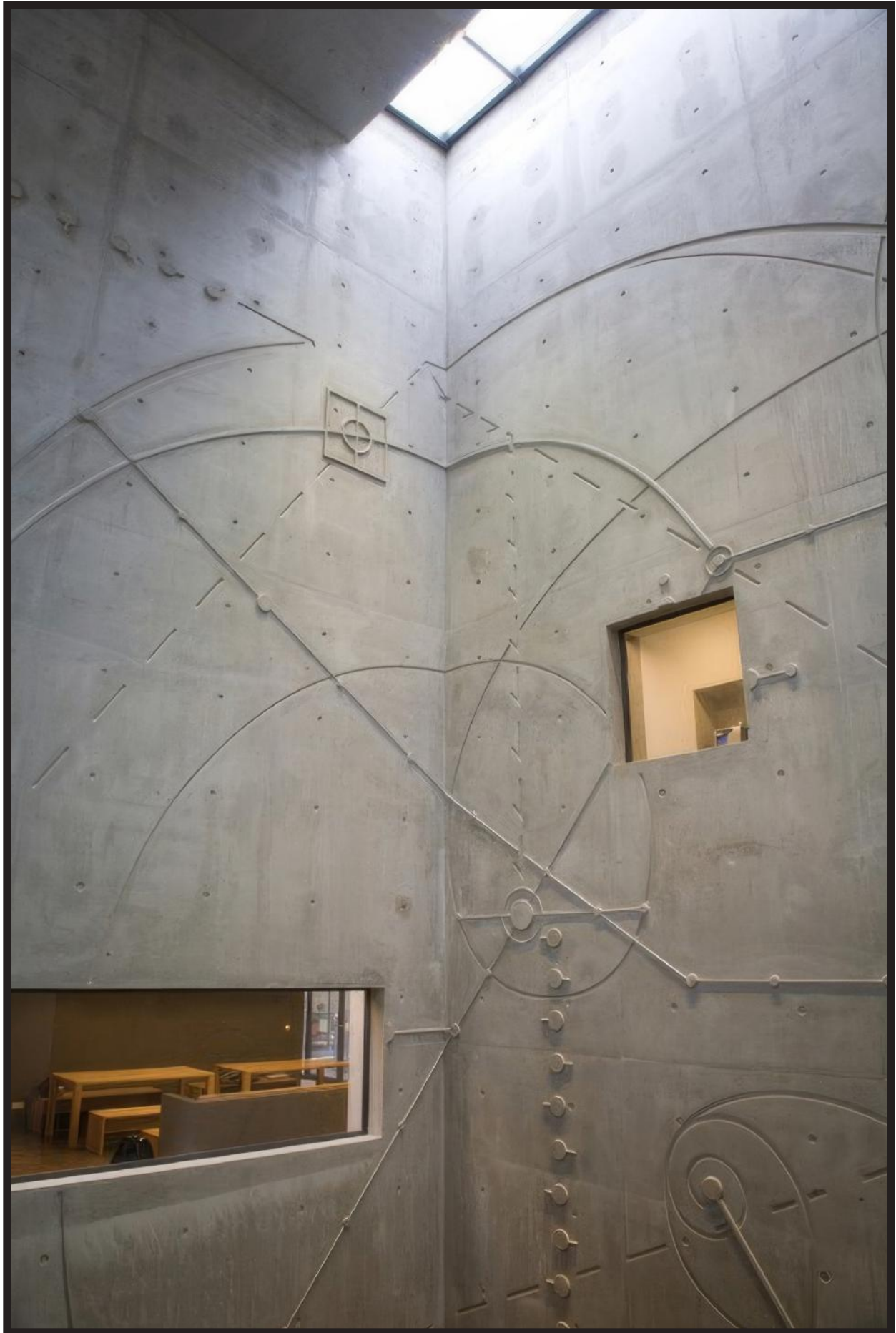


Photo by Corinne KORVER

The Netherlands is pre-eminent in the sphere of contemporary dance being the home of more than one company of international repute. Pre-eminent among those is The Netherlands Dans Theater which would undoubtedly be in the top ten of any list of the best companies in the world. But no institution can rest on its laurels and whether it is a dance company or a football team, new young talent has to be discovered and nurtured.

So, it is entirely logical and fitting that only about five minutes' walk away from NDT's home at the Amare, through the narrow streets of The Hague's old town, stands Korzo, a theatre dedicated to experimental contemporary dance, music, circus and physical theatre, a place where new and established talent can try out new ideas or burnish existing ones. Apart from the main auditorium there are two small spaces which between them can often turn out many different shows each week.

Korzo presents work by smaller independent dance companies, students from Codarts the performing arts

college in Rotterdam and similar ones in The Hague and Amsterdam and even gives the opportunity for NDT dancers to work on their own projects. It hosts many festivals, including Indian Dance Festival, Holland Dance Festival, Here We Live & Now, Cirque Mania, (Un)heard Music Festival, ReWire and many more.

The building itself, nestling between fashionable restaurants and art galleries in the city's bustling Prinsestraat, is not very conspicuous from the outside. But as soon as you step inside you will be aware of the almost church-like proportions - not surprising perhaps as parts of the adjacent old hidden church of Our Lady of Scherpenheuvel were incorporated into the finished theatre during renovation. The polished concrete walls of the lobby with mysterious high windows and bridges are decorated with circular geometric shapes and put one in mind of a climbing wall. But forty years ago it was not so impressive.

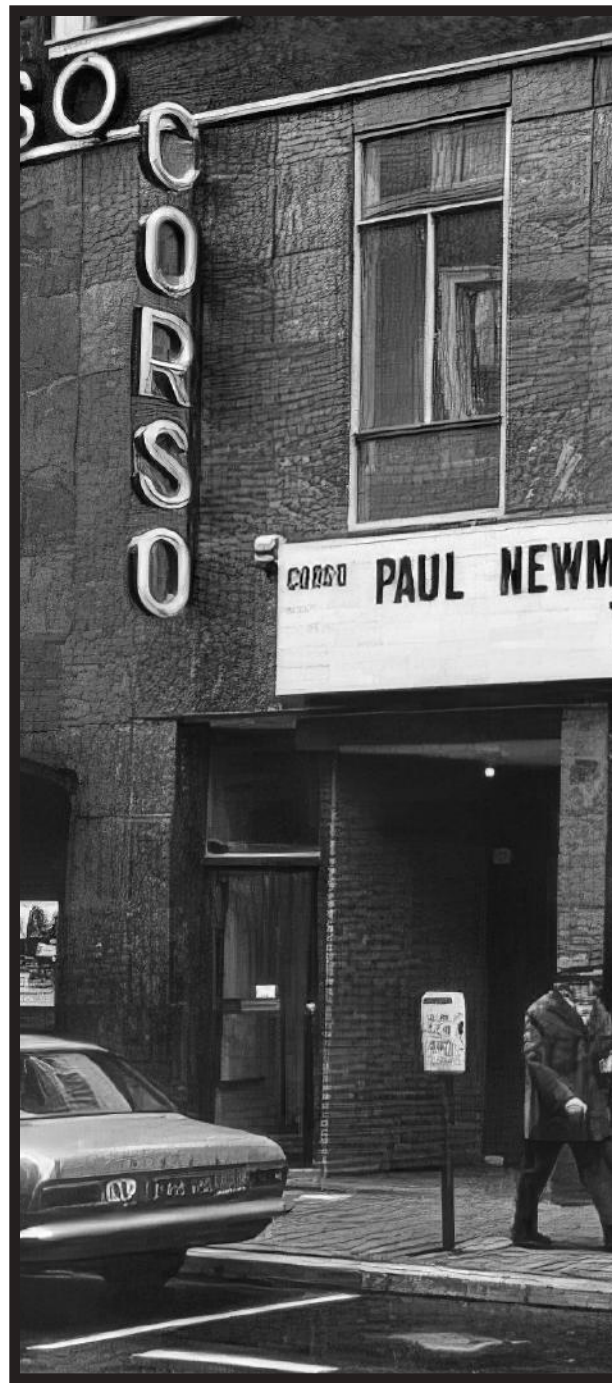
Korzo was created in 1984 in the dusty shell of an abandoned former cinema. Corso, one of the first cinemas in The Hague, opened its doors on 1st October

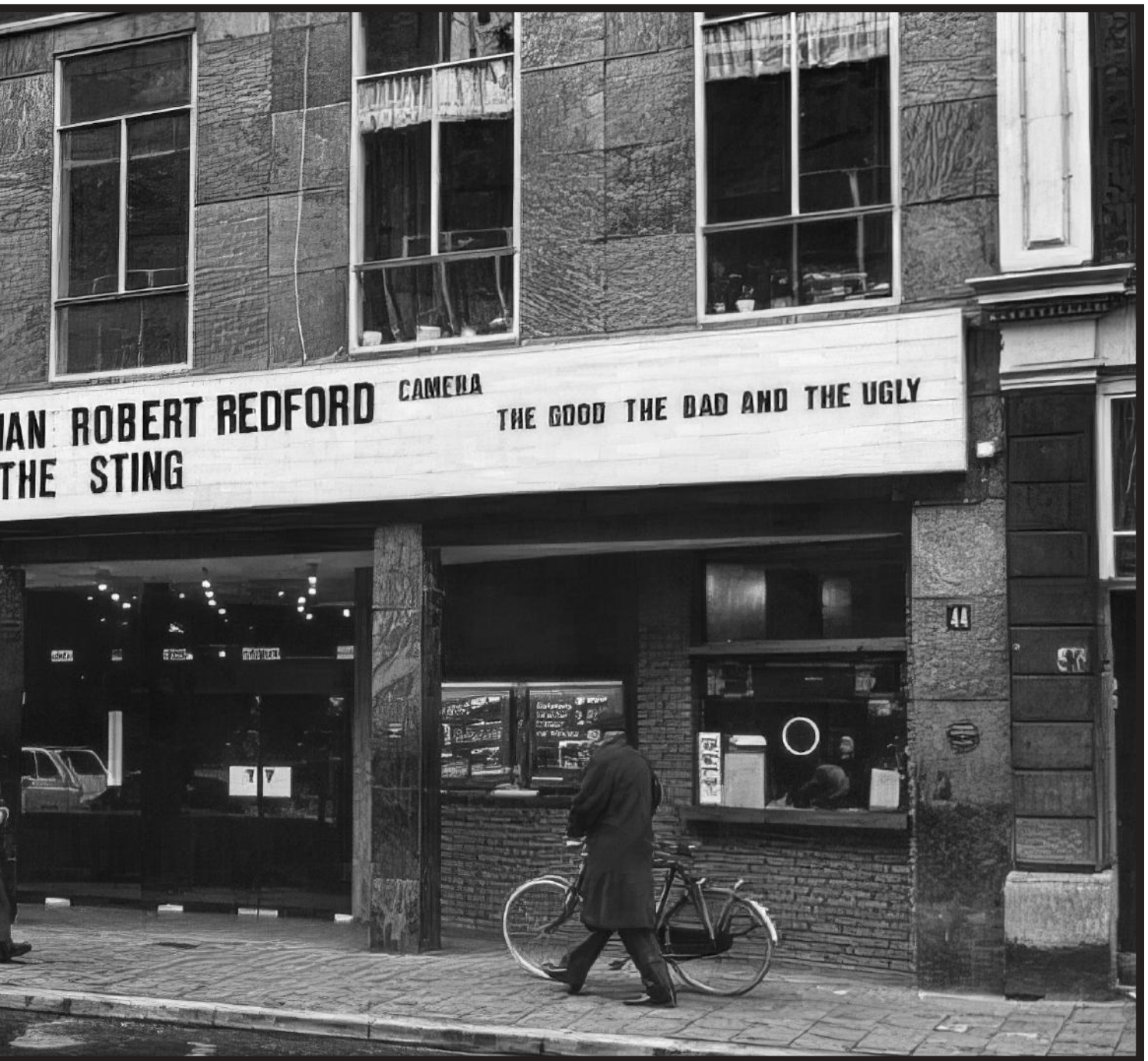
1913 as the Familie Bioscope (Family Cinema) and, as most cinemas did at the time, had a stage for live performances hidden behind the screen. In 1925 the large hall of the next door Unitas building was incorporated into to the cinema as a foyer.

The Familie Bioscope closed as a cinema in September that year and reopened the following month as a theatre, now calling itself The Trianon. But in February 1938 that too closed, reinventing itself a week later as the Corso cinema. In 1943 it was taken over by the Holland-Twente Cinema Company only to close again for two years after the war.

In 1959 a second, smaller auditorium opened which was called the Camera. For the next twenty-two years Corso and Camera happily co-existed but in January 1981 the Tuschinski group, which then owned the cinema, closed the main room but continued screenings in the smaller one. In May that year the death knell tolled, the projectors were turned off for the last time and the cinema closed for good, the empty building subsequently being bought by The Hague Municipality. And the old cinema was not the only empty building in what was then a rather rundown Prinsestraat, a street which was proving to be an embarrassment for the city because of its proximity to the Palace Garden and Noordeinde Palace.

Redemption for Corso came in the form of a group of students from the Catholic (originally spelled with a K) Social Academy who brazenly squatted the building on 9th November 1983. Other groups became involved resulting in Theaterwerkplaats whose mission was to create a space for the performing arts in The Hague. Participants included the Center for Artistic Education and the Blauwe Aanslag, Styrofoam (the group of students from the KSA) and members of The Haagse Pop and Zeebelt foundations.







Work started to make the semi derelict building useable. The priority was installing a staircase to give access to the hallway and to provide the living space above the cinema with electricity







Work started to make the semi-derelict building useable. The priority was installing a staircase to give access to the hallway and to provide the living space above the cinema with electricity so that it could be used as a base. The opening event at the newly named Korzo was held on 12th February 1984 in order to attract publicity and to put pressure on those who might provide funding for the new venture. Conditions were still fairly basic and, for example, it was proposed to supply the toilets with water via a garden hose run from another part of the building.

Marjo Brandse was a student at the KSA and one of the original squatters and remembers one of the regular early events. "Once a month, the theater café was transformed into a Haagsche Tea Room with marble walls, sweet floral wallpaper, paintings and stylish tables and chairs. A set that was built up every time as in a performance. Some visitors did not realize that it was a 'performance', they honestly thought they had entered a new establishment. Looking back, the street theater festival in the summer of 1987 may have been the highlight of these years. That year Korzo had its own tent at the festival, with its own programming and design: The Bromtol. While demolition - in connection with the upcoming new construction - had already started in the building, two chefs were cooking for the Theatrical Meal upstairs in the improvised kitchen. A meal that was served a little later in De Bromtol, while the stage had turned into a long, round table".

Despite all the hard work, the lack of space plus the efficiency and technical quality of the building remained a point of concern and from 2003 further plans were made to demolish the neighbouring church and integrate the remaining space into the existing



A
T
E
R
I
A

K
O
R
Z
O
T
H
E
A
T
R
E

parts of the old cinema. A budget of €4.5 million was approved and the plans were implemented. Work started in 2008 and Korzo moved to a temporary home in BINK36.

On 3rd February, 2011, Princess Maxima opened the brand new Korzo complex in the, by then, trendy Prinsestraat. One of the reminders of Korzo's colourful past had carefully been retained and incorporated into the new building – a stained glass window from Our Lady of Scherpenheuvel. Sadly it is hidden away in one of the upstairs rehearsal studios and not visible to the general public.

And the rest, as they say, is history □





Rembrandt van Rijn, *Glasses Seller* (Allegory of sight) c.1624-1625

Rembrandt's
FOUR SENSES
- his first paintings
at Museum De Lakenhal in Leiden



Rembrandt van Rijn, *Three Singers (Allegory of Hearing)* c. 1624-1625

Museum De Lakenhal in Leiden, which opened on 1st May, 1874 is celebrating its 150th anniversary. Kicking off this celebration is the presentation of Rembrandt's *Four Senses — His First Paintings*. Rembrandt created this series, his earliest known work, when he was around 18 years old and living in Leiden. In addition to *The Glasses Seller (Sight)* from the museum's own collection, the presentation consists of three works from The Leiden Collection in New York: *The Operation (Feeling)*, *The Three Singers (Hearing)* and *The Unconscious Patient (Smell)*. The fifth sense,

Taste, is missing. Together, the four paintings can be seen in the museum for 150 days. They are all very small and are shown in the room containing other Leiden old master.

The series of senses shows that Rembrandt had been a stubborn and experimental artist from the start. Particularly since the 16th century, the senses have generally been depicted as personifications of elegant women with fixed attributes. But that's not how Rembrandt does it. He chooses everyday scenes that are recognizable to everyone. These early works were not successful in all respects. But they also



Rembrandt van Rijn, *The Stone Operation (Allegory of touch)*, c. 1624-1625

initially exhibit those qualities that would later make Rembrandt an innovative and celebrated painter: his use of chiaroscuro, his loose brushwork and his unique eye for the interaction between ordinary people with characteristic expressions.

Rembrandt's *Senses* occupy an important place in Leiden art history. The jubilee museum makes the local developments and cultural connections that have characterized the city's illustrious past clearly visible. At the heart of the permanent collection presentation, the *Four Senses* hang among other works by the young Rembrandt and paintings by friend and competitor

Jan Lievens and star student Gerrit Dou. How quickly Rembrandt developed technically and formally can be seen, for example, in *Musical Company* which he painted in 1626, about two years after the *Senses*. And what is striking in the piece *Resting Travellers*, made about five years later by an anonymous painter from Rembrandt's Leiden environment, is the successful play with light and dark. The fact that Leiden had a fertile artistic climate in these years is evident in the creative exchange with Jan Lievens, whose *Old Woman Reading* with a delicately rendered headscarf was an unmistakable source of inspiration for Rembrandt.



Rembrandt van Rijn, *The Unconscious Patient* (Allegory of Smell), c. 1624-1625

The face of the young Jan Lievens even appears in Rembrandt's *The Three Singers* and again in his *Musical Company*

Already at the opening of Museum De Lakenhal in 1874, the city felt it was a pity that there was no work on display by its most famous son, Rembrandt van Rijn. An important moment in the history of the museum was the purchase of *The Glasses Seller* in 2012. This panel, part of Rembrandt's *Senses*, shows the novice artist during the years he worked in Leiden. His studio must have been a stone's throw from where Museum De Lakenhal now stands. Two of Rembrandt's *Senses*,

The Operation and *The Three Singers*, were added to The Leiden Collection of the French-American collector Thomas Kaplan in 2007. The third, *The Unconscious Patient*, only surfaced in 2015 at an auction in New Jersey. Kaplan purchased it in 2016. Since then, the series has been on display at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford in 2016 and the Rembrandt House in Amsterdam in 2016-2017. The reunion of the *Senses* in the city where Rembrandt created the series therefore represents a first, both for Leiden and the Museum □

Rembrandt's Four Senses continues at Museum De Lakenhal in Leiden until 16th June.



The UNDERGROUND

An adaptation of Dostoyevsky's *Notes from the Underground* by NITE and Club Guy & Roni

Michael HASTED

Photos by Sjoerd KNOL





It's a bit of a chicken and egg situation – are people outsiders because nobody likes them or do people dislike them because they are outsiders? It's a subject that has fascinated many writers – largely, I suppose, because many of them are outsiders themselves. In his brilliant, now almost forgotten, 1956 book *The Outsider*, Colin Wilson explores the phenomenon assessing the works and characters of Kafka to Camus and Earnest Hemingway to Fyodor Dostoyevsky. The outsider has always been a source of fascination to the more balanced, well-integrated members of society to whom the company of others has always been fundamental to their existence.

The National Interdisciplinary Theater Ensemble (NITE) and international dance company, Club Guy & Roni together form the largest multi-faceted theatre house in the Netherlands. Their new piece, *The Underground*, takes us on another journey into the world of the loner.

Freely adapted from Dostoyevsky's *Notes from the Underground* by Rik Van Den Bos we learn of the fears and frustrations of a nameless character as he rails against most aspects of human existence. His *raison d'être* is moaning and complaining, finding fault with everything, including himself. He, as they used to say, stares at his navel concerned only about his own problems, not thinking or caring about others. Every aspect of his life is a failure. Not a lot of laughs, you may think. Well no, there weren't many but the story is handled with a fairly light touch with lots to distract from the doom and gloom. In some ways it reminded me of the 1961 British musical *Stop the World, I Want to Get Off* whose central character, also a clown, tells of his dissatisfaction with the status quo.

The fact that the central character is portrayed as a clown is not insignificant. Although a figure of fun, there is always the underlying sadness and loneliness.

In fact, the "tears of a clown" has become a bit of a cliché. But Guy Weizman's *The Underground* takes it a step further, presenting the piece as almost circus. The large, elaborate set consists of a series of platforms and frames enabling the performers to jump and swing around in acrobatic fashion and there is a brilliant slack rope speciality act from Bram de Laere that would grace the ring of any circus you care to mention, though his main function is as a sort of alter-ego to the main character.

The excellent seven-piece band recruited from Slagwerk Den Haag is always on stage and constitutes an important element of the proceedings. More Fellini than Barnum and Bailey, each with a long pony-tail, they are dressed in ankle length red and white hooped figure-hugging tube-like costumes which are grotesquely padded. In a funny way they put me in mind of the Caterpillar in *Alice in Wonderland*.

The main character, nicely played by Sanne den Hartogh, is quite aware that his behaviour alienates others but seems powerless or unwilling to change. I think it is the lot of the outsider to think they are the only normal one. His tirades bordered on the monotonous, tedious almost, but there were a few funny lines – I liked the idea that all self-help books should be burned.

All-in-all NITE's *The Underground* is an excellent and original piece of theatre with some memorable moments, a couple of which involved balloons. There was one sequence with a series of errant red balloons and the finale involving large white balloons attached to and floating above all those on stage was a moment of sheer beauty. The white spheres had a sort of ethereal quality, perhaps representing a longed for, though unlikely, moment of joy and optimism □

The tour of NITE's *The Underground* continues until 17th May

91422



Roelant Savery, *Sleeping Young Man, Probably Pieter Boddaert* (1576-1625), 1606-07.
P. & N. de Boer Foundation, Amsterdam

Roelant Savery's *Wondrous World* at Mauritshuis in The Hague

Roelant Savery was born in Kortrijk 1578, but his Protestant family fled to Haarlem in 1584 to escape the advancing Catholic Spanish troops during the Eighty Years' War. He moved to Amsterdam in about 1590 in order to train as a painter. In 1604 Emperor Rudolf II invited him to become a court painter in Prague. He returned to Amsterdam in 1615. Three years later, in 1618, he settled in Utrecht, where he would remain until his death in 1639. The decade from 1604 to 1612 that Savery spent in Prague was the most creative phase of his career. After his return to the Netherlands he focused mainly on floral still lifes and animal paintings. He was declared bankrupt in 1638, and was forced to sell his home in Utrecht. The exhibition covers Roelant Savery's entire body of work.

He was a pioneer in many fields and introduced several new themes to Dutch painting. He made the Netherlands' first floral still life and was the most notable painter of the legendary (extinct) dodo. He was also the first artist who went out into the streets to

draw ordinary people. His painted landscapes are often like a fairy-tale, featuring ancient ruins and marvellous vistas. His animal paintings include so many species that it would be an understatement to describe them as 'crowded'.

Roelant Savery's Wondrous World, featuring over forty paintings and drawings, including works on loan from museums in the Netherlands and abroad, will introduce visitors to this highly versatile artist. The exhibition has been sponsored by the Friends of the Mauritshuis Foundation, VriendenLoterij, Stichting de Johan Maurits Compagnie, Het Cultuurfonds and the MAOC Gravin van Bylandt Foundation.

Savery specialised in landscapes. His paintings of impressive waterfalls were an entirely new phenomenon in art. Habsburg Emperor Rudolf II amassed a large collection of Savery's work while the artist was his court painter in Prague. The Emperor was even keen to 'collect' the natural beauty of his country, so he sent Savery to Tyrol to depict its landscape. Savery travelled there in 1606-07 to capture the still inhospitable natural

the DoDo & Given

by G



One animal – the legendary dodo – was already close to extinction in Savery's day. But Rudolf had one in his collection (a stuffed one, at any rate), so Savery was able to portray it. His depiction of a rather heavy bird (probably because the one in Rudolf's collection had been overstuffed) defined its image for centuries.



Roelant Savery (attributed), *The Dodo and Other Birds*, c.1630. Natural History Museum, London



Roelant Savery, *Large Flower Still Life with Crown Imperial*, 1624.
Centraal Museum, Utrecht

environment of the Alps in a series drawings and paintings. He also made a series of drawings of Prague and the surrounding area, the earliest topographical drawings of the city. The drawings, featuring Charles Bridge, the gateway to the Strahov Monastery and Prague Castle with Rudolf II's palace, are certainly picturesque. Roelant included himself in one drawing, seated on the ground with his sketchbook in his lap, a pot of ink beside him, drawn from life, precisely as he observed it.

Savery was also a pioneer of floral still lifes. It was important for a painter of flowers to depict all parts of the flower as realistically as possible. Savery had plenty of opportunity to hone his skills in Prague, as flowers from all over the world were grown at Rudolf's palaces. Savery's first floral still life in 1603 was fairly modest, with just eleven flowers and several insects. By 1615 he was including many more flowers in his paintings, both native and cultivated and, as always, lots of insects. But by 1624 his floral paintings featured whole forests of flowers, up to sixty-four varieties at a time, from cultivated to wild. And the flowers are teeming with life: butterflies, insects and small animals, no fewer than forty-five species, including a Moluccan cockatoo using its sharp beak to pull apart a frog (an entirely imaginary scene, as this bird eats only seeds, berries and insects).

Roelant Savery was best known for his animal paintings, of which over fifty have survived. In this respect, too, the painter found everything he could wish for in Prague. The Emperor had zoos, aviaries, a *Löwenhof* with a collection of lions, a pheasant garden, a deer park, stables and a collection of stuffed animals. As with his flower paintings, Savery combined them all in landscapes teeming with life. These animals – dromedaries, foxes, elephants, bears, lions, cattle, deer, horses – would never be able to coexist in real life, but in Savery's paintings they live peacefully side by side. He would add a biblical (Adam and Eve) or mythological (Orpheus) story to the picture, to make the idea more plausible. Fantasy plays a role in many of Savery's paintings. One, depicting the interior of a stable where a woman milks a cow, for example, features the extraordinary sight of witches flying around on broomsticks. In another, a macaw and a cockatoo look on while grooms parade before us two impossibly elegant horses in fairly unnatural poses (one has two raised legs).

One animal – the legendary dodo – was already close to extinction in Savery's day. But Rudolf had one in his collection (a stuffed one, at any rate), so Savery was able to portray it. His depiction of a rather heavy bird (probably because the one in Rudolf's collection had been overstuffed) defined its image for centuries.



Roelant Savery, *Two Horses and Grooms*, 1628, Municipal Museums, Kortrijk (Belgium)

Roelant Savery was one of the first artists who sought out models beyond the studio, drawing ordinary people out on the street, or wherever else he encountered them. He would often draw them from behind, so that they had no idea they were being immortalised. He also scribbled down notes about what they were wearing, to jog his memory later. One beggar was wearing 'filthy black leather breeches' and 'filthy ash-grey stockings'. One extraordinary drawing features Jews at a synagogue on one side of the paper, and a young man sleeping on the other. It is possible to pinpoint the precise location of the synagogue: the Neualtschul (Old New Synagogue) in Prague.



Savery's five or six drawings of Jews in Prague are the earliest known images of contemporary European Jews. The young man on the on the first page of this article, dressed in elegant attire, dozes in a chair. Given his tousled hair, closed eyes and slightly open mouth, Savery must have drawn him, too, 'from life', precisely as he observed him □

Roelant Savery's Wondrous World continues at Mauritshuis in The Hague until 20th May





SALON DES REFUSÉS

at 1646 Experimental Art Space in The Hague

Photos by Maarten Nauw



**“1646 celebrates diversity in a time when division and exclusion seem to gain ground in The Netherlands.” 1646
co-directors Clara Pallí Monguilod and Johan Gustavsson**

Amidst the current Dutch political climate, where people’s differences seem to be a motive for exclusion and divide, at 1646 Rasmus Myrup brings to life a group of Nordic folkloric characters. They invite us to think about the need for imagination and how diversity needs to be celebrated and protected.

The new works in the exhibition *Salon des Refusés* by Danish artist Myrup are the result of a co-operation between 1646 and the Gothenburg Biennial and the exhibition is a collaboration with Le Criée, in Rennes, France.

A group of folkloric folks who have been ousted from modern Nordic normativity are hanging out in the exhibition. They are all gravitating towards the entrance of a club, waiting for us to leave so that they can come alive. This is a space where humans can’t go – their safe space. A space without us.

These mythological beings, with bodies of the natural materials they animate, wear custom-made garments that express their personalities, as contemporary embodiments of their ancient, actual legends. These figures are beings of the past, in a contemporary

context. Not unlike ourselves, yet completely different. For instance, the powerful earthly deity and single mother of four magical oxen, who drops acid once a year to alleviate the pressures of parenthood. Or a forest elf who is sick and tired of having to cover up the hole in her back, just because the human men can’t stop gawking at it...

The cultural past is repeatedly hijacked by extreme right-wing conservatives attempting to distort history to fit into their often patriarchal, misogynist, homophobic, cis-centric worldview. Resisting this suffocating grip, Myrup re-reads the sources of the past and brings forth their sensuous, queer and progressive characters.

Originating from oral storytelling, these personages arise from a collective subconscious, representing a wilderness in both reality and thought.

Rasmus Myrup aims to rediscover these ever-changing tales and gain a deeper understanding of our own present time in the process □

Salon des Refusés runs until 7th April at 1649 Experimental Art Space in The Hague



Summer Creative

Scapino Ballet Rotterdam and Conny Janssen Danst offer an inspiring and ground-breaking programme full of master classes, workshops, classes, lectures and presentations



Scapino Ballet Rotterdam and Conny Janssen Danst will open their doors during the summer of 2024. Dance talent from all over the world is invited to take part in an inspiring and ground-breaking programme full of master classes, workshops, classes, lectures and presentations from 21st July to 2nd August - the Summer Creative.



Two renowned Rotterdam companies, two weeks, one unique opportunity for dancers and dance students. Personal development is the focus of this varied program provided by choreographers, teachers and dancers from both Scapino Ballet Rotterdam and Conny Janssen Danst.

Young dancers will be introduced to repertoire from various performances and challenged to new forms of movement. They will be invited to train their technical dance skills and develop their creativity and individuality as a dancer in various creative processes. Both weeks conclude with a studio presentation.

In addition, many activities outside the curriculum are organised with the aim of bringing participants, dancers, teachers and choreographers of both companies closer together. Participants are given the opportunity to work on their qualities as a performing artists and immerse themselves in the Rotterdam's dance world. Auditions will be held online and registration closes on 25th March.

More details and information about the organizing companies can be found on the Scapino Ballet and Conny Janssen Danst websites



p museum
prinsenhof
delft



pioniers in keramiek

16 februari t/m
8 september 2024